



Cinderella of the Nile

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

The Cinderella story can be found all around the world, often appearing in surprising places. Here Beverley Naidoo looks to Egypt, adapting a story told by Herodotus and bringing in familiar fairytale elements ? a bird that is instrumental in bringing ?Cinderella? and her prince together, three sisters, not ugly but jealous. This Cinderella lives in a real location and shares her story with characters known from history.

Here we meet Rhodopis, born in Greece, captured and enslaved, befriended by Aesop she is then sold to an Egyptian master. Like all good fairytale princesses she is both beautiful and kind. And it is her kindness that will eventually lead her to a happy ending.

Naidoo?s retelling of this richly variegated narrative that spans the ancient Mediterranean world, is straightforward and almost matter-of-fact. It is direct and accessible, an admirable quality though I would have liked a bit more of the exotic to match Vafaien?s illustrations. These are indeed exotic. Brilliant colours spring from the page, a feast for the eyes. Her style, very much her own and unique, presents some challenges to a Western audience, referencing not just her Iranian background and the miniatures from that world but also Egyptian tomb paintings, Greek vase paintings and Minoan friezes while remaining completely contemporary. This is very different to our familiar literacies but it is exciting to be faced with such vibrant images transporting us to another world to meet a lively, positive heroine.

Cinderella of the Nile is the first in series of books through which young readers will meet stories that will be both familiar yet unfamiliar combining authors and illustrators from around the world; they will be welcome.

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