

Christmas Tree

Elizabeth M. Scott

Kay Whytock Jackson, Illustrator

AuthorHouse (Oct 30, 2009)

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The holiday images in this picture book evoke classic Christmas memories.

A young girl of eight is responsible for decorating her home for Christmas in this picture book, *Christmas Tree*, consisting of the impressions of author Elizabeth Scott's childhood. Colorful holiday images and descriptions of the author's memories create a warm yuletide mood.

Scott tells of the family's mood change after Thanksgiving, when lists are made for Santa, there are goodies to bake, and the house is ready to be decorated. She has found the perfect tree, and from that year on, finding the tree and decorating the house will be her responsibility. With the animals tucked in the barn, there is a magical snowfall on Christmas Eve, followed by Elizabeth spotting the Christmas star, reminding her of the real reason and importance of the season, which she shares with the reader.

The plot of the book is simple enough, filled with an eight-year-old's impressions of the magic and excitement of Christmastime. Scott creates the classic Noel images of baking treats, decorating, and wrapping gifts. She implements these in a simple rhyme scheme: "Plans taking shape. / There's so much to do. / Lots of goodies to bake, / And pies, quite a few."

While the ideas and rhyme come through, this book as a read-aloud is choppy. The abundance of commas in some areas, occasional absence of commas in others, capitalized letters midsentence, and sentence breaks in difficult places cause problems. Forced sentences added only to make the text conform to four-line stanzas contribute to the offbeat lyricism of this book.

Illustrations by Kay Whytock Jackson are in crayon or colored pencil, with natural-looking colors. The basic images set the tone and capture the seasonal feel of the book. But many of the illustrations are at strong angles with odd perspectives. In the picture of the girl decorating the tree, the horizon line where the wall meets the floor is at two different levels on either side of the tree.

Christmas Tree is a simple, charming story of the author's holiday memories.

BETH VANHOUTEN (June 2, 2014)

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