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Posted on 10 March 2019 By Katherine Applegate

Delightful I love that our protagonist is a tree and we see the world through the eyes of this still giant I loved Katherine's descriptions of leaves and branches moving in the wind and the interplay of animals Trees, our planets memories They are also the planets lungs They help to cool us down and bring beauty to us So yes, I love the tree at the center of the story The tree watches the lives of those around it, animals and humans We meet many of the animals The story really revolves around Samar, a girl who is a muslim who moves into this neighborhood Now this neighborhood is a collection of many different types of people and races and skins It has been very opening but for reasons of the political mood of the country, the muslims aren't popular in this place Someone carves the word LEAVE into the tree and the family feels a little nervous and afraid Samar makes a wish on this special wishing tree that she wants a friend She is very lonely So the tree who normally just holds the wishes begins to make plans using the animals to get Samar to interact with other people It really is a fantastic story It's heartwarming and the writing is wonderful She captures what it would be like to be a tree The beginning starts a little slow but it works up to a fantastic ending It's a nice short and sweet read for middle grades and above. Five enthusiastic stars for this sweet, beautiful, heartwarming story It's charming, and funny, and big hearted, and touching, and imparts a lovely and timely message without it being saccharine or manipulative I loved every page. Trees Can't Tell Jokes, But They Can Certainly Tell Stories Red Is An Oak Tree Who Is Many Rings Old Red Is The

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Neighborhood Wishtree People Write Their Wishes On Pieces Of Cloth And Tie Them To Red S Branches Along With Her Crow Friend Bongo And Other Animals Who Seek Refuge In Red S Hollows, This Wishtree Watches Over The Neighborhood You Might Say Red Has Seen It All Until A New Family Moves In Not Everyone Is Welcoming, And Red S Experiences As A Wishtree Are Important Than Ever ALL THE STARS This is THE middle grade book of fall 2017 and it should be on the pre order list for every single library and middle grade classroom in the country While it may be listed as for ages 10 14, I would read this book aloud as far down as first grade WISHTREE is at first glance a middle grade novel about a tree and animals, but WISHTREE is also, and importantly, a message book It uses the medium of a beautiful middle grade story to spread a message about wishes and inclusion and friendship and religious tolerance in a time of great turmoil in the US And yes, it also has great dialogue between Red the oak tree and Red s animal friends that s what will first hook kids But as teachers and parents share this book with children, Red and the animals will fall to the background as discussions about big topics arise..big topics that we do need to be talking about What Applegate has done with this book is exquisite, as she has wrapped this vital message up in a book that is incredibly accessible to to even the most reluctant middle grade reader short chapters, simple sentences and manageable vocabulary are the perfect venue for a message like this I will be recommending this as a staff book club pick this year and hope to have it read aloud to as many classes as possible in my school It s THAT good And THAT important Please see the book website for resources and to register for a Wishing Day event on 9 28 17 Thanks to NerdCampMI and the publisher for the advance review copy of this title all opinions are my own This galley will now be passed on to the kidlitexchange review network. Katherine Applegate s The One and Only Ivan is one of the finest books I ve ever read Not one of the finest children s book Not one of the finest illustrated book although the drawings are breathtaking No, one of the finest books, period I have harangued countless adults to please, please give Ivan a chance So it pains me to say that Wishtree is no The One and Only Ivan Yes, as is in Applegate s 2013 Newbery Medal winner, Wishtree has an

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important message We should accept people even if they re different and get to know them before we judge them But whereas a gorilla as narrator worked so perfectly in The One and Only Ivan, Red the oak tree as narrator seems twee And who is the audience for this book The message, as portrayed in the book, is probably too subtly expressed for most 8 to 9 year olds to follow but too heavy handed for adults, even kid lit lovers like myself. In the interest of full disclosure, I received this book from NetGalley, Macmillan Children s Publishing Group and Feiwel Friends in exchange for an honest review. Wishtree is like an iceberg small on the surface but immensely powerful underneath This is another quietly powerful book by adored author Katherine Applegate. Beautiful story about family and community. Beautiful, unique, touching But most of all, real It s just what I needed to read today, this week, this year. Rereading and loving Red s voice Wise and gentle When bad things happen, he s learned you have to stand tall and reach deep I cannot wait to give my copy of this book to a kid in need of a wonderful read It is absolutely beautiful It s poetic without being pretentious and narrated by a tree older than any existing human And yet, this tree is humane than anyone I know The tree is an observer It philosophizes about life and shares his thoughts with his not always delightful animal tenants It doesn t act, because it cannot move like a human can. But the tree feels compelled to do something, or say something rather, when a new family moves into one of the two houses in front of it and some people express their unhappiness about having Muslims for neighbors It s a deeply moving story about love, friendship and acceptance, as well as the importance of preserving nature that harms us in no way Like one of the animals mentioned in the story, why would you kill something that literary gives you life oxygen Not only that, but this is a page turner It s short but still full of substance Plus it contains great illustrations that help visualize scenes and add to the lyrical atmosphere A must buy, read, review Blog Youtube Twitter Instagram Google Bloglovin With Red, Katherine Applegate introduces another quiet, resilient protagonist who like the caged gorilla in The One and Only Ivan, speaks movingly to a noisy, belligerent world Red is a caring oak who describes her life as a leafy shelter for generations of animals, and as a wishtree for humans It s easy

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to suspend disbelief with her wise voice, active mind and caring soul She knows well the habits of creatures in her world and treats readers to an insightful analysis though the habits of humans could be a bit trickier for her Two hundred and sixteen rings, and I still haven't figured them out The pacing starts out slowly, with early chapters focused almost entirely on the natural world, but eventually we get to meet the human at the novel's center Samar, a recent Muslim refugee, is lonely and in need of a friend When a teenager carves a hateful message into Red's trunk, she worries about its effect on Samar and her family Amidst all this, the woman who owns the property threatens to cut down Red, having forgotten the story of her ancestors and the beginning of all the wishes As much as she doesn't want to be chopped down, Red still persists to help Samar So she and her best buddy, a crow named Bongo, begin to scheme about helping Samar make a connection to the community, with poignant results. Applegate often untangles thorny subjects for young readers In Wishtree, she takes on anti-Muslim bigotry, handling the subject with a light touch, so the treatment doesn't feel heavy There's sly humor, and fun friendships involving the tree, talking animals, and humans, mixed in with some meaty scientific information about trees and animals The story is sprinkled with strikingly beautiful language, but never showy My favorite was, the stars freckled the sky I adored Red And her story could teach us a lot about kindness, friendship, family, heritage, and so much If you find yourself standing near a particularly friendly looking tree listen up

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