



The Last Straw

By Fredrick Thury

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The Last Straw By Fredrick Thury

Christmas from a camel's-eye-view.

Everyone has heard the Christmas story before, but **THE LAST STRAW** is a unique and unforgettable new telling. Voices roll across the desert sands to Hoshmakaka, a curmudgeonly old camel, whispering that he has been chosen for the great responsibility of carrying gifts to the new baby king. With reluctance, Hoshmakaka accepts his task. Every day in the heat crossing the desert, his pack grows ever more burdensome as the crowds of people, anxious to welcome the new king, give him their gifts to carry. He is as strong as ten horses as he proudly tells the younger camels. But, oh, his gout! Oh, his sciatica! Nevertheless, Hoshmakaka plods on until he reaches Bethlehem. In the end he realizes the great honor of his task and never again is there a burden too heavy for him to carry.

Vlasta van Kampen's gorgeous illustrations of the hot desert sands and the cool, star-filled night sky transport readers on the journey to Bethlehem to see the new baby king. The beautifully detailed illustrations of the loveable Hoshmakaka masterfully change as his pack of gifts grows impossibly huge.

The endearing Hoshmakaka is also available as a plush toy to be a companion at storytime. Nine inches tall and adorned with his precious pack of gifts, Hoshmakaka will be a great reminder of the rewards of giving all year long!

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Kindergarten-Grade 3-Hoshmakaka, an old, foolish, and proud camel, is chosen to carry the wise men's gifts to the baby Jesus. Reluctantly, he agrees and boasts to the younger camels that he has the strength of 10 horses. As he embarks on his journey, people along the way ask him to take their gifts. Goaded by the younger camels, he keeps adding to his load. A small child asks him to carry one last gift, a piece of straw for the baby's bed, and Hoshmakaka is brought to his knees by the weight. Jesus reaches out and touches him and "From that time on there was no burden, great or small, that Hoshmakaka would not gladly carry." The story is adapted from Thury's original libretto, performed by the Toronto Children's Chorus. Strikingly rich, detailed watercolors enrich the text. While the humbling message may be too subtly conveyed for very young children, this low-keyed and gentle story can be enjoyed by a broad audience.-M.W.
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From [Booklist](#)

A grumpy camel's boast comes back to haunt him in this engaging Christmas picture-book tale, adapted from a choral libretto. Despite gout, sciatica, and general surliness, old Hoshmakaka reluctantly agrees to carry the Wise Men's gifts to the baby king. But because he incautiously puffs himself up before the younger camels, he also ends up taking jugs of milk and wine, baskets of pastries, and other presents offered along the way. Vlasa van Kampen's bright, sharply detailed watercolors depict the shaggy protagonist plodding along in stately arrogance beneath a burden that grows to comically towering proportions. When a child asks him to carry a piece of straw, Hoshmakaka refuses. He relents, however, but he realizes that if he wants to finish his trek, he'd better not stop again. Entering the stable at last, the camel falls to his knees in exhaustion, whereupon a touch of the baby's hand dispels both the burden's weight and the camel's wounded pride. The text and illustrations work unusually well together to evoke the story's humorous undertone while preserving a grand sense of occasion. *John Peters*

From Kirkus Reviews

paper 1-57091-379-X Thury humorously joins the adage about breaking the camel's back and the story of the baby in the manger, while also poking fun at pride and praising humility. After hearing mysterious voices declaring his role, the aged but proud camel Hoshmakaka reluctantly agrees to journey to far-off Bethlehem bearing gifts for a new baby king. As he makes his way along the road he is heaped with presents large and small, light and heavy, until his joints ache and his legs nearly buckle. A child's piece of straw, offered for the baby's bed, brings Hoshmakaka to his knees, but not before he has entered the stable where others also kneel. Whimsical watercolor illustrations detail Hoshmakaka's stately carriage, his growing burden, and his emotional transformation from arrogant to humble. This camel's-eye-view is a light, unusual look at the traditional Christmas story. (Picture book. 4-8) -- *Copyright ©1999, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Juan Turgeon:

The book *The Last Straw* gives you the sense of being enjoy for your spare time. You need to use to make your capable much more increase. Book can to become your best friend when you getting stress or having

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Zandra Woods:

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