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Pretty Funny

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

Haylah Swinton wants more than anything else to be a comedian. She calls herself fat, though her friends disagree. She chooses to go by the name of Pig, a name she has reclaimed from those who bullied her; if she self-identifies as Pig, the bullies are less likely to use it as a term of abuse. Haylah lives with her mother and her four-year old brother Noah. One day in assembly at school an older boy Leo Jackson performs a comedy routine. He is a good comedian. Haylah is attracted. There is a local competition designed to identify the best young comic. Is it possible for Haylah and Leo to team up and win the competition? Is it even possible that something unimaginably better may develop for Haylah?

Despite the attractiveness of Leo and his skill as a performer, the most appealing feature of this book is the depiction of the affection and understanding between Haylah and her younger brother. The relationship between the siblings is so silly and so vibrant that at times it leaps off the page. Haylah is a very likeable protagonist. She makes some excruciating tactical errors, such as trying to intervene in her single mother's love life. The contrast between the common sense and decency Haylah demonstrates most of the time and her occasional lapses into genuine cruelty makes for an uneven response on the reader's part. But the overriding judgment on the novel must be positive. Here is a young person with ambition and drive. Bravo.

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