Germans!
Author:
Rocio Bonilla
Reader:
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Germans! (Siblings!)

Siblings is a beautifully illustrated and sweet picture book by Rocío Bonilla, with a heartwarming message at its core. Aimed at children between the ages of 3 and 5, it is 48 pages long, but tells the same story from two very different perspectives.

As it opens, one of the main characters tells the reader he doesn't like his sister, who is illustrated as a much bigger rhinoceros (he is human). He describes all the annoying things she makes him do, and that she makes him feel small, even though he thinks he can do things just as well as his older sibling. But even though he is clever and funny, she is really boring, as well as making him angry. But she does build very high towers, and isn't scared of monsters in their bedroom, so perhaps being one of two siblings isn't so bad, but when he sees a new baby he's not so sure about being one of three…

If the book is flipped over and read that way (back-to-front, as it were – hard to tell with a pdf) it tells the same story from the viewpoint of the older sister. This time the younger sibling is illustrated as a monkey. She mentions how irritating it is to have to take him home two days a week, and that he keeps touching (and breaking) her things. He thinks he is very funny but he's just annoying and a bit of a crybaby. But when he's at summer camp she misses him because he makes her laugh, and he's really good at inventing stories, so actually being one of two siblings isn't so bad, but being one of three?!

As always with Bonilla's books, the highlight of this book is the quality of the illustrations: they emphasise and strengthen the story on every page. I loved that as both brother and sister reflect on the good things about their sibling, the illustration of them subtly shifts from being a rhino and a monkey to being human and looking like each other. It underlines a message of empathy and understanding, and the structure of the book cleverly shows readers how situations can be understood in different ways.

… this is a beautifully illustrated book with universal charm.

From the reader´s report by