



[Home](#) > The Land of Neverendings

The Land of Neverendings

Books Reviewed:

[The Land of Neverendings](#) [1]

Issue:

[227](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Rebecca Butler](#) [3]

~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

Holly (aged 15) and Emily (11) are sisters. Holly is disabled with seizures, impaired vision and lack of oxygen. As the story opens, Holly has just died from a violent seizure. One of the sisters' favourite pastimes was for Emily to tell Holly stories about her favourite teddy bear, Bluey. The bear lives in an imaginary land called Smockeroon.

The imaginary land is one of the things Emily misses most when her sister is dead. She even begins to dream that animals from Smockeroon come to visit her. There is a doorway between Smockeroon and what is termed 'the Hard World?', that is to say our world. But that door has been broken. As a result, a black toad of despair has forced its way into the imaginary world, spreading gloom. Bereaved humans like Emily must take the lead in searching for the Sturvey, the authority that can establish order in the other world. Will their quest succeed? Will Emily's dearest wish be fulfilled, to see Holly and Bluey again?

Saunders does not shrink from giving an accurate and piercing account of the grief and desolation that afflict young people who are bereaved. But she casts such a sense of humanity and resilience over the grief that her book becomes uplifting. The inchoate desire sensed by every child that toys might come to life is here expanded to a global view of life and experience. The book has no illustrations as such. But it is illuminated by countless instances of intertextuality, references abounding to C.S. Lewis, A.A. Milne and Lewis Carroll to name only three.

The risk in such a narrative is that the character who dies at the opening becomes a mere cipher. But Emily's memories of her deceased sister are so vivid and so real that she remains an active protagonist in this captivating story. All children may benefit from reading Saunders's book. But for children who have suffered a bereavement it will be specially beneficial.

Source URL (retrieved on Jan '21): <http://wvjxyve.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/227/childrens-books/reviews/the-land-of-neverendings>

Links:

[1] <http://wvjxyve.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/the-land-of-neverendings>

[2] <http://wvjxyve.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/227>

[3] <http://wvjxyve.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/rebecca-butler>