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Forever Family

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Editor's Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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This story covers some of the same ground as Jacqueline Wilson's **The Illustrated Mum** and will appeal to a similar age group. At the beginning of the story, Pearl is living with a kind and understanding foster mother and has a caring social worker who is looking for a 'forever family' to adopt her and give her a stable and loving home.

But Pearl's mother is still alive, miles away in a psychiatric hospital and Pearl longs for her, remembering only the happy rainbow covered parts of their life together, and not the times when her mother's behaviour was erratic, when she drank too much and when Pearl had to fend for herself. Believing that her mother will be waiting for her, Pearl runs away to the canal boat in Leicester where they had lived, unaware that there is a nationwide search, at one stage, sleeping in a hollow tree, like a character from an Enid Blyton novel.

Of course, her mother isn't there but Pearl finds Amber who is now living in their old home. Amber is a children's book illustrator, interested like Pearl's mother in art and making things look beautiful and people happy. There is a harrowing scene when Pearl visits her mother in hospital and with the support of those around her, finally comes to realise that although she will always love her mother, she knows that she is unable to live with her.

This is an emotionally honest book with enough going on to keep the reader's interest. The ending though requires some suspension of disbelief. Amber, a single person, no relation, living on a houseboat with uncertain income and who has earlier been questioned by the police for keeping Pearl for several days without informing anyone, manages to become first her foster parent and then her 'forever family'. But hey, perhaps we shouldn't knock a happy ending. There's nothing wrong with ending on a smile.

Running Order:

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