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# The Last Paper Crane A Tale from Hiroshima

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Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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Ichiro is looking out of the window. His friend Hiro is tidying the mess left by his little sister, Keiko who will now be in her Kindergarten class. Then it happens; a blinding whiteness ? and the world changes. This is Hiroshima, 6th August 1945; the first atom bomb has just exploded. Ichiro survives and we learn of his experience as he finally tells his granddaughter, now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century of the burden he has carried all his life and which we now learn as well.

This is an outstanding and heartfelt book which should find its way into every school and library. We know a great deal about World War II as it affected Europe and the UK. We hear much less of the Japanese experience. Drewery?s novel goes a long way to redress this imbalance. Ichiro?s voice is direct, and immediate ? but at the same time very non-judgemental. This is not a story about ?them? and ?us?; rather we see an individual facing the consequences of the actions of others surviving, but at a cost that will affect him throughout his life. We are also shown the kindness of people in extreme situation ? and the possibility of hope. It could have been quite conventional in presentation ? it would still have been effective as a story, the prose unaffected and direct. However, Ichiro?s narrative is framed by the words of his granddaughter as she tells us about her concern for her grandfather and then her determination to help him. This is in the form of a verse novel in which the narrative is interspersed with reflective haikus that highlight feelings, reactions, ideas. The result is powerful and immersive bringing two voices into play to bridge the gap of years and ensuring that Ichiro?s words draw the reader into the reality of his experiences by making them different not just through the tone but visually. Adding to impact of the whole are the delicate ink decorations and illustrations in soft blacks, greys and white ? paper cranes flutter across the pages while atmospheric scenes peopled with shadowy figures mirror the world Ichiro is inhabiting as he searches for Keiko.

This is a story embedded in history, but one that will reflect many realities today; highly recommended.

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