The Christmas Tree that Ate My Mother by Dean Marney

Lorianne Ouderkirk

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation
Available at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol33/iss3/5

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the All Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Children's Book and Media Review by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.
Author: Marney, Dean

Title: The Christmas Tree That Ate My Mother

Year of Publication: 1992

Publisher: Scholastic Inc.

ISBN: 9780590448819

Number of Pages: 86

Rating: Cannot Recommend

Reading/Interest Level: Intermediate

Keywords: Holiday; Adventure; Fantasy; Mothers; Family; Humor

Review:

Elizabeth freely expresses her opinions, including the fact that she thinks the family Christmas tree is weird. Strange things happen from the beginning: first, the tree salesman knows Elizabeth’s name even though she does not introduce herself. Next, the tree moves itself around the living room, and the ornaments don’t stay put. Then Elizabeth watches as her mom walks right into the tree. Elizabeth has to face her own fears of the dark and of loneliness as she seeks to rescue her mother from inside the Christmas tree and bring her back in time for Christmas morning.

Written for young readers in grades four to six, The Christmas Tree That Ate My Mother is part of a series of similar books by Dean Marney. The story line and vocabulary are simple, which make this a book that young readers can easily read on their own. However, the story does not challenge the reader’s imagination much beyond the concept of traveling to an unknown location through the trunk of a tree and fighting a large black blob. The main character is whiny and disrespectful to her parents and brother, and she often uses sarcasm when communicating with her family. While beginning readers may find success with the book’s easier reading level, the story and characters come up short.

Reviewer: Lorianne Ouderkirk

TEXT © 2013 The Children’s Book and Play Review
Come to my Christmas tree, little one, a soft voice suddenly whispered over his head. He thought that this was still his mother, but no, it was not she. Who it was calling him, he could not see, but someone bent over to him, and — all at once — oh, what a bright light! Oh, what a Christmas tree! And yet it was not a fir tree, he had never seen a tree like that! Where was he now? Everything was bright and shining, and all around him were dolls; but no, they were not dolls, they were little boys and girls, only so bright and shining. They all came flying round him, they all kissed him, took