



Jamal's Journey

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

The first page of Michael Foreman's new picture book shows us Jamal, a beautiful little camel. Alone in a glowing golden landscape of desert sand there's no clue to tell us whether this is a modern or ancient story. 'Walk, walk, walk?', says the text, 'That's what camels do.' A turn of the page reveals that Jamal is following his parents. They are carrying brightly coloured bundles and their human owners, including a young boy keeping a careful eye on Jamal. Each of the Bedouin adult riders has a hooded falcon on their wrist. When disaster strikes, and Jamal is separated from the group in a sandstorm, a falcon saves the day, flying back to find the young camel and leading him safely to his parents. When the camels arrive in the city we see that this story has a modern day setting. Behind the bright market stalls with their displays of food and other colourful merchandise we can see the glittering towers of Dubai. 'Now Jamal knows the world is more than just sand,' explains the text, 'When his legs are long and strong, he wants to see it all.' The final image is of Jamal and the boy, both grown up and handsome, making their way across the sand towards a glowing horizon, falcon friend following just in case.

Michael Foreman was inspired to write this story by a visit to the Dubai Book Festival and his book reminds us that this ultra-modern city was built in a desert, and that its roots are firmly in Bedouin culture. His fascination with camels is clear and his breathtakingly beautiful ink and watercolour illustrations give a wonderful sense of wide open expanses of sand and sky. This story that feels so timeless provides readers with a powerful sense of a unique city and culture.

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