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Teachers' Notes



Fox & Moonbeam

Aleesah Darlison / Narelda Joy

ISBN: 978-1925563009

Recommended retail: \$24.99

Reading level: Ages 0-7 Picture Book

Book Summary

It is Victorian England and Gerard Fox winds clocks for the queen. His lowly status means he lives in a world forever surrounded by shadows.

Mademoiselle Moonbeam Lapin is a famous ballerina. She lives in the golden glow of stage lights. When Moonbeam offers Fox her friendship, both of their worlds are transformed forever.

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Reasons For Studying This Book

Fox and Moonbeam is a lavishly illustrated book that reminds readers the importance of self-belief and finding the courage to step out of the shadows and into the light.

This is a particularly relevant message today when 1 in 35 young Australians aged 4-17 experience depressive disorders that stem from a lack of self-confidence. The narrative is suitable for Ages 0-7, as young readers may enjoy the beautiful illustrations and simple story of friendship, while primary-school readers may discuss the importance of self-belief and emotional wellbeing through strong support networks.

Themes

Self-belief

Gerard Fox initially only plays his violin in the shadows of his apartment. Through his friendship with Moonbeam, he gains the self-confidence to step into the light and play for large audiences.

Friendship

Gerard Fox lives in a world forever surrounded by shadows, where the week ahead is always the same as the one before. Every night, he plays a lonely song on his violin. Mademoiselle Moonbeam Lapin is a bright, shining star who lives in the light. But her heart is empty. She dreams of a friend. When Moonbeam befriends Fox both of their worlds are transformed forever.

Author and Illustrator Bios

About the Author



Aleesah Darlison is an internationally published, award-winning author who writes picture books, chapter books and novels. Her much-loved stories promote courage, understanding, anti-bullying, self-belief, friendship, teamwork and environmental themes.

Since commencing her writing journey, she has published thirty-seven books and has won numerous awards for her writing including an Australian Society of Authors (ASA) mentorship and the Environment Award for Children's Literature (Non-Fiction) for her picture book, *Our Class Tiger*. In 2012, she was shortlisted for the same award for her picture book, *Warambi*.

Her picture books include *Stripes in the Forest: The Story of the Last Wild Thylacine*, *Mama & Hug*, *Spider Iggy*, *Our Class Tiger*, *Little Meerkat*, *Bearly There*, *Puggle's Problem*, *Fox and Moonbeam* and *Warambi* (2012 CBCA Notable Book Non-Fiction; 2012 Wilderness Society Award for Children's Literature Shortlist). Her novels and series include *Ash Rover*, *Little Good Wolf*, the Netball Gems Series, the Totally Twins Series, the Little Witch Series and the Unicorn Riders Series.

About the Illustrator



Narelda Joy is an Illustrator and 3D artist specialising in highly textural illustrations, collage, puppets, sculptures and workshops.

Narelda won the State Medal (highest marks in the state) for Design Cert IV, was accepted into the Bachelor of Costume at NIDA, and graduated with Distinction from the Advanced Diploma in Design and Illustration Skills. She also has First Places with Distinctions in both Fashion and Theatrical Millinery.

Narelda has won many First Prizes for her fabric sculptures including four First Places and four Standard of Excellent Awards at the Sydney Royal Easter Show, and has been exhibited at the Books Illustrated Gallery, M2 Gallery, See Street Gallery, Blue Mountains Regional Gallery, and Raw Grandeur.

Narelda is passionate about children's books and is Vice President of the Blue Mountains sub-branch of the Children's Book Council of Australia. She has illustrated for *The School Magazine*. Narelda sells her Australian animal puppets and illustrations at the internationally-renowned Scenic World.

She lives in the beautiful Blue Mountains surrounded by inspirational flora and fauna.

Author Interview: Aleesah Darlison

1. What prompted you to sit down and write the story of *Fox and Moonbeam*?

I'd have to say that this story sprang, unbidden, from my imagination. The first line, 'Gerard Fox wound clocks for the Queen', came to me and the rest soon followed.

2. What was it like to see Narelda Joy bring your story to life with her beautiful illustrations?

It was very exciting seeing Narelda's artwork come through. Even in those early draft stages I knew that what she was creating with her many and varied layers and the complexity and beauty of her illustrations would result in something special. Each page in *Fox and Moonbeam* is lavishly illustrated and beautifully detailed. There's so much for both young and older readers to discover in these pages.

3. What's the best thing about being an author?

Being able to dream and be creative. Using your imagination. Making the magical happen. Bringing a stylish, handsome fox to life and allowing him to have an incredible friendship with a white rabbit who also happens to be a world-famous ballerina.

4. Why did you choose a fox as your main character? Most people are pretty afraid of foxes, but we can't help but love Gerard Fox.

Are people afraid of foxes? I've always utterly adored them, but then I do tend to see animals in a different light to others and I try to bring that out in my stories. Every animal is unique. Perhaps foxes are just misunderstood and have been given a bad rap all these years. Of course, Gerard Fox is handsome, kind and humble – maybe that's why he's so irresistible. He's incredibly talented but his shyness forces him to live in the shadows. Moonbeam helps Fox find the courage to step into the light.

Key Curriculum Areas:

CURRICULUM AREAS AND KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

Foundation (Kindergarten/Prep)

English

ACELT1575	ACELA1429	ACELA1434	ACELY1653
ACELT1577	ACELA1430	ACELA1786	
ACELT1783	ACELA1432	ACELY1651	
ACELT1578	ACELA1435	ACELY1652	

Year One

English

ACELA1444	ACELA1451	ACELT1582	ACELY1656
ACELA1787	ACELA1452	ACELT1584	ACELY1788
ACELA1447	ACELA1458	ACELT1586	ACELY1660
ACELA1449	ACELT1581	ACELT1832	

Year Two

English

ACELA1461	ACELT1833
ACELA1462	ACELY1665
ACELA1463	
ACELT1591	

Questions and Reflections

Have the teacher read the book out in class, making sure everyone can see the illustrations. Alternatively, students can take turns at reading each page aloud.

Speaking and Listening

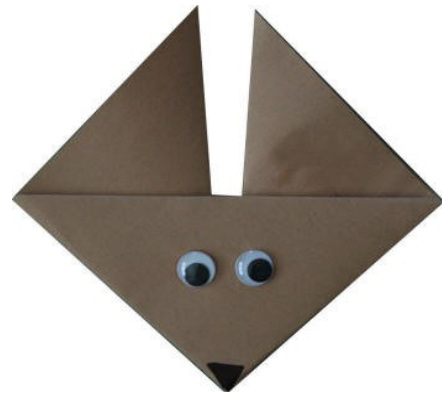
1. Before reading, discuss the cover. Who are the characters? What could the book be about?
2. Fox winds clocks for the Queen. Is this a job that you would like to do? Why or why not? Would you like to be a ballerina like Moonbeam? Why or why not?
3. Fox likes to go to the park and play the violin. What activities do you enjoy? Would you call them passions?
4. Using the pictures to help you, what feelings does Fox experience throughout the book? Does Moonbeam have these feelings too? How are they different?
5. How do you think Fox feels when he plays the violin?
6. How do you think Fox feels when he watches Moonbeam dance?
7. How does Moonbeam and Fox's friendship change them?
8. Fox and Moonbeam inspire each other to follow their dreams. What is your dream? Is there someone that inspires you? Why?
9. Fox and Moonbeam work better as a team. Can you think of something that is more fun to do in a team than alone? (e.g. doing the dishes, playing outside etc.)
10. How do you think Fox and Moonbeam feel at the end of the story? Why? How is this different from how they felt at the beginning of the story?

Classroom Activities

Make Gerard Fox

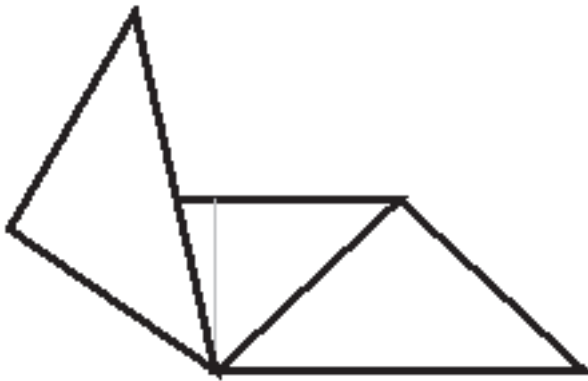
Materials

1. One square piece of brown construction paper
2. Black marker
3. 2 x Wiggly eyes
4. Glue

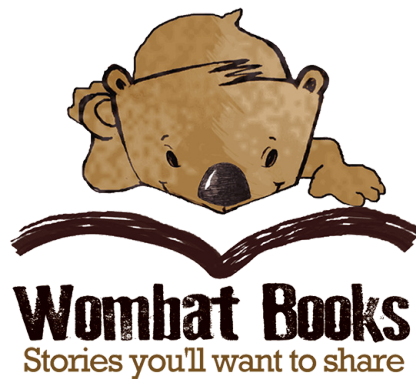


Instructions

- 1) Fold the paper diagonally.
- 2) Fold the tip of the triangle down to touch the first crease.
- 3) Keep the side with the fold facing up and fold both sides up to make a square with a gap between it. These will form fox ears.



- 4) Flip the paper over.
- 5) Glue two wiggly eyes on the largest triangle, parallel to the hypotenuse.
- 6) Draw a small triangle on the corner below the eyes.



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