



Luna Loves Art

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~~Editors Choice:~~

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Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

Luna greets us with her irrepressible smile and equally irrepressible hair. Excitement radiates from her ? she is going with her class on a school trip. In fact everyone is looking forward to it ? except Finn. The art gallery is impressive ? and so are the paintings. There is so much to see and do. Luna is completely engaged; Finn is not ? there is clearly something wrong. ?Maybe he needs a friend? says Mum. So Luna makes the effort but it is when the class encounter Douanier Rousseau?s *Surprised* that Finn is able to express what he is really feeling, while *Family Group* by Henry Moore unlocks a bit more. Soon Finn is able to enjoy the outing with his new friend Luna.

This is a subtle story that does not just introduce a young audience to some of the most iconic works of modern and contemporary art (Louise Bourgeois? great metal spider towers over the children, Van Gogh?s *Sunflowers* spill out of their frame), it is also about the stories even children hide. We see Luna getting ready with her Dad who drops her off at the school gates. We learn that her Mum is a parent helper. And what about Finn? Coelho does not describe his background but through his encounter with the art we appreciate Finn?s circumstances. There will be young readers who will recognise this sort of situation and both empathise and sympathise. The text is direct and immediate with a poet?s eye for phrase and timing. Fiona Lumbers in her illustrations captures the mood and atmosphere. There is a sense of space as the class moves across each double spread in the gallery ? but there is the moment when Finn explodes; a neat series of vignettes. She reproduces the art subtly ? this will intrigue not overwhelm and young readers who get the opportunity will find themselves recognising the real work; not least because the inside covers introduce a selection in a lovely mixture. The design is exemplary; the text clearly placed on each page inviting reading as the eye is invited to look. Recommended.

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