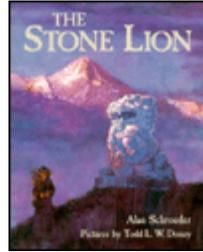


The Stone Lion



The Stone Lion

by Alan Schroeder, Todd L Doney (Illustrator)

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Publishers Weekly

Schroeder's (Ragtime Tumpie) atmospheric rendering of a traditional Tibetan tale receives sumptuous illustrations from newcomer Doney, whose paintings shimmer with golden light and icy mountain peaks. An allegory about greed, the story tells of Drashi and Jarlo, two brothers who in turn encounter an imposing stone lion at the top of a mountain. In the manner of the Perrault classic, "Diamonds and Toads," the lion fills the reverent Drashi's bucket with gold and silver coins, but punishes the avaricious, grasping Jarlo; unlike its French counterpart (in which the wicked sibling is permanently disgraced), however, the Tibetan legend ends on a redemptive note. Fortifying the authenticity of his retelling, Schroeder comfortably and convincingly incorporates regional details (to show that Drashi is "good-hearted," for example, the author explains that "he was never too busy to fill the water kang for a neighbor or help his mother pound barley at the bread trough"). Doney's softly focused representational art captures both the majesty of the mountainous land and the intimacy of the characters' exchanges. A welcome addition to the current crop of multicultural tales. Ages 6-8. (Mar.)

School Library Journal

Gr 1-4-Set in "the barren hills of Tibet," this story is described as a traditional tale, though no source is cited. A greedy young man, exasperated by his good-hearted younger brother's honesty, drives the boy and their widowed mother from his home. Mother and son find refuge at the foot of a great mountain. Searching the upper slopes for dead wood, the boy meets a magic stone lion who rewards him for his piety and ecological awareness with a shower of gold coins, and eventually punishes the older brother for his greed. The writing is clear and smooth, and the full-color, painterly illustrations offer sweeping vistas of the Himalayas as a backdrop to the action. Many small details mar the book's handsome surface, however. Children will quickly note a discrepancy between art and text on the second page, when a scene described as taking place inside a shop is pictured outside. Also, characters' motivations are not sufficiently explained. The outcasts eat rice, which does not grow in the highlands of Tibet. A showy but nonessential addition to picture-book folktale collections.-Margaret A. Chang, North Adams State College, MA