



The Fate of Fausto

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[Carey Fluker Hunt](#) [3]

Editorial Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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?There was once a man who believed he owned everything and set out to survey what was his??

So begins Jeffers' *painted fable* about Fausto, a man whose greed and sense of entitlement leads him into dangerous waters as he claims dominion over the natural world. At first, Fausto doesn't encounter much resistance - flowers and trees are easy pickings, after all. But he has to show who's boss before the lake submits, and the mountain isn't at all impressed by his posturing. 'I am my own?', it says, stubbornly, and Fausto must throw a tantrum to make it bow its head. Readers will be waiting for Fausto to get his come-uppance, but it takes an ocean to vanquish him. Faced with its quiet indifference, Fausto's histrionics are irrelevant, and all we can do is watch and wonder as he makes his final step.

This beautifully designed book features a series of traditional lithographs - a first for Jeffers, who hasn't worked with these techniques before. Initially depicted in tones of sepia highlighted with salmon pink, the palette changes as Fausto makes his fatal decision to confront the sea. Plain white backgrounds and clever page layouts allow his business suit and expressive postures to dominate the spreads, even when all that's visible is a pointed finger or departing foot. The carefully-crafted text is minimal, with a large typeface that evokes mid-century styling and is carefully placed to command attention without intruding on the lithographs. Sentences are often spread across several pages, creating a sense of anticipation and space.

Artistic and environmentally-aware adults will appreciate Fausto's message and design quality, but the book is more complex than it first appears and responses amongst younger audiences will reflect this. Fausto does get his just reward, but middle-aged men are not a common sight in picturebooks and some children may need an adult to champion the book before they connect. For those who do engage, **The Fate of Fausto** has much to offer, including opportunities for debate and creative exploration, particularly around 'P4C'-style questions about land ownership and how we treat the natural world.

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