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Meesha Makes Friends

Books Reviewed:

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Reviewer:

[Lucy Staines](#) [3]

Editor's Choice:

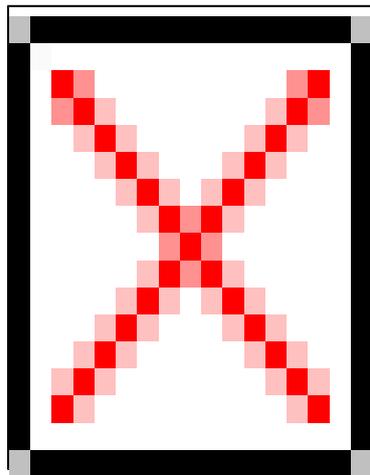
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Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5



[4]

Meesha loves making things. We see her looking very comfortable surrounded by card, crayons, gluesticks and scissors. In fact, Meesha is especially good at making things, as the text and some gorgeously expansive illustrations explain: she can make pictures out of numbers, and pictures out of sounds, and sometimes pictures out of both. But there's one thing that Meesha finds hard to make, and that is friends. Everyone else seems to find it easy, says the text, but not Meesha. The illustrations again let us know just how Meesha feels - the other children are depicted in greys and half-tones; Meesha by contrast is in a bright red dress. The gulf between her world and theirs is vivid. To escape loneliness, Meesha starts to make her own friends, stitching and glueing a whole group. They might not be good at boisterous games, but Meesha feels comfortable with them and *that*, says the text: 'was what mattered.' Then Meesha is invited to a party. Her parents assure her it will be fun, but Meesha can't find a way to join in. She retreats to a quiet corner and starts to craft friends, until a boy asks if she'll show him what she's doing. Before long, they are working together, and chatting, and have soon caught the attention of the other children too. And that, says the narrator, was how the friends that Meesha made helped Meesha make friends. We can see that for ourselves because Meesha's world has changed and is all colour now, no grey left.

The story is told with a beautiful simplicity and clarity but the truths that it conveys are important and heartfelt. Meesha

has particular problems (adults will realise that she is autistic) but lots of us struggle with shyness and lack of confidence. Her story shows young readers how painful that can be and reassures them that talking, sharing, being honest and trusting others can change things. This is the latest in Tom Percival's **Big Bright Feelings** [5] series and once again he has created a story to expand children's understanding of the world, boost their confidence, and counter their anxieties.

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