

Beverly, Right Here

Kate DiCamillo

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Poignant and with heartbreak and touches of humor throughout, Kate DiCamillo's *Beverly, Right Here* is a tale about learning to trust in others and in oneself, related by fourteen-year-old Beverly Tapinski.

There is nothing left for Beverly in the house by the orange trees. Her dog is dead; her mother is an alcoholic; one of her best friends is gone. So Beverly leaves. She winds up in a small town where a cast of colorful characters, including weary Mr. Denby and warmhearted Lola, show her that sometimes it's okay to let people in.

The story is uncomplicated, but its straightforwardness and realism are engaging. Some questions are unanswered, including whether Beverly will stay with Lola and what comes of her mother, pulling attention from book's themes. DiCamillo's short sentences make the book near poetic, and the established rhythm keeps the story moving. Elsewhere, choppy syntax mirrors Beverly's inner turmoil; it's a beautiful added element.

Each of DiCamillo's characters helps to shape who Beverly becomes. Their individual quirks and charms—one character has fashion model dreams; another has their books—make them memorable. Beverly is the hardest to get to know because she is so afraid to let anyone see her. As she learns to trust, her distance changes, but it's never fully clear what she is feeling. Her inner feelings must be pieced together from the memories and bits of verse that she recalls.

As hopeful as it is heartbreaking, *Beverly, Right Here* offers up messages of trust and self-worth that are important for all young people to hear.

VIVIAN TURNBULL (September / October 2019)

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