

# A Swallow in Winter

AUTHOR

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ILLUSTRATOR

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Mid Primary



## SYNOPSIS

On a quiet Christmas night, a swallow takes flight from Africa, searching for something it cannot quite name. A disenchanted driver sits alone in his yellow truck, yearning to be home. And a man walks through the snowy streets, feeling utterly alone. But when the three destinies meet, it seems their search for hope, belonging and kindness has finally ended.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Timothée de Fombelle is a much-admired French playwright, as well as the author of award-winning fiction. His first series, *Toby Alone* and *Toby Alone and the Secrets of the Tree* has been published in 27 languages and has won numerous awards including France's prestigious Prix Sorcières and the Marsh Award. Timothée's adventure series, *Vango, Book One: Between Sky and Earth* and *Vango, Book Two: A Prince Without a Kingdom* received huge critical acclaim, and book one was granted an English Pen Award for translation. Timothée's beautiful story, *Captain Rosalie*, was first featured in the acclaimed collection *The Great War: an Anthology of Stories Inspired by Objects from the First World War*. Timothée lives in Paris.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Thomas Campi is an award-winning illustrator, who has been making comics for over twenty years. Thomas lives in Sydney.

## STUDY NOTES

- Before reading the novel, view the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:
  - The title of the book
  - The author
  - The publisher
  - The blurb.
- What can you see happening on the cover of this book?
- Based on the cover, what do you think this story is about? How do you think it will begin/end? Revisit your answer after reading the story to see if your predictions were correct.
  - After reading, design your own cover for the book with new imagery and a new tagline that will persuade and interest people in reading the book.

- Discuss the title of the book. Do you think this is a good title? Why or why not? If you were asked to choose an alternative title for the book, what would it be? Remember, a good title should capture the audience's attention and give them some idea of what the book is about.
- The orientation sets the scene, mood and introduces the characters. In the opening scene of the novel:
  - Which character/s are we introduced to?
  - What mood is the author setting?
  - Write what you think could happen in the story based on how the writer has set the story up.
- It is the author's job to create trouble for their characters. They need to make it difficult for the characters to achieve their goals. What trouble (complications) does the author create to make it difficult for the main character to achieve their goal/s?
- Can you identify the climax of the story, the moment of highest tension?
- Characterisation is how the characters in a novel are described physically, their point of view, their personalities, their private thoughts and their actions. Draw a picture of a character from the book and then describe their personality in five words.
  - Compare your ideas of that character with other people in your class. Did you imagine the same person?
- Consider the world the author has created in this novel. Can you describe it? How is it different to the world you live in? Which elements of the world seem realistic, and which seem fantastical?
- How does the story conclude/come to a resolution?
- Compare the ending of the story with how you imagined it ending at the end of the first chapter. Were you surprised by where the story went?
- Imagine if one of the characters wasn't in the story. How do you think the story would have been different? What do you think would have changed?
- Choose a scene in the novel and rewrite it from the perspective of another character. Focus particularly on the character's attitudes and feelings, rather than simply recounting events. How might another character see and experience events differently to the character in the novel?
- Imagine that a movie was being made of the novel. In small groups, create a soundtrack to accompany some of the key scenes, thinking particularly about the mood you want to convey. You could either make a compilation of existing songs or compose your own musical pieces. Present your soundtrack to the class, explaining why you have chosen the pieces you have. Also choose your ideal cast for the movie and create a movie poster.