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The Tin Forest

Karen Abbott

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Book Review

The Tin Forest

Author

Helen Ward

Illustrator

Wayne Anderson

Reviewer

Karen Abbott

Rating

Outstanding

Level

Toddler, Preschool,
Primary

Pages

32

Year

2001

Publisher

Dutton Juvenile

ISBN

9780525467878

An old man dreams of living in a beautiful green forest that is full of living plants and creatures, but the reality around him is trash. Each day he burns garbage, sorts trash, and buries a bit; but the mountain of waste is too high. One day while viewing a piece of trash he gets an idea--why not build a forest from the trash? Each day a builds a bit, and then a bit more. Soon he has tin trees and tin birds and tin cats, an entire forest of tin. But it is quiet. It is not quite the forest that he has always dreamed about, until one day a bird visits. The bird returns the next day carrying seeds like birds do. As the seed grows and other seeds develop the tin trees are soon wrapped in vines and surrounded by flowers. Animals move in and soon this is forest full of sounds and smells and beauty. It is just the forest he dreamed of now, and he has creatures to share it with.

The theme of this book is both ecological and motivational: if you can't do everything, at least do something and bit by bit the little things will make big changes. The illustrations and text both contribute beautifully to this theme. The words describe the old man's feelings and desires while the pictures show a transition from the dirty and grey shades of metal to living colors. Perhaps the element that is the most fun is finding the things hidden in the dusky metal forest as they gain living counterparts in the thriving forest growth. A secondary theme is the necessity of companionship and beauty which also transforms and inspires the heart. The reader hopes the best for the lonely old man who dares to dream himself into a more beautiful world, and who succeeds. This is an especially great book for environmentallyl conscious people and dreamers who can see and build a world beyond the one we inhabit now.