



Over the Shop

By JonArno Lawson, illustrated by Qin Leng

Candlewick Press 2021

ISBN: 9781536201475 (HC Picture Book)

Age Range: 3-7 (Suggested by Publisher)

BOOK SYNOPSIS

In a beautifully detailed wordless picture book, a tumbledown building becomes home sweet home for a found family.

A lonely little girl and her grandparent need to fill the run-down apartment in their building. But taking over the quarters above their store will mean major renovations for the new occupants, and none of the potential renters can envision the possibilities of the space—until one special couple shows up. With their ingenuity, the little girl's big heart, and heaps of hard work, the desperate fixer-upper begins to change in lovely and surprising ways. In this bustling wordless picture book, JonArno Lawson's touching story and Qin Leng's gentle illustrations capture all angles of the building's transformation, as well as the evolving perspectives of the girl and her grandparent. A warm and subtly nuanced tale, *Over the Shop* throws open the doors to what it means to accept people for who they are and to fill your home with love and joy.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

★ In this wordless tale, a chosen family forms. . . A few carefully placed pride rainbows make queerness explicit: a barely noticeable rainbow belt; a rainbow hat, tiny in a distance shot; and, finally, an unmistakable (and unprecedented for this shop) rainbow flag hanging outside the business at the very end. Careful readers may deduce that the Asian tenant is a transgender man, signaled through an extremely subtle plot point. Poverty and the child's early loneliness are subtle too, but warmth never is. A wordless, singing infusion of love and energy into a home. —Kirkus Reviews (starred review)

★ A dedication to trans activists and some characters who are nonbinary in dress and clothing make a simple message of love and acceptance resonate subtly. In this wordless book, there is comfort in familiarity, but sometimes a little change can shed new light on everything. . . This wordless story manages to speak volumes. Detailed images fill each page, requiring careful study and observation to understand the entire story. Multiple frames appear on each page, creating a more robust narrative than is often found in picture books. . . This meticulously detailed tale spreads a heartwarming message of renewal, hope, friendship, and compassion.—School Library Journal (starred review)

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★ A child helps create community in this wordless tale by Lawson (*Over the Rooftops, Under the Moon*). . .With a sure line and growing touches of color and adornment as the couple brightens their space, Leng captures the snowball effect of the girl's and the couple's efforts. It's a story about warmth, hospitality, and the way human beings can learn to change at any age. Though it's resolved with compassion, the grandparent's initial reluctance may call for some context setting.—Publishers Weekly (starred review)

★ With loosely rendered lines and gently mottled texture, the watercolor scenes of the building's transformation are fascinating and uplifting, a tribute to the partnership of optimism and elbow grease. . . the silent narrative attests to the common weal of a diverse community.—The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books (starred review)

★ A girl lives with her grandparent in the back room of a sleepy grocer in this subtle wordless tale about how acceptance makes neighborhoods brighter. The detailed illustrations show each day starting like those before it: arranging goods, feeding an alley cat, and waiting to see if anyone will rent the apartment upstairs. There are no takers for the fixer upper—until an enterprising couple moves in, giving the shop and its surroundings new life. At the book's end, a new rainbow flag celebrates inclusion.—Foreword (starred review)

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

Kate Greenaway Medal (CLIP) Longlist

Kirkus Reviews Best Books of the Year, Picture Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books Blue Ribbon

School Library Journal Best Book of the Year

Georgia Children's Picturebook Award

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

[Let's Talk Picture Books interview:](#)

[Pride and Less Prejudice interview](#)

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