

How Smudge Came



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From Booklist Gr. 2⁺-4, younger for reading aloud. Cindy finds a stray puppy in a snowstorm, sneaks it up to her room, and snuggles up to it in bed: "If there's one thing Cindy knows, this is her best friend." You respond to the universal pet story before the illustrations show that Cindy is a young woman with Down syndrome. The initial empathy is never lost. Cindy lives in a group home; it's a comfortable place, but there's no privacy and no place for her puppy. In the daytime she travels to her cleaning job in a nearby hospice. She enjoys her work, and the patients like her. One very sick young man, who is nearly blind, helps her name the puppy "Smudge." Her hospice friends feel her grief when she has to give up her pet to the animal shelter. Most mental disability stories are told from the viewpoint of a sibling or a friend. This book, first published in Canada, is remarkable in telling it as Cindy sees it. We hear her voice, clipped, direct, concentrated on one thing: she must keep Smudge. Lightburn's realistic pictures in soft-tone colored pencil have the same beautiful sense of fragility, steadfastness, and connection. We see Cindy half smiling about her secret as she tells herself to concentrate on her chores ("Don't break a plate, Cindy. Think about the plates, not the puppy"). The rooms and corridors at the hospice, the quiet portraits of the people there, are seen through her eyes. There's no preachy message about respect; the story demands it. In a

wonderful ending, both surprising and convincing, she gets her puppy back: Smudge will live where Cindy works, at the hospice. Cindy gets her dearest wish through her own grit and her absolute single-minded determination, and with the help of her friends. Hazel Rochman --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title. Product Description "You respond to the universal pet story before the illustrations show that Cindy is a young woman with Down's syndrome. [This book] is remarkable in telling it as Cindy sees it. Lightburn's realistic pictures in soft-tone colored pencil have the same beautiful sense of fragility, steadfastness, and connection."Booklist (starred review) See all Editorial Reviews"

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