

## **REVIEW -**

Leila hasn't seen her mum in years. After they fled fighting in Damascus, Leila went to live with her cousin and aunt in the UK, while her mum travelled to Norway for work. Leila is finally going to see her mum again.

Instead of being greeted by her mother at the airport, Liv, her mum's colleague, is there instead. Leila feels abandoned. Her mother doesn't want to be the familiar face at the airport. Finally, Leila meets her mother, confirming Leila's fear – she is not wanted. Leila is asked to go on a quest, to track Miso, the blue fox who Leila's mother has been tracking this whole time.

The book continues with Leila and her mother's team tracking one arctic fox. The plot takes twists and turns and depicts how Amina's love is divided between her work and her daughter. Amina takes risks for Miso which she might not have taken for Leila, which amplify Leila's feelings of abandonment and rejection.

Kiran Millwood Hargrave narrates not only Leila's journey, but Miso's. I think this is significant as it demonstrates the similarities in Miso's journey and Leila's and how two different figures can have their stories so connected. They share similarities and truly mirror each other.

Tom de Freston's illustrations bring life to the words by decorating the pages with arrays of blues and greys. The illustrations tell their own stories, with colours contrasting and bringing the mood to each page. I feel like the combination between the words and the imagery is perfect and makes each page atmospheric.

This story demonstrates real acknowledgement of important topics like migration, climate change and family relationships in such an interesting way. Mother-daughter relationships are complex, and I enjoyed how Leila and her mum's struggles were depicted on the page accurately rather than written as a 'perfect' family. Major issues in everyday life are depicted in realistic ways, bringing the story to the next level.

I think Leila's mother, Amina, is such an interesting character as she made the decision to sacrifice her relationship with her daughter for her work. This is such a rare choice, and it illuminates Amina's split love for her research and her daughter. This also makes the reader consider Amina's decision and perspective. It is this which highlights Amina's interesting background and life after she chose research. Some readers might think that what she did was unforgivable, so in the story, many would frown upon her. This develops her character as it makes the reader have mixed thoughts about her. Her commitment to Miso the fox is astonishing. Amina risks her life for Miso almost as if she is her child. Leila comments on her mother's extreme love for Miso, so this is something that Leila feels.

Overall, I would recommend this book for ages 9 – 13 years as it is a hugely engaging and enlightening read. If you enjoy books following an animal's story, this is a great choice as well as if you enjoy family drama.

Kind Regards,  
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