ForeWord Reviews

PICTURE BOOKS

Sophie and Rose
Kathryn Lasky
Wendy Anderson Halperin, illustrator
Candlewick Press
978-0-7636-0459-2
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While exploring the attic, Sophie finds an old but charming doll that previously belonged to Sophie's mother and grandmother. With Rose, who seems wise in the ways of little girls, Sophie enjoys a relationship of simple pleasures and unconditional love. Rose is subjected to well-intentioned hair styling, accidental falls from windowsills and even being left outside overnight in the garden. The more cracks, split seams and missing parts Rose develops, the softer, cuddlier and more lovable she is to Sophie.

Halperin's detailed pencil and watercolor illustrations both complement and extend the simple yet magical story of versatile author Lasky. Each page's text is placed on pastel semi-circles positioned at the bottom center of the page. Some illustrations are full page while others expand the story along the side or across the top of the larger picture with small blocked images that portray a sequence of activities. In one such set, Sophie's mom is sewing Rose's stuffing back into her arm with the large drawing showing Sophie attentively watching the operation while four smaller ones along the side of the page let the reader know exactly what Sophie is doing to assure Rose's speedy recovery.

Although the theme of Sophie and Rose is not a new one, the effective collaboration between author and illustrator, text and pictures, makes the book a true representation of all that is wondrous in picture books. Here is a title made for cozy lap-sharing which will be enjoyed not only by children within the suggested K-3 age range, but also by those who have had a special friendship with a doll or stuffed animal. Find a comfortable spot and a daughter, niece, neighbor or grandchild who will listen to the story and explore the pictures with you over and over again.

Janis Ansell