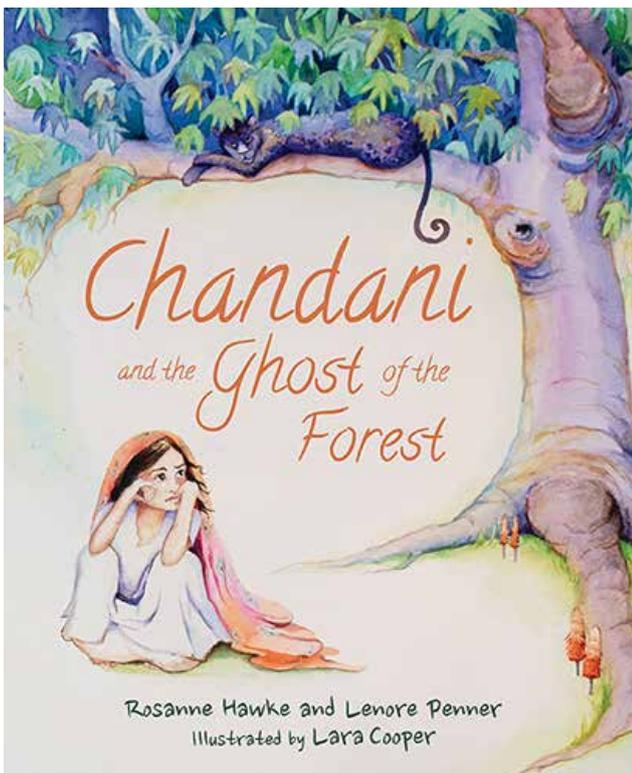




Wombat Books
Stories you'll want to share

Teacher's notes



Chandani and the Ghost of the Forest

Rosanne Hawke/Lenore Penner

ISBN: 9781925563450

Recommended retail: \$24.99 hardback

Reading level: Ages 6-10

Book summary

Once, the slave girl Chandani lived near the mysterious forest, dreaming of kindness. Her work was never done and she longed to go home. Then she discovered the Ghost of the Forest and her world changed forever.

A heartfelt fable of friendship and courage, *Chandani and the Ghost of the Forest* reminds us that hope can be found even in dark places.

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Contents

Book summary	1
Why study this book?	2
Themes	2
About the authors	3
About the illustrator	3
Questions and activities	4
Author interview	5
Illustrator statement	5
Key curriculum areas	6

Why study this book?

Child labour is a brutal and difficult fact of life in some countries, where poverty is widespread. By highlighting the issue at a young age, we can inspire the leaders of tomorrow to take action on this concerning issue. This book links to the Australia Curriculum, by establishing Australia's engagement with Asia, intercultural understanding and human rights. The vivid illustrations invite children to feel empathetic towards endangered animals.

Themes

Child-enforced labour/slavery/trafficking

The power of friendship

Courage in difficult circumstances

Endangered animals/forest and habitat loss

South-Asian culture

About the authors



Rosanne Hawke is a children's author who lived as an aid worker with her family in Northern Pakistan for seven years. Her daughter Lenore encouraged her to become a writer and this is the second picture book they have collaborated on together. Rosanne writes fiction built from personal experience and the way she sees the world. She wants to give a voice to children who are unheard. You can connect with her at www.rosannehawke.com



Lenore Penner is a primary school teacher with a passion to inspire enjoyment of reading in her students at Harvest Christian College. She lives on the Yorke Peninsula, South Australia with her husband and two daughters. The first book she co-authored with Rosanne was *The Wishgiver*, a delightful story about friendship.

About the illustrator



Lara Cooper is a dynamic painter across mediums, with a unique vision for artistic storytelling. As a result her work is unique, fresh and meaningful, both in subject and technique. Lara began painting almost 14 years ago and in those same years made several trips to Asia, including living for a year in Northern Thailand. In spending time with ordinary people in developing countries, Lara has also nurtured a deep concern for issues of justice. She has recently completed studying a degree in Intercultural Studies. Using painting as the expression of her concern for a more beautiful world, her work captures a complex mix of the real alongside the longed-for and imagined.

Questions and activities

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.

1. What do you think it would be like to be taken away from your family and become a slave?
 - Could you be happy?
 - Would you try to run away? Do you think Chandani tried to run away?
 - Why do you think she wouldn't succeed?
2. What would life be like in the forest alone for a child?
 - Why do you think the leopard took Chandani back to the lady?
3. Make a diorama of Chandani's new home or her old one. What does she miss the most?
4. Paint your favourite part of the story and explain why you like it.
5. Research black leopards. Why do you think the leopard is depicted as purple?
 - Write a paragraph about leopards, create a short video or paint a picture of them.
6. Research child labour. How many children each year are sold as slaves?
 - How do you think this practice could be stopped?
7. Chandani was taken after an earthquake. What do you think should have happened to Chandani?
 - Write a different story about Chandani, based on your answer. At the end, suggest how a better life could be made for other children like Chandani.
8. Read a selection of Aesop's fables. What makes a story a fable?
 - Write a fable where an animal helps someone. What does the person learn?
9. Research deforestation.
 - What happens to animals when their habitat is destroyed?
10. Make some Pakistani or North Indian food as a class, or try some at a local restaurant. Chandani would have eaten foods such as vegetable (subzi) or lentil (dhal) curry and chapattis.

Author interview

1. What inspired the story behind *Chandani and the Ghost of the Forest*?

We saw children forced into labour when we lived in Pakistan. This picture book is a voice for those children who are sold into domestic labour and their suffering is unheard. The Charity Compassion states 168 million children are trapped in child labour (almost 11% of the world's children).

2. Why do you think people should listen to fables in today's current political climate?

Originally, fables were written to show how to live morally. In today's society, most people believe morality is outdated and people should just do what they think is best as long as they are not hurting others. Even though Chandani's story doesn't have an obvious moral like older fables, we believe it is not moral to enslave or mistreat children, or trap and kill endangered animals.

3. What can we do to end child slavery?

We need to be more aware. Through awareness, change can happen. We need people who are willing to stand up and be a voice for those who aren't being heard. In the case of domestic labour, the families need help and education to escape their poverty and no longer need to send their children away to work. We have so many resources in the West we should share.

Illustrator statement

Many things contributed to the creative adventure that was illustrating *Chandani and the Ghost of the Forest*. Close to my heart were the times I have spent in South East and Central Asian countries, seeing firsthand the reality of poverty and feeling the internal struggle of coming back to my relative affluence in Australia. The imagined daily life of an unseen little girl, stuck in the grips of an unjust system far bigger than herself, is just one possible story amongst countless others. Other inspirations were more light-hearted. The purple tone in the leopard's coat was an artistic decision, to create an interesting black instead of a more standard flat black. Plus, I discovered that purple is one of Lenore's favourite colours! The page where Chandani's face is pressed up against the leopard is a call back to a favourite illustration of mine. It was in the large picture book version of *The Enchanted Wood*. Jo eats a 'toffee shock', which grows larger and larger in his mouth until it explodes! His overblown expression was clearly memorable!

Key curriculum areas

Year 2 English

ACELA1463
ACELA1469
ACELA1470
ACELT1589
ACELT1591
ACELY1668
ACELY1674

Year 3 English

ACELA1475
ACELA1483
ACELT1596
ACELT1599
ACELA1493
ACELA1496

Year 3 HASS

ACHASSI056
ACHASSK069

Year 4 English

ACELT1603
ACELY1692

Year 4 HASS

ACHASSI073

Year 5 English

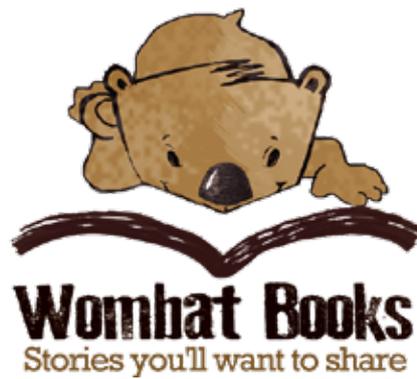
ACELA1505
ACELT1608
ACELY1698

Year 5 HASS

ACHASSI102
ACHASSI104

Year 6 HASS

ACHASSI130
ACHASSK139
ACHASSK148



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