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Maybe a Fox

Abigail Packard

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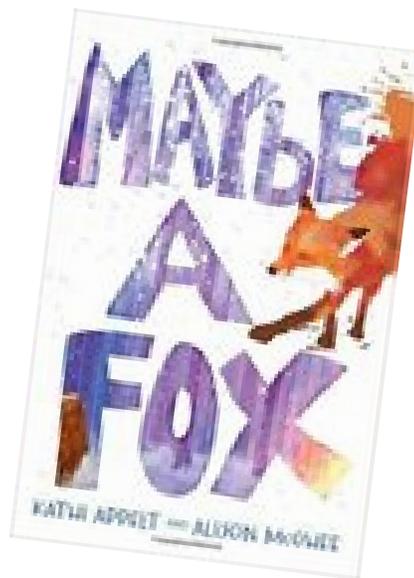
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Book Review

Title: Maybe a Fox
Author: Kathi Appelt and Alison McGhee
Reviewer: Abigail Packard
Publisher: Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy Books
Publication Year: 2016
ISBN: 9781442482425
Number of Pages: 272
Interest Level: Intermediate
Rating: Excellent



Review

Jules and Sylvie have been each other's rock since their mother died. Behind their home in the forests of Vermont runs a river that disappears into the Slip and reappears a short walk away. It's here that Jules and Sylvie throw their wish rocks despite the rule to never go there. When Sylvie runs down to the Slip to throw a wish rock but fails to return, Jules and her father are forced to cope with yet another loss to their family. At the same time, a baby vixen names Senna is born. She loves to run and she's fast. She's also kenneb, an animal born to help a human. As Senna grows, Jules tries to navigate life after Sylvie. After an encounter with Senna that leads to the Grotto, a special place filled with rocks and tokens to honor the deceased, Jules decides to throw one more wish rock for Sylvie. But there are dangers in the forest and Jules gets caught in the middle. Senna throws herself between Jules and danger and saves Jules's life, sacrificing her own. In light of Senna's sacrifice, Jules is able to begin living her life again.

Maybe a Fox, coauthored by Kathi Appelt and Alison McGhee, is an emotional story of loss, grief, and hope. Jules, Sylvie, and Senna are very real characters with intense, real emotions. Jules and Sylvie's bond and relationship, although only visible in the first few chapters of the book, is poetically shown to the reader through their interactions, making Sylvie's death all the more real and tragic for the reader. Jules struggles with anger and sadness is touching and is poetically shown through her memories and actions. In addition to the main story, there are several side stories following the girls' neighbors Sam and Elk that act as a nice backdrop to Jules, Sylvie, and Senna's story. The writing is wonderful, magical, mythic, sensitive, and hopeful. A perfect blend of multiple stories that culminate in a powerful message of love and hope.