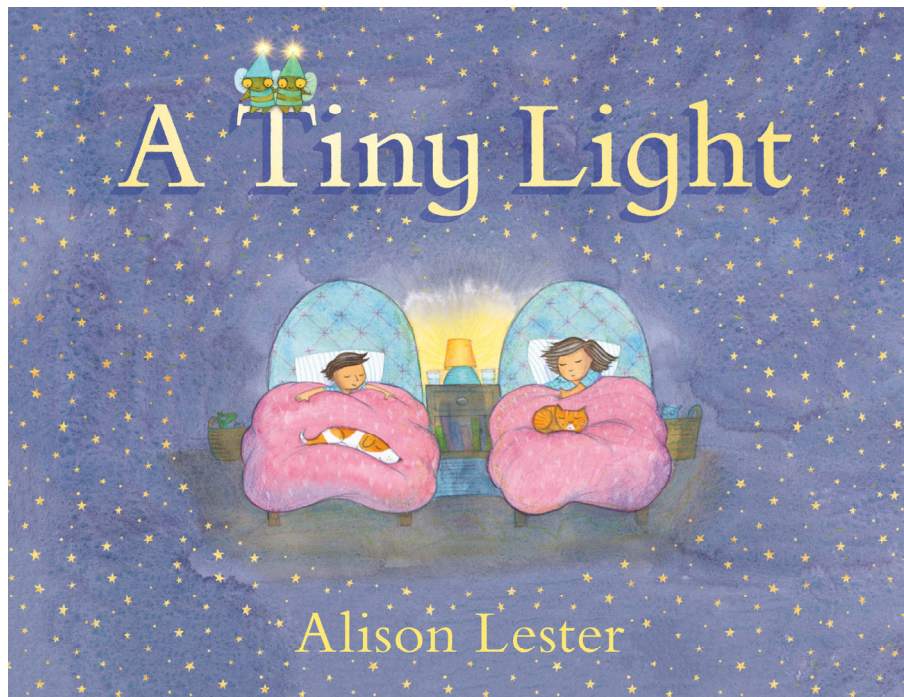


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# A Tiny Light

## Alison Lester



### Teachers' Notes

Prepared by Christina Wheeler, who is a practising teacher librarian with a background in the Australian curriculum (English).

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Synopsis	2
Themes	2
Writing Style	2
Author Motivation	2
Study Notes	3
About the Author	5

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**SYNOPSIS**

As night approaches, the Twinkles come to visit, helping their young friends to marvel at the wonderful things that happen when the sun goes down. With their glimmering lights and shimmering ways, they chase away fear of the dark and help give wonderful dreams when sleep comes.

With calming, lyrical rhymes and magical illustrations, *A Tiny Light* is a classic and comforting bedtime story that children will return to again and again.

**THEMES**

- Rhyme
- Bedtime
- Light
- Night
- Dreams

**WRITING STYLE**

*A Tiny Light* is written in rhyming verse and, through its use of second person, directly invites readers to delight in the marvels and magical ways of the Twinkles. Integrated into the illustrations are the many wondrous things that happen at night-time, helping to allay fears of the dark. Lyrical and engaging, the text encourages young children to actively interact with the stunning illustrations that are as evocative as they are delightful. The illustrations also provide an added layer of literacy, as audiences are enticed to look beyond the written text to observe what else is occurring on each page. *A Tiny Light* is an endearing read-aloud picture book that will be enjoyed time and time again.

**AUTHOR MOTIVATION**

A few years ago I found a tiny book amongst my mother-in-law's things. It was made from butcher's paper, folded and held together by a piece of red string, and the title, in her careful handwriting, was *Aunt Milly*. Aunt Milly was a small creature who came down from the stars and flew around Joan's room at night,

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doing tricks and making her laugh. I love this idea. I have many grandchildren and they often have trouble getting to sleep at night, even after many stories. A visitor from outer space is probably what they need. I also like the idea of connecting children to the wide world, to assure them that they are all part of the huge universe.

**STUDY NOTES**

- Before reading *A Tiny Light*, look carefully at the cover and endpapers. What do you think the story might be about? How would you describe the children on the cover? Discuss the concept of light. How does this compare with the dark?
- The written text begins, 'When you go to bed tonight, be sure to leave a tiny light, so Twinkles in the Milky Way can find you when they come to play.' With a partner, brainstorm what might happen when you turn the next few pages. Check your predictions after reading.
- Discuss the importance of 'reading pictures' as well as the written text to fully understand the narrative. Discuss the role of illustrations in conveying meaning.
- Which is your favourite page of *A Tiny Light*? Why is this your favourite? Share with a friend.
- In small groups, create a dramatised version of *A Tiny Light*.
- Create a Word Wall with the vocabulary used in *A Tiny Light*. Use these words to write a simple recount of what happens in this story.
- Use the Talking Strips below to tell your friend about this story.

First ...	Next ...	After that ...	Finally ...

- In the role of the dog or cat in the story, write a recount of your encounters with the Twinkles.
- As a class, create your own rhyming verse/s that would be suitable inclusions in *A Tiny Light*. Illustrate these verses.
- Create your own night sky by completely colouring a sheet of paper with different coloured crayons. Paint over this with black paint. When dry, use the end of a small paint brush to scratch stars into the paper. Create a classroom display with these artworks.

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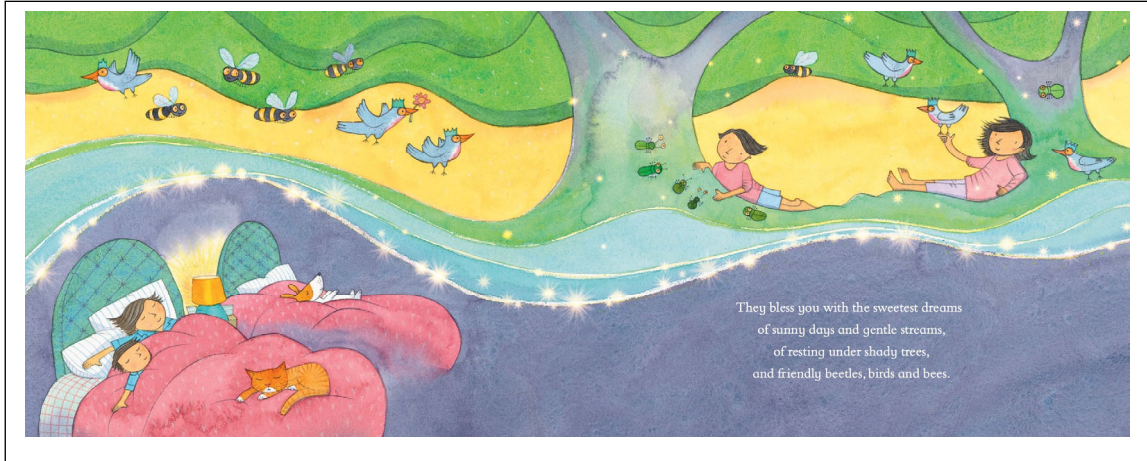
- Re-enact the Twinkles whistling ‘down past Moon and Mars, overtaking shooting stars’. What do you imagine they would see, feel and hear on their journey? Use a Y Chart to brainstorm your ideas.
- How do you think the little boy feels about night-time? What clues tell you this? How do the Twinkles help him? Have you ever felt afraid of the dark? How might this story help small children overcome these fears?
- How would you describe the relationship between the brother and sister in the story? How do the illustrations show this?
- As a class, create your own ‘magic garden’ in a style like Alison Lester’s, using crayon resist watercolour techniques. Write a story about playing in this garden to accompany your artwork.
- View real-life images of auroras. Find out more by viewing the following clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pyOGpGsxDIs>
- *A Tiny Light* shares many of the wonderful things that happen when the world is dark. Using the book as a guide, make a list of these things. Add to this list from your own knowledge.
- The Twinkles help the children learn about the sun, moon, planets and constellations. What constellations do you know of? Ask your parents to show you some that they know in the night sky.
- Draw a line diagonally on an A3 piece of paper. On one side, draw pictures of what happens during the daytime as shared in *A Tiny Light*. On the other, draw what happens during night-time. Write an explanation of the changes in the sky between day and night.
- Choose one of the objects that the Twinkles share from the spread below. Read more about this object from library books. Share what you have discovered in a voice recording.



- What advice would you give a friend who is afraid of the dark?
- Explain the Earth's rotation each day. Use the following clip to help: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l64YwNI1wr0>

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- Using the spread below, share one of the dreams that the children may be having.



- In the last spread, when the children are ready to begin the day ahead, what do you think they are looking at? What might they be thinking? Share with a friend.
- Imagine you are one of the Twinkles. Write a diary entry or letter about your day.
- Imagine you are one of the kookaburras waking with the sun. What would you notice as the night-time disappears?

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Alison Lester is one of Australia's most popular and bestselling creators of children's books. Her picture books mix imaginary worlds with everyday life, encouraging children to believe in themselves and celebrate the differences that make them special. In a career spanning decades, Alison Lester has written many books and won numerous prestigious awards, including the Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Picture Book of the Year Award for her much-loved classic *Are We There Yet?* and the CBCA Eve Pownall Book of the Year Award for *One Small Island*. Her picture books include *Kissed by the Moon*, *Running with the Horses*, *Sophie Scott Goes South* and *My Dog Bigsy* – to name just a few. Alison Lester became Australia's first Children's Book Laureate in 2012, a position shared with Boori Monty Pryor. In 2016, Alison was awarded the Dromkeen Medal for her outstanding achievement in the creation of Australian children's and young adult literature, and in 2018 she became the first children's book writer to win the Melbourne Prize for Literature, for her contribution to Australian literature and cultural and intellectual life.

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Alison lives on a farm in the Victorian countryside. She spends part of each year travelling to schools around Australia, helping students and teachers develop their own stories.