



Anton and the Battle

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

3

Swedish-born Ole Konnecke works as an illustrator in Germany. This is the second of his books about Anton to be published in English. Anton is a small boy in a large floppy cavalier's hat with a feather who meets his friend Luke, who is in Viking headgear. They begin a boasting contest about who is the strongest, which gradually escalates from who can lift the biggest stone to threatening one another with huge bombs. But before the reader can conclude that this is a parable about the human propensity for conflict, a small dog chases them both up a tree, where, having been there for some time, they compete about who is hungriest and thirstiest. Released from the tree, they test who is fastest at running home. It's deadpan observational comedy in the style of Charles Schulz's Peanuts cartoon; indeed, so much in the style that it could be easily mistaken for Schulz. Like stills from an animation, the pictures tell the story, making the text, which provides the dialogue between the boys, largely redundant. It has charm, but I found the pictures did produce some uncertainty in the narrative. The imaginary instruments of the boys' competition are usually indicated by being shown only in outline, but the bombs have a full colour fill, giving them substance and reality which is not, I believe, intended and providing a kind of false coda in the tale.

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