

A Nice Stone (En fin sten)

by Anne Sofie Allerman, illustrated by Anna-Margrethe Kjærgaard

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Recommended by: Sinéad Quirke Køngerskov

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About: In *A Nice Stone* we meet Oscar playing happily with a nice stone. To Oscar it's a penguin. But to Olivia and Otto it's a seal and a shark. Only when the children are called for dinner does the reader discover Oscar is transgender. Each child perceives the stone as something different, and each child accepts what the other two have seen. *A Nice Stone* captures the delicate complexity of transgenderism in an exceptionally elegant and modest manner. In 2020, *A Nice Stone* won the Grundtvigskforum's Children's Literature Competition: '*A Nice Stone* [is] a poetic pearl ... a gem of children's literature.'

Sinéad Quirke Køngerskov is a Danish to English translator. Read more about her [here](#).

SAMPLE TRANSLATION

A Nice Stone

by Anne Sofie Allerman, translated by Sinéad Quirke Køngerskov

Oscar is on the beach. Oscar finds a nice stone. The stone looks like a little penguin.

Oscar builds a circus in the sand and pretends that the penguin is the ringmaster of the circus. The stone stands in the middle of the ring.

Then comes Olivia. - Are you playing circus?

- Yes.

- It looks lovely. And there's a seal in the middle of the circus ring.

- A seal?

- Yes! Look, there's its nose, and there's its eyes, and the tail is here.

Olivia points. Oscar can see the seal now. Olivia leaves and Oscar continues to play. Now the penguin has dressed up as a seal. But then comes Otto.

Otto can clearly see that there's a shark in the middle of Oscar's circus, and now Oscar can see the shark, too.

What a nice stone. Oscar turns the stone this way and that, seeing the penguin, the seal and the shark as it turns. Oscar puts the stone back in the middle of the circus ring and notices that the people in the audience see something different, depending on where they are sitting.

Olivia and Otto say they are going to go bathing. Oscar would like to go too. Oscar stands on the bathing jetty looking at them, but doesn't dare jump in.

- Just imagine you're a shark, like your stone, Otto shouts up from down in the water.

Oscar can feel the shark inside.

Oscar grows brave and jumps in with a huge splash.

Down in the water, Oscar feels the bathing shorts slip down. Oscar gets embarrassed and is about to cry.

But Olivia and Otto laugh, and Oscar realises that it's actually quite funny.

Mum and Dad call: - Olivia, Otto and Odette! Time to eat!

- I don't like it when you call me Odette, Oscar says while they are eating.

- But that's your name, says Dad.

- No, my name is Oscar.

And then Oscar shows them the nice stone he found.