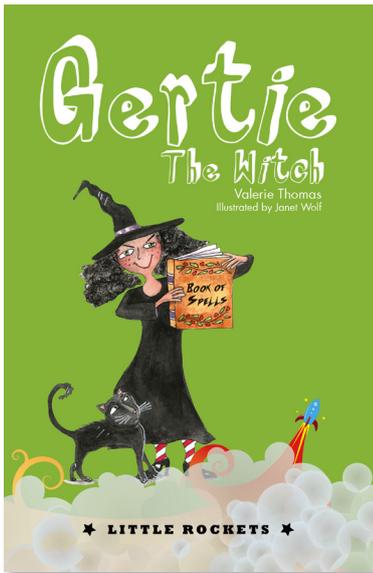


TEACHERS' NOTES

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Gertie the Witch

Written by Valerie Thomas

Illustrated by Janet Wolf

Synopsis

Gertie the Witch is the story of a witch who enjoys causing trouble. One of her favourite tricks is to turn the postman into a pig, or a duck, or whatever she feels like. But one postman, Sam Parker, has two children who decide to teach Gertie a lesson. When Gertie's sister Susie turns the Great Witch into a beetle, and Annie and Will Parker learn how to do magic spells, Gertie suddenly finds that she is the one in trouble.

Author motivation

The author's motivation in this book was to show, through an exciting and funny story, that children with imagination and determination can outsmart even a witch.

Author Background Information

Valerie Thomas has written lots of stories about witches. She started writing stories when she was at school, and when she started to travel around the world, she wrote stories about her travels. For many years she was an English teacher, and enjoyed helping her students to write stories. *Gertie the Witch* is her first story for New Frontier publishing.

Illustrator Background Information

Janet started writing and illustrating picture books in her home town of New York in 1981. In 1994, she moved to Melbourne, Australia, after meeting her future husband on a train from New York to Washington, DC. Janet loved creating Gertie, especially her red and white stockings. She had to do hours of research reading books, because she is yet to meet a real witch.



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Educational Applicability

Family values.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Before Reading the Book

1. What would you do to help your parents? List five things you could do to help your parents.
2. List some character values, such as responsibility, fairness and respect and ask the children to name others.
3. Talk to the children about legends, myths and fairytales. Is there a difference between them?
4. Which fairytales do you know that have a witch as a character? How are good witches depicted differently to bad witches in books and films? This can include their appearance and the way they behave.

After Reading the Book

1. What sort of children are Annie and Will? Discuss how Annie and Will helped their parents. Do you think Annie and Will did the right thing?
2. Discuss other books that have references to witches. Is Gertie a good witch or a bad witch?
3. Gertie and Susie are sisters and Annie and Will are brother and sister. Do they get on well? Discuss your relationship with your siblings. Do you always get along?
4. Do you think Gertie needed to learn a lesson? Did she learn her lesson? Is it good to use magic?

ACTIVITIES

Design

- Ask the children to create their own Books of Spells.
- Create a wand that can be used when casting a spell.

Language

Ask the children to shout out the words Will uses when he casts a spell. What other words can be used? For example, latin words in Harry Potter.

Emotions

Annie and Will go through a range of emotions in the story. Have the children identify the illustrations that depict anger, pain, frustration, surprise and worry. What other emotions could be drawn on Annie and Will by an illustrator.

MARKETING

The book will be marketed with the other books in the Little Rockets series.

The series was launched this year.

www.littlerockets.com.au



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