



Leaf

Stephen Michael King

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A GREEN TALE FOR ALL AGES An enduring friendship sprouts between boy and plant.

When a little boy runs in a panic from a haircut, a bird sees to it that his luxuriously follicated head is put to good use and drops a single seed right on top. Time passes, and wait...could it be? Something grows. A leaf! Instead of trying to rid himself of his new living hairstyle, the boy learns how to make the leaf grow, and, in turn, winds up growing a lot himself.

Leaf Details

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From Reader Review Leaf for online ebook

Rebecca Ann says

This book would be best for one on one instead of storytime because the few words included are onomatopoeias. This is essentially a visual story of a young boy (I thought it was a girl the whole way through) who is fleeing from a haircut. While he's outside a seed drops on his head and sprouts into a leaf. Eventually his caretaker catches up to him and cuts off his hair and the leaf, but the boy plants it in the ground and it grows into a lovely tree. There's a cute little twist at the end as well.

The illustrations are gorgeously sketchy and simplistic pen and watercolor with a limited color palette of mostly moss green, sky blue, dirt brown, and muted yellow.

red flags: none

Dolly says

[when we see him grown up with a family standing beside a tree that grew from the seed (hide spoiler)]

Joella www.cinjoella.com says

Wowzer! This one was amazing. I love good wordless picture books, and this one is golden!

Jaq says

Charming tale.

Margie aka The Bumble Girl says

Although LEAF was published back in 2009 it is a new favorite! My boys purchased this adorable book for their baby brother because of its memorable and sweet illustrations.

The book is told mostly through it's illustrations - words are very minimal, and that's what we love about this story so very much!

We are assuming that LEAF is the boys name - he seems like a happy little boy who loves to play and get dirty, like all little boys do. In the beginning of the book, there is what we assume to be is his mother, who wants to cut his longish hair. And of course, like most little kids, he does not want to get a haircut and runs away.

Once outside, a bird drops a seed onto his messy hairy head and out sprouts a tiny twig. With the sun, rain and his little adventure with his puppy, Leaf and his twig enjoy their freedom and time with nature for the

day.

Leaf then returns home for his bath and bedtime. He then dreams about his twig which then takes a turn into a nightmare. So when his mother is waiting with the scissors again the next morning, he does not run away and does what he has to do. Mom cuts his hair, twig and all... we are so very sad. But relieved when we see Leaf take his twig and plants it outside.

As Leaf grows up - so does his hair and twig. We see Leaf turn into an older boy, teen, young man and then a father. And through each milestone, Leaf visits his twig which has grown up right along with him - a small tree into a huge one. Lots of memories have been left to our imagination.

It is such a touching story. I was all teary-eyed by the time I finished the end of the book. The illustrations really do reach out to you and you cannot help but react to how Leaf is feeling and what he goes through. Actions do speak louder than words. This book clearly comes from the authors heart - his dislike of social uniformity, the loss of his hearing at the age of 8 and his passion for art and books.

I highly recommend this sweet book to be shared with children a year old and up.

Alicia says

With simple line and watercolor illustrations, King tells the story of a boy, his dog and his love for nature. When a bird drops a seed on the boy's head, a sprout starts to grow. With the help of his dog the boy waters and cares for the sprout growing on top of his head. Until his mother cuts his hair, and with it the sprout. King's illustrations makes use of a lot of white space, allowing for the focus to remain on the boy and his dog. Aside from a bit of onomatopoeia used as sound effects, this is beautifully done wordless story.

In the end the boy takes the cut sprout and pile of hair clipping, plants them in the ground, and watches the sprout grow into a tree, making *Leaf* a great selection for a program or booklist dedicated to Earth Day or simple acts of environmentalism. While the target audience is ages 4-8, I think that even older children and adults will adore this story.

Lisa Vegan says

This wordless (except for words for sound effects) picture book was a nice surprise. I found it fun and delightful. It's a book pre-readers can read to themselves after one read aloud, I think. It's a funny and lovely and whimsical fantasy story. I absolutely loved the dog. I also loved the leaf (leaves) and what happens with it/them. The ludicrous occurrences are amusing, and this is a very creative story. The illustrations are just perfect, although I admit that it took a while for me to realize that the child was a boy and not a girl. It's a wonderful book for kids who are attuned to nature, and that is most kids.

Kathryn says

Told through illustrations (and the occasional written "sound effect"), "Leaf" reveals the surprising and delightful consequences of a little boy who runs outside to escape getting a haircut. The ending made me smile and one of the "morals" of the story could be that sometimes something you fear leads to something

you love. Though I wasn't quite as captivated by this title as I was by King's excellent "Mutt Dog" this is still a pleasant story and one I would recommend to King's fans.

Lynley says

A great surrealist picture book with no words apart from onomatopoeia and mimesis.

Given that almost all stories about kids and dogs are white boys, I was actually a little disappointed to find the kid isn't a girl (I'd thought he was, due to the long hair).

The story reminds me of that creepy Tooheys Extra Dry ad with the Yamasuki soundtrack.

Jo Oehrlein says

There's no narrative text or dialogue in this book, but there is some onomatopoeia.

The story is about a girl who ends up with a plant growing on her head. Her mother cuts her hair (and the plant) off. The girl plants the sprout and it grows to a tree as she grows.

Erin says

Wordless, but includes a couple sound-effect words

Audience: ages 4+, both boys and girls, the environmentally friendly, gardeners, learners/the imaginative
Appeal: This is a clever little book in which a young boy, running away from a haircut, gets a seed dropped on his head by a bird. And a leaf grows there (it kinda looks like the lightbulb of an idea)! The young boy tries to learn how to care for his leaf when his mother gives him a haircut and it's removed. Sad, he plants the little leaf. And it grows into a nice big tree alongside the boy who also grows up. The book ends with a bird dropping a seed (from the tree) onto the head of the boy's dog.

Application: I would use this novel to show the importance of dedication. The boy loved his leaf and did everything he knew possible to care for it. And his hard work, in the end, paid off! It also has a slight environmental scant due to the fact that it's a leaf he's taking care of--but that seems minor to me compared to the other themes.

Award: Stephen Michael King's books have been on many Australian children's book award lists, but not any that I can document.

Jack Kirby and the X-man says

There has certainly been a buzz around this book - culminating in it being announced as an Honour Book in the Early Childhood section by the Children's Book Council of Australia.

I think this hype ruined the book for me!

Early Childhood includes a pretty large range of abilities - from a newborn unable to focus properly through to an almost-reading 5-year-old. This wizzed above my son's head at about 30,000 feet.

It is a simple tale of a young boy avoiding a haircut - then discovering a bird has dropped a seed in his hair, which grows into a small sapling.

I think the sequence of growing up with a tree was more emotive in Shaun Tan and Gary Crew's Memorial.

Mrs. MA says

How does one make a book with so few words, yet so much emotion? Ask Stephen Michael King, he is an expert.

Educateempower says

I stumbled across this book whilst I was shuffling through the K section of the picture books.

leaf21

The green cover stood out (as I was looking for some more environmentally themed books) so I pulled it off the shelf and quietly read the story.

Stephen Michael King has written some fantastic books that children love and this one is another book for children to enjoy.

Leaf contains little language which is fantastic as it allows the reader to form their own version of the story.

It is wonderful to encourage young readers to let their imagination flow. Children love being given ownership of their own learning and ideas and graphic novels and picture books can allow this creativity to flow.

Leaf shows the love of nature that children can have when given the chance. It also shows the adult world and how everything needs to be neat, tidy and regimented. A sad story on adults behalf!

In this magical story a little boy grows his own seedling in his hair and loves it, cares for it and shares many adventures with it. He spends every waking minute finding the best way to care for his seedling.

Unfortunately it's time for a haircut and the adult world tries to take his small tree away from him. However,

his determination and resilience shines through and he continues to care for the tree as he grows older.

This is a beautifully drawn book which not only intrigues the reader but really hits the spot on how we need to take a step back and let the natural world become a part of our daily lives.

Take some time out to read this with a child (and by yourself) you will feel refreshed and inspired to make changes in your world.

Kara says

I am not a child for this, but I went back my childhood. The book was just. . .wow.

I remember buying it for the illustrations itself, and I didn't actually realize that there is no text in the entire story, except for the sound effects used; illustrations itself would give you the story, and I really would like to have a notebook edition of this. LOL

And as for how the story went, it was very imaginative, and I guess if texts were laid on it, it would probably hide meanings from each line for children to understand, it was a very good idea to be just illustrative, and readers itself would give the meaning of it.
