

LORGNETTE

Quarterly Review of Children's and Young Adults' Books

Author

Saeed, Aisha

Illustrator

Illustrated by LeUyen Pham

Reviewer

Carruth, Leah D

Pages

Unpaged

Price

\$18.99

ISBN

978-1-5344-6296-0

Publisher & Date

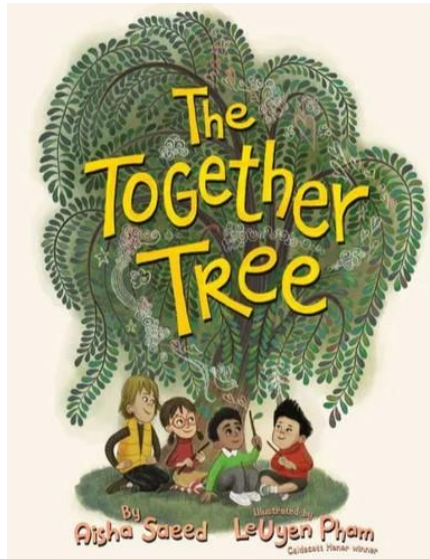
Salaam Reads, 2023

Classification

Fiction

Grade Level

K-3



Book Review: TOGETHER TREE, THE

**

What happens when you notice someone is being picked on? Do you know it is wrong but not know how to intervene? Protesting bullying is something not taught to young children, and they can stand idly by, feeling lost. Rumi starts a new school and is struggling to fit in when children tease him because he is different. He sits by himself beneath a large willow tree at recess, stirring the dirt with a stick. He is consistently picked on. One day, Asher picks up a pebble and throws it at Rumi. It makes contact and hurts Rumi's knee. Han finally steps in and asks if he can play with Rumi. Then he notices what Rumi is making in the dirt: a wonderful masterpiece. This discovery encourages other children to join in, leaving Asher by himself indoors. They eventually go inside and play there, too, including everyone.

This is an important book that helps children start talking about how to intervene when something wrong is happening. The illustrations are powerful and show different perspectives, one from above the playground as a bird's-eye view to another with everyone on the ground. When Asher hurts Rumi, Asher is drawn in an outline only, with no color on his skin or clothing. His color gradually starts coming back when the kids come back inside to join him. The author provides a powerful note about why she



Lorgnette v.36 no.4

Book Review: TOGETHER TREE, THE



wrote this story.



Heart of Texas Literature
Center

Children's and Young Adults' Books