

La página de arriba

Author:

Canizales

Reader:

Suky Taylor

The Page Above is a short, quirky story that shows how one group of animals have to hold up a lion, who believes that his page – the page on top – is special, and that he deserves to have whatever he wants, provided for him by the animals on the page below. But the poor animals underneath – the elephant holding up the lion's page, and the cow who gives him cheese, the chicken who lays eggs for him and the bird who brings him flowers – who are the ones running around to get whatever he wants as well as hold up the page, are not having quite such a good time of things. The lion even gets angry when his demands get too much and the other animals aren't quick enough. But they have had enough, and so they decide to turn the book upside-down...

Now they are on the page above and the lion is below, forced to hold up their page instead. This makes them very happy, at first, and they start to request all the things that the lion asked them for before. But the lion can't do that all by himself. and now he's very angry because he can't hold them all up on the page above. So all the animals want to be on the page on top, and nobody wants to be on the page underneath.

So they find a solution, and turn the book round again until nobody is above or below. Everybody is the same, on a double page. Nobody has to hold anybody else up, and it's much better for all of them. Although the lion perhaps needs a little more convincing that his page is no better than the page on the other side.

The story is told by a series of colourful illustrations that show the animal characters, and speech bubbles or brief captions to explain what's happening. The text tells the story but the pictures are very effective depictions of the animals' emotions and how they feel with each development of the story, demonstrating all their feelings with some wonderful facial expressions for children to react to. The idea behind the story – that it's unfair to be above or below, or to expect others to run around after your whims, is completely universal, and the characters are also as easily attainable to a UK readership as a Spanish one. The text itself is very concise, just a few captions on each page, and presents no problems for translation, or any cultural references that are not easily recognisable or familiar within culture in the UK. This is a story for very young children to be read with a parent or other adult, that proposes the simple but very important theme of considering other people's (animals') feelings, and not assuming your own needs are more important than theirs. The idea of turning the page upside-down gives the book an added quirk, so children can turn the page too and see how the characters are reversed.

This book would be easily absorbed into the UK market, with no adaptation necessary for a foreign audience. Its illustrations are funny and quite unique, and it would make the book entertaining to be read together as a family or in the classroom. The theme and ideas have a global appeal for young

children, and its simplicity and short, easy story, with added reader participation, could make it a favourite bed-time or go-to book.