



The View from Here

Lynne Hinton

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Lynne Hinton's charming *The View From Here* interlaces recollections of childhood days of wonder in the woods with themes of protesting environmental degradation.

Katie Sinclair isn't quite sure why she decided it was worth it to climb up in a tree and stay put, despite the bulldozers bearing down on it. It could be that she was trying to get away from the aftermath of her divorce, or her long-standing distance from her father, or the many small and large tragedies of her past.

But people show up for Katie. They come to see her each day, making sure she is still safe up in her tree. Their actions show that Katie's North Carolina community is as committed to her as she is to the woodpecker she hopes to save by preventing the forest's demolition.

Character relationships shine as the stars of the story, especially between Katie and her friends like Ray, Charlene, and Lily Carol. Their humorous dialogue softens the intense drama of various treetop hijinks.

When it seems like Katie is making trouble for herself, her friends are the ones to remind her how good she can be. In spite of the slow unveiling of just how isolated and unhappy the narrator is, it is clear that considerable love and care surround her.

Descriptions of natural beauty and the history of birdwatching and bird habitat preservation give depth to the story. Chapter transitions are at times abrupt; there is little change in the scenery, so chapters shift through immediate plunges into the next conversations with visitors to the tree.

The View From Here is a poignant meditation on what makes the natural environment worth saving; it also shows how integral relationships are to saving human beings.

LAURA LEAVITT (May/June 2018)

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