



The Wish Giver

Written by Rosanne Hawke & Lenore Penner

Illustrated by Michelle Mackintosh

Published by Windy Hollow Books

Teachers' notes

Synopsis

The Wish Giver is the story of Layla who is in a new class and doesn't have a friend. The Wish Giver who grants children's wishes falls off his star and lands in Layla's garden. She lets him in but learns he can't go back to his star unless someone wishes for him to. Layla wishes that he can return home. The next day when her class is playing soccer, Layla hopes to make a friend by kicking a goal for her team, but Mia and Richard Seamus call for the ball. She kicks it to them and Richard Seamus kicks the goal. Friday is a good day as Mia and Richard Seamus sit with Layla at lunch. The Wish Giver smiles from the biggest brightest star.

Writing Style

The writing style is suitable for lower primary children to read themselves. There is the use of images, ie Laylas's tears are like raindrops. The images used are ones that young children will understand. Colour is used in the text as is font size.

Here is an example from page 8.

Layla stared through the window. She could see the biggest, brightest star.

She brushed the tears from her eyes. Was she dreaming? She thought she saw something falling down, down, down.

Like an autumn leaf it landed in Layla's garden.

Author inspiration

Rosanne: Lenore first turned me into a writer by asking me to write a story that I told her when she was a young teen. She then asked me to publish it. That story became the novel *Jihad*. During the process I realised this was what gave me life and I have never stopped writing since. Lenore often test-runs my manuscripts and suggests the bits that could be improved.

Lenore had written a picture book in her Year 11 English class called *The Wish Giver*. She suggested recently that we should re-write it to try to publish it. Her reason? She wanted a gift for the doctors who helped her birth her children.

I'd re-write it and read it to her and she'd make more suggestions. In the end the characters changed and so did much of the plot, but the original idea of a Wish Giver living on the biggest brightest star remained. Lenore's initial inspiration was from a friend who wrote her a personal story about a boy who lived on a star and was in love with the girl in the moon.

It's been an enriching experience working with Lenore on this writing project and *The Wish Giver* is a deserving culmination of all the inspiration she has given me as a daughter and a friend.

Background information

Rosanne: when I was little I wondered if someone lived on a star granting wishes. It's possible my big sister told me this and my mother was often thanking her lucky stars. Whenever we saw a shooting star we always made a wish. Someone had to be up there. Now, I think of the Wish Giver as a cross between an Arabian genie and a Cornish piskie, though piskies didn't grant wishes or live on stars. In fact they caused quite a bit of trouble. Genies or jinns didn't live on stars either. But the Wish Giver with his curled shoes and beanie certainly looks like a piskie or a genie.

Study Notes

Theme: friends

Issues: loneliness and friendship; how to get a friend.

Children in lower primary are often have trouble with friends. 'So and so doesn't like me', or 'no one will play with me' are constant stories that teachers hear. The Wish giver is a story that can open up discussion on how to get friends. Layla finds a friend by being friendly and discussion can centre on ways we can reach out to others.

Some questions for class discussion

1. Why was Layla lonely?
2. I find if I know what my characters want the most I can write a story about how they get it. What did Layla want the most?
3. How does Layla get a friend?
4. In what ways can we be friendly to others?
5. 'When you wish upon a star' is the opening song of Pinocchio (Disney). Can you find the lyrics for that song on the Internet? Do you think it is true?
6. Some characters who have lived on stars include the little prince who lived on Asteroid B-612 (Antoine de Saint-Exupery, *The Little Prince*.) Can you find any more?

