



The Explorer

Books Reviewed:

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Reviewer:

[Jane Churchill](#) [3]

~~Not a choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

Inspired by her own journey to the Amazon, Katherine Rundell's new novel is an atmospheric and vivid adventure. Set in an unspecified time past, four children find themselves catapulted into the Amazon jungle after the small aircraft they are travelling in crashes into the treetops after their pilot dies. Miraculously they survive and at first the children are suspicious of each other and argue about everything. Fred's fascination for explorers and love of reading books on survival at least helps them learn to fend for themselves. They face constant danger, hunger and night terrors but become braver and stronger when they finally work together as a team. They become more acutely aware of their surroundings noticing details such as how monkeys cover themselves with ants before taking honey from a bee's nest and then doing the same themselves. Desperate to find a way back to their families they make a raft and paddle downriver. Stopping when they see a steep cliff in front of them they climb up and stumble upon a ruined city and an inhabitant they did not expect to see. Here the plot speeds up and takes a deeper and more psychological turn.

The novel is sumptuous in its descriptions of the lush and verdant landscape ? almost too much at times ? but the story conveys a real sense of the vastness and beauty of the Amazon. There is an underlying message that one should have respect for the landscape and that exploration carries a cost and is not always a force for good. The children appear a touch unnatural to begin with but grow and develop into their individual personalities and together form an unshakeable bond of friendship through their shared experiences. Both the explorer and the children have a profound effect on each another. This is a fiercely passionate book full of love and hope. Embellished with wonderful b/w line illustrations, it's a very handsome edition indeed.

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