HACHIKO
Author:
Lluis Prats
Reader:
Laura McGloughlin

Hachiko is a simply told, beautiful tale of loyalty and friendship set in early twentieth century Tokyo. It is divided into two parts: the first part takes place between 1924-1925, and the second part from 1925-1935. The story opens on a morning in January 1924, as Professor Eisaburo Ueno is preparing breakfast for his wife Yaeko and his daughter Chizuko in the Shibuya district of Tokyo. He is reading the paper when his wife reminds him that he must remember to collect the akita puppy that is coming from Odate at the station post office on his return that evening.

This is a deceptively simple, beautifully written book that both encapsulates the private universe of Hachiko and his master and allows a fascinating glimpse into life in pre-war Japon. The writer creates very vivid images of Japan which are brought to life by the gorgeous illustrations by Zuzanna Celej throughout the book.

(…) the fact that it's based on a true story (as the reader discovers in the epilogue), and Hachiko's statue is still outside Shibuya station gives the tale added depth and emotional resonance: I had tears in my eyes on finishing the last page and had to find out more about Hachiko (…) the story of Hachiko's determination and love for his master is so recognisable (especially to dog-owners) that it has universal appeal.

(…)I strongly feel that there is a space in the UK market for books that draw children into other cultures, especially those as beautifully-produced as Hachiko, so I'd recommend it wholeheartedly for translation.

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