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The Rabbits

By Shaun Tan, John Marsden

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Dramatically moving allegory of colonisation told from the viewpoint of native animals.

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The Rabbits By Shaun Tan, John Marsden Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 2-8-An allegorical picture book about ecological and cultural destruction, illustrated with remarkable and highly stylized art. Small, reddish-brown armadillo/numbatlike creatures describe what happens when newcomers arrive in their homeland-"The rabbits came many grandparents ago...." Their numbers and technology take over, with devastating effects: "Sometimes we had fights, but there were too many rabbits.... They chopped down our trees and scared away our friends... and stole our children." In the end, the land is devastated and the animals wonder, "Who will save us from the rabbits?" The brief, bleak text is simple, and its message fairly obvious, but it is the stunning ink, oil, and wash artwork that adds complexity and the visual experience of a culture and landscape being overrun. The sharp-angled, streamlined white rabbits in formal suits and uniforms start out the same size as their rounded unclothed compatriots, but soon take over the foreground in ever-expanding size. The tiny innocent smokestack of their first vehicle and the predatory prow of their massively looming ship become the ominous portent of mechanization that runs amok. Though aspects of both illustrations and text make the parable particularly pertinent to Australia, the nonspecific language and highly stylized art are easily generalized and parallels can be drawn to any study of colonial history. The story's point of view provides a clear understanding of, and unsentimental empathy with, the experience of indigenous cultures, while its extraordinary art offers a thought-provoking, powerful look at a land and people overwhelmed.-*Nancy Palmer, The Little School, Bellevue, WA*

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About the Author

John Marsden was born in Melbourne, Australia in 1950. In 1969 he began an Arts/Law Degree at the University of Sydney, but soon abandoned this for a series of exotic jobs. It was not until 1978 that he found a career which suited him: that of teaching. His first book, *So Much to Tell You*, was published in 1987. It won the 1988 Children's Book of the Year and the U.S.'s Christopher Medal, and was named Notable by the U.S. Library Association. After a few more books, he left teaching to write full time. *Tomorrow When the War Began*, published in 1994, was the first in a trilogy which has smashed sales records, but more importantly gripped the hearts and imaginations of young readers worldwide. After more than 25 books, he is arguably one of the best-known and best-respected novelists for young adults.

Award-winning artist and author Shaun Tan has achieved international recognition for his work, including the CBCA Picture Book of the Year Award for this book, an Honor Book Award for Memorial (with G. Crew) and *The Lost Thing*, an APA Design Award, an Honorable Mention at the Bologna Book Fair, three Aurealis Awards, and Spectrum Gold and Silver Awards. In 2001 he was named best artist at the World Fantasy Awards in Montreal. A graduate of the University of Washington in 1995, with honors in fine arts and English literature, he lives in Perth, Australia.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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