

★ **When Dad's Hair Took Off****Jörg Mühle**

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A father's balding inspires far-flung, humorous adventures in Jörg Mühle's winsome chapter book *When Dad's Hair Took Off*.

A child narrates this vibrant story about the fate of their father's hair: wanting "a life of its own," it springs loose during his grooming routine, and her father scrambles after it. His hair sails out of the bathroom and into the wider world, at first seeming to settle on the grass. Then it travels over the hills and into town, to a restaurant, to the zoo, and even to the sea.

With all the relish of a tall tale, deadpan timing, and choice vocabulary (with words like *rootling* and *hullabaloo*), the story morphs and leaps from one improbable act to the next. The hair is personified: it shares fond musings (it and the father had "done everything together," from attending kindergarten to going to the dentist), and it sends mischievous postcards, too. Comical illustrations further enhance the silliness, depicting the father's effort to get his crowning glory back.

The messes that result from the chase are hyperbolic: plumbing fixtures tip over, townsfolk tumble by the wayside, and objects fly as the now-bald man, clad in a house robe, races around with a butterfly net. The hair, in turn, is drawn as individual prickles that move in capricious streams and sometimes camouflage themselves. The unnamed child's clear amusement about what's now become family lore is also a highlight; they even include their own elaborate diagram and express affection toward their father, whose vanity is never stated outright.

In the fabulistic chapter book *When Dad's Hair Took Off*, harrumphing desperation takes over when a man seeks his wayward hair, tracking it through a bevy of shenanigans.

KAREN RIGBY (September / October 2023)

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