

Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

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Lost & Found.

Davis, Brooke (Author)

Jan 2015. 288 p. Dutton, hardcover, \$26.95. (9780525954682).

Soon after seven-year-old Millie Bird's dad dies of cancer, her mother abandons her in a department store.

Karl the Touch Typist, so called because he loves the act of typing and types on every surface he can find,

has escaped from a nursing home and taken refuge in the same store where Millie has been left. Agatha

Pantha, who lives across the street from Millie, has not left her house since her husband's death seven

years before. Millie's plight brings out a protective impulse in the two octogenarians, and the three of

them, along with a department store mannequin named Manny, embark on a journey across the Australian

Bush to find Millie's mother, Millie posting signs that read "IN HERE MUM" along the way. A big hit in

Australia, this novel was written as a PhD thesis on grief. Though the whimsy grows tiresome, Davis

shows particular skill in getting inside the mind of a seven-year-old. Her dotty characters and themes of

displacement and marginalization call to mind the works of fellow Aussie Elizabeth Jolley, minus Jolley's

sharp edge.

— *Mary Ellen Quinn*