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# Toby Alone

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

Known in its original French as **Tobie Lolness**, de Fombelle's novel has already enjoyed wide acclaim and won various awards. Its hero, 13-year-old Toby 'just one and a half millimetres tall' is one of a miniature community whose world is that of a huge oak tree, where human and non-human forms of life co-exist, though not necessarily on equal terms. Toby's father, an eminent scientist, has made a significant discovery about the tree's sources of energy but feels unable to reveal the full nature of his findings. The family's exile and imprisonment follow but Toby manages to escape and, from now on, dedicates himself to the liberation and rehabilitation of his parents. It is a pursuit which sees numerous journeys through the tree's many branches and numerous encounters with some very unsavoury villains but also with many sources of comfort and inspirations of survival. Toby's story, part of it lived in the novel's present and part in a series of flashbacks to less frantic childhood days, makes for a fascinating, original novel, where the strong ecological dimension never diminishes the intrinsic interest of the narrative. As the boy himself reflects towards its end: 'You think your life is over once and for all, but it always turns out to be more complicated than that.' Complicated, certainly, but the many twists and turns are well worth disentangling. François Place's illustrations re-create effectively the settings and denizens of the story's fantasy arboreal world.

Running Order:

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