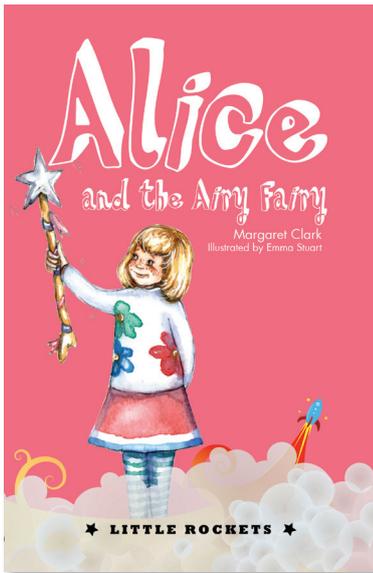


TEACHERS' NOTES

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Alice and the Airy Fairy

Written by Margaret Clark

Illustrated by Emma Stuart

Synopsis

Alice is intrigued when her mother's weird cousin, Mary, arrives to stay in an old blue camper van decorated with flowers, gold moons, stars and fairies with magic wands.

Dad says Mary behaves in an irresponsible airy fairy manner but Alice is convinced that Mary is a real fairy in disguise.

Mary wants to exhibit her paintings but she is rushed to hospital, leaving the family to gather the art works and take them for display. But are all the paintings hers or has there been a terrible mistake?

Author Motivation

The author was motivated to write this gently humorous book to foster and encourage children's imaginations.

Author Background Information

Margaret Clark is the published author, nationally and internationally, of 257 books for children and teenagers. Her genres range from hair-raising horror, adventures (*Aussie Angels* series), relationships and friendships (*Mango Street* series, *Chickabee* series, *Fat Chance* and sequels, *Hold My Hand or Else* and sequels), the darker side of life (*Back On Track – Diary of a Street Kid*, *Care Factor Zero*) and fantasy (*Web Watchers*). Non-fiction titles include *Secret Girls' Stuff* and *Secret Friends' Stuff*. *Alice and the Airy Fairy* is her first book for New Frontier.

Margaret lives in an old cottage and a rambling garden with two ginger and white cats called Bert and Harvi.



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Illustrator Background Information

Emma Stuart has been illustrating children's books for the past 12 years. During this time she has illustrated more than 40 books. Emma loves illustrating because it's like magic – "The characters already exist, I just bring them to life on the page." Emma enjoyed working on *Alice and the Airy Fairy* because she always believed in fairies as a little girl (and still does).

Educational Applicability

The theme of this book is family life and tolerance about different lifestyles, persistence in achieving creative goals, having an unlimited imagination and being able to solve problems.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Before Reading the Book

1. Discuss how some people have nomadic lifestyles. Why do they do this? What would be good about this, not so good? Do they have goals and ambitions or do they just drift along in an airy fairy fashion?
2. What happens when people come to stay for a few days or a few weeks or a few months and are the rules different?
3. Look at eight paintings that are all very different. Get children to select the one they like most and why. Then discuss the differences in opinions regarding colour, texture, composition, subject matter, style and intent.
4. Discuss families and extended families and the role of brothers and sisters in families.

After Reading the Book

1. Mary is a very different person compared to the other members of Alice's family. Talk about some of these differences.
2. Why do Bonnie and Alice think that Mary is a real fairy?
3. Bonnie caused trouble because she was only little. Discuss how siblings can be annoying and how to cope and be more tolerant.
4. This story is based on a true event that happened when a 'hippy', free-spirited artist came to stay in a van next door to the author. Has anyone unusual come to stay in the children's neighbourhood? Discuss.

ACTIVITIES

Design

Make a pair of fairy wings or a wizard's cloak and a wand that has magic powers. Maybe these can be used in a play or drama later on.

Language

Make up a rhyming spell that you can use to do your homework, your chores, or transport you to an exotic island, to Hollywood or outer space.



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Emotions

In *Alice and the Airy Fairy* there are many emotions. Ask the children to draw some of these on balloons (happy, sad, angry, amazed, frustrated) then let the balloons fly away.

Creative Writing

The children pretend that a witch, a wizard or a fairy has come to live next door. How would they know this? What would they see and hear? Write down the experiences with unlimited imagination but also the story must sound credible.



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