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Heartwood Hotel #1: A True Home

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Book Review

Heartwood Hotel #1: A True Home

Mona's house is swept away in a storm. The homeless mouse wanders looking for a new home until she comes to the Heartwood Hotel. Mr. Heartwood offers Mona a place to spend the night in exchange for helping the maid, a squirrel named Tilly. Tilly is not happy about it, but comforts herself that it is only for one night. In the morning Mr. Heartwood offers Mona a position through the fall and Tilly is dismayed again. Mona soon feels at home among the employees and guests and even saves the hotel from a sleepy bear with her courage and quick thinking. The tension between Mona and Tilly escalates into a final disagreement that sends Mona running away in tears. She discovers a pack of wolves who plan to attack the Heartwood Hotel on First Winter's Eve. Mona returns to the hotel and uses an ingenious plan that involves a certain sleepy bear. She saves the Heartwood Hotel, her friends, and the First Winter's Eve festival! Tilly apologizes and they become friends.

Sort of a cross between Anne of Green Gables and The Wind in the Willows, this book is sure to appeal to readers of all ages who love personified animal tales. The characters are extra fun in their slightly predictable personalities by the fact that they are animals who live a bit like we do and a bit like themselves. Mona is a brave and courageous character who is a good example for children to follow. Black and white illustrations are sprinkled through the text, which are cute, but some color, depth, and detail would be appreciated as the story seems to warrant oil painted illustrations with lots of warmth. Full pages of illustrations would greatly enhance the telling of the tale and add a deeper sense of welcome to the words. In this story, the good guys are good guys and bad guys are bad guys, so don't look too hard at the plot, but this is the perfect story to read to children on a crisp autumn night.

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Illustrator

Stephanie Graegin

Reviewer

Karen Abbott

Rating

Outstanding

Level

Preschool, Primary

Pages

176

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