



Storm Whale

Books Reviewed:

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Reviewer:

[Jill Bennett](#) [3]

~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

?Bleak was the day and the wind whipped down / When I and my sisters walked to town.? Thus begins a first person narration telling what happens when three sisters, hair flowing wildly, skirts billowing, make their way, along the sea path buffeted by cold winds and down onto the beach. There?s a sense of exhilaration until they are confronted by the sight of a whale tossed up on the hard wet shore: ?Dark as a demon, dull of eye, / Waiting in silence to drift ? or die.?

Disregarding the weather, the girls battle all through the day, tossing buckets of water over the massive creature but have no success in refloating the creature. As dusk rolls down, they?re forced to abandon the whale to its fate and return to their beach shack. There they spend a restless night and next day rise to find the storm has blown itself out. Back they hurry, still in their pyjamas, down onto the beach and there they discover something wonderful has happened.

This is a book where verbal and visual images work in perfect harmony. The rhythm of Sarah Brennan?s lyrical text echoes the ceaseless swell of the rolling waves breaking against the shore; while every one of Jane Tanner?s illustrations, starting in black and white and then moving into full colour, seems to capture the traces of the author?s words with images that linger in the mind. The spread looking over the stranded whale and the storm-tossed sea; the close-up of the whale?s eye; the sisters waist deep in water almost overwhelmed by the waves; or safe, wrapped up warm in the fire light glow of the seaside shack all seem to have been reproduced from a sketchbook chronicling the events of the unfolding drama as they happened.

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