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# Hurty feelings

AnnMarie Hamar

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Lester, Helen. *Hurty Feelings*. Illustrated by Lynn Munsinger. Houghton Mifflin, 2004. ISBN 0618410821. \$16.00. 32 pp.

Reviewer: AnnMarie Hamar

Reading Level: Preschool, Primary

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Fiction; Humorous stories;

Subject: Hippopotamus--Juvenile fiction; Elephants--Juvenile fiction; Emotions--Juvenile fiction; Behavior--Juvenile fiction; Book--Reviews;

Fragility is a hippopotamus who "is a solid piece of work." Despite her outer appearance of strength, Fragility is hypersensitive and insecure. Her friends' compliments are kind and sincere but she always takes offense and breaks down into fits of wailing. The other hippos start to avoid Fragility for fear of saying something that will hurt her feelings. Fragility's constant indulgence in self-pity leaves her "a big solid piece of – loneliness." When Rudy the Elephant, a very rude bully, starts to hurl real insults at Fragility she stands up to him. In the process, both Rudy and Fragility learn to be a little more perceptive and gracious.

This is a clever and fast-paced story about handling emotions, although the way Fragility twists her friends' compliments can seem a little far-fetched at times. Munsinger's humorous and expressive watercolor illustrations are the book's strength and selling point. She does a wonderful job of capturing Fragility's sensitive personality. This is a great book to read-aloud.