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Quill Soup

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

Noko is a tired, hungry porcupine who seeks food from the inhabitants of a small village. However, the villagers seeing him approach are wary - he is a stranger. When Noko knocks on doors, he receives excuse after excuse from the suspicious and unwelcoming villagers. Noko is not fooled by their lies and devises a cunning plan involving making soup from his quills, a dish which he alleges is loved by the king. The villagers, intrigued and very impressed that Noko not only knows the king but also cooks for him, are keen to help and hurry to add the 'extra' ingredients he requests. In no time at all there is a satisfying (and edible!) soup for everyone to share.

The pattern of the story with the repetition of Noko's unsuccessful visits to the villagers and the gradually revealed trick he plays on them would make this a very enjoyable story to read aloud to children. Young readers are likely to be fascinated by the array of exotic animals including aardvarks, pangolins and meerkats and also by the illustrations which are intricate and fascinating. Look closely and you can spot clues to the villagers lies in the images; the monkeys hiding a box of spare food and the rabbits with carrots aplenty inside their warren. The use of colour, with the porcupine in black and white while all other animals are in full colour, emphasises the sense of difference.

Based on the European trickster story 'Stone Soup' this version is set in Africa and is part of publisher Tiny Owl's series **One Story, Many Voices**. This is a story with lots of contemporary resonance, challenging distrust of strangers and emphasising the importance of being welcoming.

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