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Book Review

Foster

By Claire Keegan

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Reviewed by: Samantha Fiander

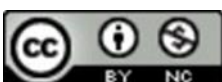
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On one of the bank and public holidays afforded to us in Scotland in May I read the short story *Foster* by Claire Keegan. Not having read the acclaimed *Small Things Like These*, I was new to the work of this Irish writer and confess that I was simply in search of something to read on a spring afternoon sat outside having taken some much-needed time to myself.

The premise of a young girl staying with relatives for a summer while her mother is due to give birth to another sibling seems simple enough. And yet, this is a tale of care, the said and the unsaid, of love, loss, community and the bonds that develop between children and adults through relationships. I could not have been more transported to the scenes and emotions of the story had I embodied a character myself. Seen through the perspective of the child, the reader navigates how as children we begin to realise how families, adults, children and communities can be different, how we learn from others, and the values and lessons we become exposed to.

It's a relief that the author herself did not heed these otherwise wise words of one of Keegan's characters: 'Many's the man lost much just because he missed the perfect opportunity to say nothing'. *Foster* is a true demonstration of the art of good short story writing. Keegan says everything. To convey such depth reminds us that fewer words can have much more power and impact than more.

Whatever time you're able to set aside, these 88 pages will be time very well spent.



About the reviewer

Samantha Fiander is the Communications and Engagement Lead at CELCIS, the Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection and has a keen interest in storytelling, language, framing, reframing and representation.

The review author was reviewing their own copy of this book.

