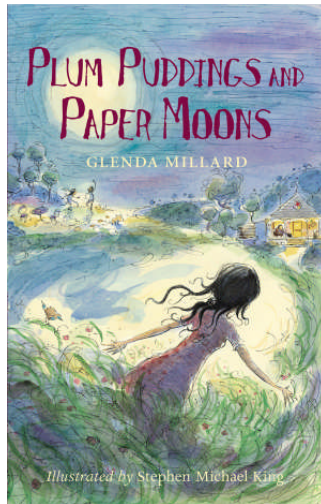


TEACHERS NOTES

AUTHOR: GLENDA MILLARD ILLUSTRATOR: STEPHEN MICHAEL KING

TITLE: PLUM PUDDINGS AND PAPER MOONS



NOTES BY ROBYN SHEAHAN-BRIGHT

CONTENTS

SYNOPSIS

THEMES

WRITING STYLE

AUTHOR MOTIVATION

ILLUSTRATOR MOTIVATION

AUTHOR BACKGROUND

ILLUSTRATOR BACKGROUND

EDITORIAL COMMENT

MARKETING & PROMOTION

STUDY NOTES

CONCLUSION

SYNOPSIS

Plum Puddings and Paper Moons is the fifth book in Glenda Millard's immensely enchanting *Kingdom of Silk* series illustrated in captivating style by Stephen Michael King. 'The Kingdom of Silk is a place where wishes sometimes come true. But even there, you can't wish away something that has already happened, no matter how much you want to, or how tightly you close your eyes, or how hard you clench your fists when you wish.' (p 2)

The Silks live in a very special place, and are a very special family. Even if their beloved Tishkin will never be with them again, the Silks still believe in wishes. They believe in magic. And most of all they believe in love. In this latest instalment in the series, fifteen year old Scarlet, the eldest of the Silks, who is often less inclined to believe in wishes than the rest of her family, finds something important to believe in. For at the Colour Patch Café where she has a part time job helping Mr Kadri, she meets Anik, a boy who has had to flee from his war torn country, losing his parents and most of his family, to travel to safety in a new home. Scarlet declares peace on Cameron's Creek and organises a march on Christmas Eve.

Plum puddings and paper moons are not the only magical things in the Kingdom of Silk this Christmas. For love is in the air, and wishes really do seem to come true, at long last.

THEMES

The themes in this book include: **Imagination and Magic, Families, Individuality, Wishes, Cooking and Recipes as Shared Memories, Refugees, Peace and War, Growing Up, and Community Responsibility.** [See also Related Activities and Discussion Points in Study Notes Below]

WRITING STYLE

Interpretation and Reading Comprehension is also encouraged by this text which is enhanced by **drawings** which will stimulate both **Visual Literacy Skills** and **Creative Arts Activities.** [See also Related Activities and Discussion Points in Study Notes Below]

AUTHOR MOTIVATION

See **Glenda Millard's** comments on *Plum Puddings and Paper Moons* at the back of the book which offer real insights into why she created this particular story about Scarlet's campaign to wage peace not war.

AUTHOR BACKGROUND

Glenda Millard says that she 'has loved reading and being read to from early age.' As a child, her more robust pursuits included billy-cart racing, tree-climbing and attempting to fly. She used to dream that she could fly and on windy days she could be found at the football oval with her arms outstretched, poised to be whisked away, or sometimes balanced precariously on the roof of her Nana's shed. Neither of these techniques worked. Even an impressive bandage around her wrist, a day home from school and a ride in the council grader was poor compensation for the spectacular failure of her launch attempt from the high-up swing at school. Glenda left school at 15 and didn't discover the joy of writing until nearly forty years later when she enrolled in a TAFE course. Glenda was shortlisted for the NSW Premier's Award 2004 as well as receiving the Honour Book Award for the CBCA awards that same year for her book *The Naming of Tishkin Silk*. Her picture book *Kaito's Cloth* was shortlisted for the Queensland Premier's Award 2005, and *Layla, Queen of Hearts* was shortlisted for the Younger Readers CBCA Award in 2007, and winner of the Queensland Premier's Literary Award in 2007. Her most recent novel *A Small few Kiss in the Dark* is for lower secondary readers and was winner of the Queensland Premier's Literary Award for YA Fiction in 2009. Her picture book *Isabella's Garden* illustrated by Rebecca Cool is shortlisted for both the CBCA Award and for the Queensland Premier's Literary Award 2010. *All the Colours of Paradise* has also been shortlisted for the Queensland Premier's Literary Award 2010. *Mbobo Tree* illustrated by Annie White is another of her latest picture books. Glenda has written picture books for very young readers as well as novels for lower secondary readers. Her books are beautifully written,

and are an inventive mixture of whimsy and reality which will entrance both children and the adults who read her books with them.

ILLUSTRATOR BACKGROUND

Stephen Michael King says that he can remember drawing all of his life. Growing up in suburban Sydney in an environment where his imagination and creativity were nurtured, he wrote stories, dreamed of illustrating a book and of one day working with Walt Disney Studios. When he was nine, Stephen went partially deaf but his hearing loss was unnoticed for a number of years. During this time he began to immerse himself in art where he could communicate without words. Due to his deafness he found school a traumatic experience which failed to prepare him for the future. However, he was eventually employed as a children's library assistant and this job made use of his natural affinity with children and helped pave the way to future opportunities. In 1990 he was employed by the Walt Disney Studios in Surry Hills and he subsequently worked as a book designer and illustrator for Scholastic Australia.

Watercolours, black ink, oil painting and sculpture are Stephen's favourite media, and he has now produced a number of successful books. His first picture book, *The Man Who Loved Boxes*, won the Family Therapy Association Award and was shortlisted for the Crichton Award in 1996. It has since been published around the world and translated into a number of languages. In 1997 Stephen collaborated with Robin Morrow over *Beetle Soup* - Australian Stories and Poems for Children, which was shortlisted for the 1997 CBCA Book of the Year for Younger Readers. *Patricia* was released in 1998 and in 1999 both *The Little Blue Parcel* and *Henry and Amy* were shortlisted by the CBC for the Picture Book of the Year Award.

Some of Stephen's most recent books are *The Pocket Dogs* and *Pocket Dogs Go on Holiday* (with Margaret Wild), *Emily Loves to Bounce*, *Millie, Jack and the Dancing Cat*, *Mutt Dog!*, *You!* and *Never Ever Before*. *Applesauce and the Christmas Miracle* (text Glenda Millard) and *Leaf* were both shortlisted for the 2009 CBCA Early Childhood Book of the Year Award. He has an excellent website where you can find out all about his work. <http://stephenmichaelking.com/bio.html>

MARKETING & PROMOTION

- Advertising in children's and trade magazines, *Magpies*, *Reading Time*, *Dmag*
- Copies sent for review, author available for interview

STUDY NOTES

The following activities and discussion points relate to the **themes**, **writing style** and to other curriculum areas such as **Interpretation and Reading Comprehension**, **Visual Literacy** and **Creative Arts**.

A. THEMATIC ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION POINTS:

- **Imagination and Magic**

Discussion Point and Activity: 'We're all born with magic in us,' she said. 'A child's magic is so powerful it sometimes rubs off on grown-up people. When that happens, they rediscover their own leftover magic and all kinds of remarkable things happen.' (p 46) Discuss the imagination with your students. Encourage them to talk about their favourite 'imaginings'. Have them write a brief description of something they've imagined or dreamed which was particularly memorable for them. They might like to draw it as well.

- **Families**

Discussion Point: 'The Kingdom of Silk' is actually the world of one particular family—the Silk family. Griffin is the only brother to 'The Rainbow Girls' — The Rainbow Girls, Scarlet, Indigo, Violet, Amber and Saffron—and

Griffin's best friend is Layla Elliott. The Silks have a secret sadness, though, because their youngest Tishkin died when she was a baby. Perry Angel also lives with them and is Layla's 'second best friend'. Annie is their mother, Ben is their father, and Grandmother Nell is a magic grandmother who looks after them all. Who is your favourite character and why?

Discussion Point: 'Nell could have told Amber it doesn't matter where you come in the family or what you look like, it's the things you do and say and what you are like on the inside that matters.' (p 32) How does Scarlett feel about being the eldest Silk? How does Amber feel about being in the middle? Have you ever felt that your position in your family matters? Do you think it's better to be the eldest, the youngest or somewhere in between?

- **Individuality**

Discussion Point: Each child in the family is different – even the twins, Indigo and Violet. Discuss the things which are different about the members of your family or your friends. What makes each one an individual?

- **Wishes**

Discussion Point: 'Wishes like this are deep and silent and don't need to be said. Made-aloud wishes are usually for fun and not important at all. (p 3) Make a list of 'made-aloud wishes'. Then think of a 'deep and silent wish' which you'd like to make, and keep it to yourself!

- **Cooking and Recipes as Shared Memories**

Activity: Nell thinks of her book of handwritten recipes as: 'Tiny treasures to keep forever. Nell knew most of them by heart, but she sometimes read her recipe book the way other people might read a novel. Sometimes she laughed as she read. Sometimes she cried.' (p 31) Encourage your students to 'Create a Recipe Book' of their own. Invite them to paint or draw or collage a cover on the book and include their names. Then they can start to collect recipes from special people in their lives.

Activity: 'It seemed almost magical that the person receiving the cake knew exactly what Amber wanted to say. It was cake language. But sometimes Amber made *just-because* cakes.' (p 36) Have a 'Cupcake Making Day' and invite students to create a shape, a design, a decoration which reflects what they want to say to the person they are making the cakes for.

- **Refugees**

Activity: 'Anik took his first steps in a faraway land where children walked as lightly as shadows, as cautiously as cats, for fear of disturbing buried bombs.' (p 50) Mr Kadri had once lived in a village like Anik's so has taken his family in and given Anik a job. Discuss the plight of refugees. Are there any refugees in the place where you live, or in your class? How might you offer some assistance to a refugee group? eg Your class might help with a fund raising drive to assist in funding the local refugee language classes. If there are refugees in your class, the teacher might encourage them to share with the other members of the class, some of those experiences they feel comfortable sharing. Remember that some memories can be very painful and that like Anik, they may have things they'd rather not discuss. This might, however, offer them an opportunity to speak about some good memories of their countries and culture.

Activity: Read books about immigration eg *The Arrival* by Shaun Tan (Hachette Livre, 2006); *The Island* by Armin Greder (Allen and Unwin, 2007); *Ziba Came on a Boat* by Liz Lofthouse and Robert Ingpen (Penguin, 2007). Then discuss them in relation to *Plum Puddings and Paper Moons*.

- **Peace and War**

Discussion Point: Begin this unit of work by discussing the theme in this novel, with reference to some key quotes such as:

'Scarlet's anger at the poem stems from what she's learned of Anik's losses in war. 'A time for war and a time for peace she wondered, 'Did this mean forever? Would there always be wars?''(p 57)

'Maybe if we all did something small we could make a difference. Who knows, we might even change the way other people think.' (p 61)

'They will not say, Miss Crimson, but in their homeland, marching is not permitted. No marching of any kind. I am thinking they are afraid Constable Wilson will be locking them up if they come peace marching with us.'(pp 98-9)

Classroom Activity: Your class might like to conduct an activity which focuses on peace. It might be a semester of work about peace as a theme. It might be a simple craft activity like creating collages of doves and then hanging them in the classroom for a week. It might be reading and discussing other books about the subject eg *Home and Away* by John Marsden and Matt Ottley (Hachette, 2008); *The Angel with a Mouth Organ* by Christobel Mattingley and illustrated by Astra Lacis (Hodder & Stoughton, 1985); *War Game* by Michael Foreman (Puffin, 1995); *My Hiroshima* by Junko Morimoto(Angus & Robertson, 1987) .

Classroom Activity: Ask your students to come up with one simple idea for spreading the word about the need for peace, to create a slogan, and a campaign to promote it.

- **Growing Up**

Discussion Point: Scarlet knows now that nothing stays the same forever. She has been going through a difficult patch but through meeting Anik she changes. How does she change? Choose passages to indicate how and why she changes.

- **Community Responsibility**

Discussion Point: Scarlet gathers the entire population of Cameron's Creek together and they all celebrate by having tea at the table her father has made from the old bridge timbers. How does your community gather or share common interests or concerns? Is there a community issue you think should be made a focus in your community?

B. WRITING STYLE ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION POINTS:

- **Alliteration**

Activity: The title of this book is a good example of alliteration, but there are many other examples in this book as well: There are **names** such as Nasty Nellie, Barnacle Bill, Sinbad the Sailor or Cameron's Creek; the **chapter headings** are often alliterative too eg Plum Pudding Planetarium (p 48); Kiss-me-Quick and Kryptonite (p 62); there are other **descriptive phrases** which are alliterative as well: 'tigers' teeth and tails and toes' (p 22); 'buccaneers banquets'(p 29); 'buried bombs'(p 50); 'painting pictures ... wearing wings'....picking posies of pansies' (p 66). Have fun creating alliterative phrases of your own!

- **Playful Made-Up Language**

Activity: The Silks have a lunch of 'finny, scaly, gilly, taily, salty sea sardines' (p 36). Make up a similar description to describe your favourite breakfast, lunch or dinner.

- **Metaphor**

Activity: 'The sun was a hot yellow peach in a sea of strawberry sauce and the moon was a paper doily tossed up high.' (p 55) Choose some image in nature which appeals to you and describe it metaphorically as Glenda Millard has done here.

- **Poem**

Discussion Point: 'Being Scarlet' (pp 71-2) is a poem Scarlet writes about herself. It's a simple series of lines in each of which she describes herself. Have your class write poems about themselves like this.

- **Letters**

Activity: Scarlet writes a passionate letter to the Prime Minister (p 92) about her quest for peace and invites him to attend her march. Write a letter about some issue you care about to a person in a position of power.

- **Author Study**

Activity: Study Glenda Millard's other works and discuss and compare her writing style.

C. INTERPRETATION AND READING COMPREHENSION ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION POINTS:

- **Series Writing**

Discussion Point: When Glenda Millard begins each book in the series, how much does she need to tell the reader about what has gone before, in case they haven't read the rest of the series? Did you spot anything she told the reader about previous books and what happened in them?

Activity: Write a brief story outline for a sequel to the other *Kingdom of Silk* books. In this one, Scarlet plays a large and central part in the plot. Who could be the main character in the sixth book? Make up your own title for the sequel too.

- **Series Illustration**

Discussion Point: How important is the continuity provided by the illustrator who has illustrated the series? Why do you think Stephen Michael King's illustrations work so well with Glenda Millard's text? How might it have changed if, for example, someone else had illustrated the series in a different style?

- **Characters**

Activity: There are several things which happen in the book which are lovely examples of the influence which the Silks have on other characters whom they encounter. For example, Layla's mum Caroline Elliott buys tarts she doesn't even like every week for months so that the Silks will have silver tart trays to make decorations from. Mrs Ogilvy has generally been very hard on Scarlett in the classroom, but realises that Scarlet's march is important: 'And she wished she had been brave enough to ask questions about big things, lucky enough to have a grandmother to tell her she could change the world, wise enough to believe it and bold enough to try.' (p 97) Who else is influenced by the Silks, in this book, or in the rest of the series, either to change their habits, or to become happier?

- **Chapter Headings**

Discussion Point: How do the chapter headings relate to the action in each chapter in the book?

D. VISUAL LITERACY AND ILLUSTRATION ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION POINTS:

- **Drawing**

Activity: Perry's favourite thing is to draw. Look at some of the drawings in this book. The artist Stephen Michael King uses watercolour overlaid on very fluid suggestive drawings. eg Scarlet riding her bicycle past the cafe (p 86). Invite your students to draw the image in their own way. How does the artist create a sense of movement? How has he used perspective to make Scarlet the dominant figure in the image? Invite your students to draw this or another image in the book, interpreting it in their own way.

- **Colours**

Activity: Colours can be explored to denote feelings as they do in this series. The colours chosen for the covers, for example, are muted pastels which suite the themes very well. Each of the 'Rainbow Girls' is named after a colour, and when Mr Kadri painted his café he painted it in rainbow colours. What does the concept of a rainbow represent thematically? Paint a rainbow.

- **Book Cover**

Activity: Covers need to convey a lot about a book's contents. Examine Stephen Michael King's cover image carefully and then design a new cover for this book.

- **Illustrator Study**

Activity: Study Stephen Michael's King's other works and discuss and compare his illustration style.

E. CREATIVE ARTS ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION POINTS:

Activity: **Create a Kingdom of Silk Christmas** in your classroom. Choose a tree which you think the Silks would like; make Christmas decorations like the ones which the Silks make out of silver tart trays; make food and drinks which you think the Silks would enjoy. OR Have a **Grandmother Nell Pirate Party**, by building a pirate ship in the classroom, creating a menu, and inventing some pirate games, like the ones she plays with Perry.

Activity: Have a **Poetry Reading** of all the poems created in the activity above in [B].

Activity: Create a **Classroom Display** with some of the stories and pictures you've created, inspired by the **Kingdom of Silk** series.

Activity: Design a **Peace Sign or Poster** advertising a peaceful march.

CONCLUSION

The Silks are a loving family who relish the fact that each of them is different.

Their eldest daughter Scarlet is a real 'red letter' girl; she's fiery, moody and unpredictable, or as Perry says she's 'scary ... like Kryptonite', since she's dangerously likely to fly off the handle, and make him lose his powers as Superman, and anyone else run for cover.

But, underneath it all, Scarlet has simply been looking for something to believe in. And Anik gives her that precious gift.

This is another triumph in the multi-award-winning *Kingdom of Silk* series. It's a skilful blend of reality and magic; of whimsy and wisdom; of families and fealty; of loss and love.

It's another concoction of delights which readers (adults and children alike) will find irresistible ...