



When Otis Courted Mama

By Kathi Appelt

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Apart from sticker burrs and sand fleas, Cardell's life is mostly wonderful. He knows he's loved through and through by his perfectly good mama and his perfectly good daddy. They live in different parts of the desert, but that's okay—Cardell is mostly used to it. Then Otis comes calling, and Cardell feels a *grrr* form in his throat. Otis can't make jalapeño flapjacks or play Zig-the-Zag anything like Cardell's daddy. And so Cardell waits for Mama to say "*Adiós, Otis.*" But what will happen if she doesn't?

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

PreS-Gr 3—Set in the southwestern desert, this adorable, humble tale of how a young coyote copes with divorced parents will win children's hearts. The cadence of the story, with its soothing repetition, balances the new dual-home reality of so many children today with the old comfort of Home where a child feels "loved through and through." The beautifully toned gouache brushwork and large swatches of color are reminiscent of Rothko's work on one page while evoking classic Golden Book aesthetics on the next. White stands out like the stars in the desert night, and the eyelashes of these coyotes are long and lush or their cheeks blush. Cardell loves his daddy who can sing and play and cook jalapeño flapjacks like no other, but he has to share his "perfectly good daddy" with a stepmother and a baby stepbrother. He loves his "perfectly good mama," but not the series of suitors that come a-courtin' but are soon sent away. Then Otis arrives, and he makes Cardell feel "a grrr form in his throat." He expects his mother to say, "We can do without Otis...but "Adiós, Otis" never came." The complicated feelings of a child who must accept a new stepparent are woefully underrepresented in children's literature. Turns out that Otis can spin a pretty good yarn that "settled on Cardell's fur like a warm blanket. Even the moon seemed to smile." Well, like Otis, this exquisitely told tale is a welcome addition to any collection.—Sara Lissa Paulson, The American Sign Language and English Lower School, New York City

Review

* "This excellent take on modern, blended families melds a believable, resonant story arc and winsome, child-appealing illustrations."

—**Kirkus, starred review**

"McElmurry's...gouache illustrations revel in the desert setting, her homey paintings evoking the look of weather-beaten folk art while contributing to the story's overall humor and sweetness."

—**Publishers Weekly**

"Like Otis, Appelt is a gifted storyteller, and families whose circumstances echo Cardell's will welcome this gentle story, which is nicely augmented by illustrator McElmurry's gouache pictures, with their vivid desert colors."

—**Booklist**

* "Well, like Otis, this exquisitely told tale is a welcome addition to any collection."

—**School Library Journal, starred review**

"Author and illustrator deliver on both substance and humor, capturing childlike emotions and conveying them in witty, comforting prose and in accompanying pictures of coyotes in bandanas and ten-gallon hats...With a sympathetic and charming main character, this story will be particularly relevant for a child with a blended family."

—**Bulletin**

About the Author

Kathi Appelt is the author of many books for children and young adults, including *When Otis Courted Mama*, illustrated by Jill McElmurry; *Oh My Baby*, *Little One*, illustrated by Jane Dyer; and the story collection *Kissing Tennessee*. Her novel *The Underneath* was a Newbery Honor book and a National Book Award finalist. She lives in Texas. www.kathiappelt.com

Jill McElmurry is the illustrator of many picture books, including *When Otis Courted Mama* by Kathi Appelt and the best-selling *Little Blue Truck* series, written by Alice Schertle. She divides her time between the wide landscape of New Mexico and a green island in Minnesota. Visit her at www.jillmcelmurry.com

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Dee Alaniz:

Here thing why this When Otis Courted Mama are different and reputable to be yours. First of all examining a book is good nonetheless it depends in the content of it which is the content is as delightful as food or not. When Otis Courted Mama giving you information deeper including different ways, you can find any e-book out there but there is no book that similar with When Otis Courted Mama. It gives you thrill reading through journey, its open up your current eyes about the thing which happened in the world which is perhaps can be happened around you. You can actually bring everywhere like in park, café, or even in your means home by train. If you are having difficulties in bringing the paper book maybe the form of When Otis Courted Mama in e-book can be your choice.

Eleanor Walker:

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Pearl Moore:

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Daniel Martin:

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