



# The Night the Stars Went Out

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News/Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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In this quirky picture book, full of embedded text and original drawings, we meet Alien, whose only job is polishing the stars. He's very good at his job and takes it seriously, not even making time to play. But one day the stars suddenly go out, and all is darkness. Alien is appalled. What to do? He calls the Star Helpline, who has the answer: a magic varnish, but it can only be found on earth. Off goes Alien, to discover that on earth Aliens float! This causes immense problems, and it is only when George and his dog discover Alien stuck in a tree that help is at hand. Together, Alien and George find the magic varnish, but in the process they become friends, and Alien discovers the joys of play. More importantly, it is their growing friendship that turns the stars back on, and as long as they remain friends, the stars will shine. Shapes are important to the illustrations. The human figure of George is round and square with stick-like arms and legs, and Alien is very round; the path Alien takes from outer space to earth is full of round shapes, and the earth houses are entirely symmetrical and basic house-shaped. There are completely black pages with only a few words, and in one case, a bright yellow page with five large words inscribed. All this adds up to a unique product, but I did wonder why the dog suddenly developed a strange furry bonnet and, more importantly, just why Alien's happiness is what made the stars shine again. Surely they had shone before when he had spent so much time working on them. And why did the Helpline recommend varnish when that wasn't the answer at all? Perhaps this is an adult problem and not a child's, so my response is a quibble on what is certainly an interesting and unusual book.

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