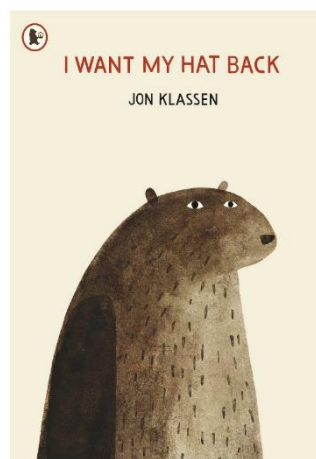


I want my hat back

Title: I want my hat back
Author and illustrator: Jon Klassen
Spanish translator: Jesús Ortiz Pérez del Mollino
Spanish publisher: Milrazones
City: Santander
Year published in Spain: 2012
Number of pages: 32 págs.
Book cover: Hardcover
ISBN: 978-84-938927-3-9



Two of the most prestigious awards in children's books illustration were given to Jon Klassen thanks to this picture book, being those: the Caldecott Medal – awarded by the American Library Association (ALA), and the Kate Greenaway Medal – conferred by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP)

His illustrations are characterized by the less becoming the more: more eloquent, more intelligent and more entertaining. In this review we will try to share the reason why Jon Klassen is able to take us back again and again to that time of half-raised socks and half-undone braids.

Analysis

Summary. Some bear's hat has disappeared and he wants to have it back. So he looks for it and asks some animals he comes across along the way: a fox, a frog, a rabbit, a turtle... what he finds are all kinds of answers and even a request for help to mount a rock.

Iconographic and visual aspects. It is not the first time we talk about Jon Klassen and his work as an illustrator: characterized by a plain draw with a white background and simple figures, as well as with minimal decorative detail, which defines the scene, and basic colours, predominantly brown and grey tones. All of this characteristics illustrate this picture book too. However, the story is jelled in details that may be seen at first glance but make the reader feel as a detective in search of the clues that Klassen is scattering in each and every one of the pages.

With only a few lines, he perfectly places us in a determined space, a forest in this case: a couple of branches, a water lily, a rock...

In this forest we find a particular fauna which will shape the tale together with its main character.

Hand in hand with the forest and animals, humour is always present. It owns a naughty touch and it is mainly determined by the figures' eyes, which are simple on the shape but effective in the message that it wants to transmit in the different situations.

On the other hand, focusing on the narrated story, the repetitive narrative outline that leads the image as much as the text is the frame that holds the story – and also collaborates emphasizing the humoured and naughty touch. Moreover, in this picture book the narrative element of the turning point that is usually marked with the text is also highlighted with colour. By this the author achieves to get all the attention on what is

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happening in that moment – trigger of what will happen next. And there can again be found, the eyes that tell everything.

Textual aspects. The simplicity reappears on the text, with short and concise sentences that are full of substance.

In the first part there is a succession of dialogues, some more coherent than others, with some surprising or, rather, unexpected elements between the main character and the animals that he comes across.

The aforementioned repetition is the one who prevails until this part, contributing with those intelligent humour touches and whispering that the best is yet to come. So far, we can only have a feeling that something is about to happen.

The writer uses graphic resources – alternating black and grey depending on the character that is talking, so that we can understand even better those dialogues. *Almost* always black and grey... From the previously mentioned turning point on, Klassen does an excellent backflip to guide us to that fantastic finish. Fantastic because of its irreverence. Yessir.

Once again, a perfect match between picture and text; a text in charge of bringing that picture to life. Thanks to the words he uses in a reserved and precise way – the exact ones at the right time, the image comes to a different life, it is completed and understood, it becomes funny and entertaining, and it contains a humour that calls to our intelligence for making us draw our own conclusions about the ending.

Once again, the eyes of the characters make sense from those dialogues on because of the words he writes and how and when he writes them. Nothing is random, form and substance, everything is adjusted down to the last detail to cause the final and desired effect.

Conclusion

Jon Klassen likes to put the reader's capacity to the test, no matter the age or purpose, if the reader stays in the surface it is okay, they will find a simple story that can be more or less entertaining. But, alas, if the reader decides to scratch a little – something that the author provokes in a cheeky way because of the simplicity of the illustration. They will cross a line in which the possibilities of going back over and over again to those drawings become the option to decode the messages that could have been unseen. Or maybe we have decoded all of them and there is no more messages, who knows... that is where the test lies.

How smart you are Jon! You know we like to dig and see what hides behind; using those expressionless eyes in your characters that tell so well, speak so well and show so well.

Something else

Lucky us this is the first book of a trilogy (at least that is the case in Spain so far) called Hat Trilogy, formed also by *This is not my hat* and *We found a hat*. Triple wisdom and fun. Also noted his work in animation films and the video of U2 *I'll go crazy if I don't go crazy tonight*.