



Grown-Ups, the World, and Me!

Judith Lazar

Roger Pare, Illustrator

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This book makes parents think about clever questions, some very serious, that might come out of a child's mouth.

Though it takes the form of a picture book for children, Judith Lazar's *Grown-Ups, the World and Me!* presents a child's-eye view of complicated questions as well as funny observations. By discussing subjects like divorce, friendship, and even war, the book gives parents a gentle entry into raising some of these issues with their own kids. Along with that, it features some cute humor and colorful illustrations by Roger Pare that will appeal to children on the older end of the picture-book reading age. Translated from French by Elisabeth Lore, the book's language might prove difficult for some, but it is also well engineered for precocious children or for parent-child reading time.

Grown-Ups, the World and Me! is divided into a number of short stories told from the perspective of a curious young boy. The book often confronts children's perceptions of time, circumstances, and how growing up changes people. In "Old Photos," the boy describes seeing photographs of his grandmother and grandfather when they were young, and ruminates "it's funny to think that they possibly crossed paths in the street and that they never had any idea what was ahead for them."

One of the sadder stories, "Seals," involves a teacher telling the children that seals are endangered. A classmate begins to plot future ways to help, and he and the narrator decide that they'll have a chance to do so—in a decade, when they finish school, if the seals are still around. In "The Price of Growing Up," the narrator questions why adults will hug a crying child but don't respond the same way to a homeless person who might just need help.

Other stories are less serious but still clever. In "Friendship," the boy bristles at having to play with some of the boys his mother invites over because they're "practically the same age" even though he doesn't like them—and suggests flipping the situation to invite over adults his mother's age without her input.

All these stories are accompanied by Pare's whimsical line drawings with a bright color palette, which produce a likable, comic effect. *Grown-Ups, the World and Me!* offers parents an opportunity to answer questions posed by both the narrator and their own children.

JEFF FLEISCHER (December 9, 2014)

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