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Permanent Rose

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Editor's Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

The latest episode in McKay's acclaimed series of stories about the endearingly eccentric Casson family features the youngest daughter, Permanent Rose. She begins the book pining for her lost friend Tom and ends it, by means of some nicely executed twists and turns in an elegantly choreographed story, flying out to meet him in New York. The novel touches on themes that another author might have treated with a much heavier hand: eldest daughter, Caddy, hovers uncertainly on the brink of marriage; middle daughter, Saffy, begins a search for her unknown father; and, meanwhile, father, Bill, leaves home and family for a young girlfriend. But the reader sees all these crises largely through Rose's eyes. For Rose, nothing is as important as her own loss; and a touching comedy results from the accidental effects of her preoccupation on everyone else's emotional turmoil. McKay has many strengths. She is witty without poking fun; and moral without moralising. She is subtle, too. It is David, brother Indigo's friend, an outsider with a history of bullying and pilfering, treated with suspicion by the girls, who makes Rose's dreams come true, while Rose remains utterly indifferent to his admiration. McKay has clarity of style and a sophistication of approach that almost make the book as right for a nearly nine-year-old like Rose as for a 15-year-old like Saffy. And it's a joy for an adult to read, too.

Running Order:

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