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Layla, Queen of Hearts

Ruth-Anne Brown

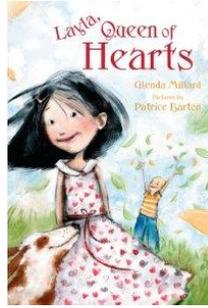
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Millard, Glenda. *Layla, Queen of Hearts*. Illustrated by Patrice Barton. Farrar Straus Giroux, 2010. ISBN 9780374343606. \$16.99. 119 p.

Reviewer: Ruth-Anne Brown

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Fiction;

Subject: Friendship --Juvenile fiction; Old age --Juvenile fiction.; Family life --Australia --Juvenile fiction.; Books--Reviews;

Layla fits right into the Silk family although they are very different from her own. She and Griffin, her best friend, play and explore at the Kingdom of Silk. Layla misses her Nana terribly now that she is gone, and Layla does not have anyone to bring to Senior Citizens Day at her school. Nell, Griffin's grandmother, suggests a Miss Amelie for the job. When they all go to meet her, Miss Amelie writes their names down on a sticky note and puts it on her wall. Layla realizes Miss Amelie has a hard time remembering current things. She wants her to come to her school for Senior Citizen Day very badly, but she knows to be patient. As Layla comes to know Miss Amelie more, she learns that Miss Amelie waits for her beau John William by her gate. He never came home from war, but Miss Amelie cannot remember. Layla finally asks Miss Amelie if she will come to her school and Miss Amelie agrees. Senior Citizen Day arrives. Layla, Griffin, and Nell go early to Miss Amelie's house. They find her outside by the gate waiting for John William. They rush her inside to warm up in blankets. After the doctor pronounces Miss Amelie fit to attend school, Layla shouts "It's a miracle!" Layla and Miss Amelie had a wonderful time making footprint paintings. Miss Amelie painted a watercolor of a girl in a heart patterned dress to help her remember the special day.

Millard writes simple but true words. *Layla, Queen of Hearts* is a book written for children dealing with struggling parent relationships, friends, and death. The characterization develops on the first page. Patrice Barton helps the reader imagine characters with soft black and white watercolors. This work would be a great recommendation for any child, but especially one who has had a death in his or her family.

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