

Pepper Masalah and the Flying Carpet

AUTHOR

ROSANNE HAWKE

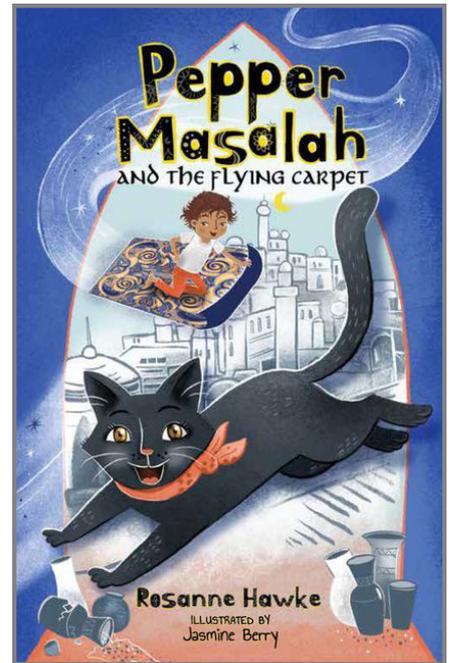
ILLUSTRATOR

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower to Mid Primary



SYNOPSIS

Pepper Masalah and her human, Zam, are whisked away on a magic carpet and find themselves in a faraway land. On this adventure they land in the Arabian peninsula and struggle with traders who won't return their carpet! Can their bond and their new friends help them find their way home?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Author Rosanne Hawke has been a teacher, a creative writing lecturer and a volunteer/aidworker in Pakistan and the UAE from 1981 to 1991. She spent two years in Al Ain, UAE (near the Omani border) between 1983–1985. She returned to Pakistan in 2006 on an Asialink Fellowship. She began writing in Pakistan and has over 35 books published. Many of her books are set in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Azad Kashmir or about Afghans and Pakistanis in Australia. These include *Shahana*, *Marrying Ameer*, *Beyond Borders* and *Taj and the Camel Trek*. She lives in rural South Australia; loves reading and cats, and has been kissed by a camel.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Jasmine Berry grew up in beautiful Albany, Western Australia. She has been drawing to impress the other kids, since she was old enough to hold a colouring pencil. But lately, she crafts these exciting and magical worlds with her computer, iPad and many coffees.

She lives in Perth with her husband and with two adorable cats, and a rather large collection of succulents.

You can find out more about her at the following Instagram: @jasmineberryart; Twitter: @jasmineberryart; Web: www.jasmineberryart.com.

THEMES

- Arab culture
- Friendship and kindness
- Cats
- Children in difficult situations
- Fantasy/adventure in the real world

STUDY NOTES

- Before reading the story, show the cover to the class and ask the students what they think the book might be about.

- Read the back cover blurb. Does this give them more of an idea of what the book could be about?
- Ask students if they can recognise the setting of this story from the cover image.
 - After reading the story, ask the students the following questions:
 - Does Pepper or Zam remind them of anyone they know: a friend, a sibling, their pet, themselves perhaps?
 - What is their first impression of Pepper Masalah? Of Zam?
 - How does Pepper change over the course of the story? Does Zam change too?
 - Ask students how they perceive Pepper and Zam's situation. Do they come through in the end?
 - Discover where the Arabian Peninsula is.
 - Read picture books on the Arabian desert and its people. How do they live, what do they wear, what do they eat?
 - Choose a cat fact and find out more info to write a short report about it. Discover more cat facts not listed in the story.
 - Weave carpets with wool or paint carpets with your own design after researching carpet and rug designs online. Write a paragraph about the carpet design you chose and say which country it comes from. Does the carpet have a name?
 - What would it be like to fly on a carpet? Where would you go and what would you do? Write a story.
 - How do you think the carpet can fly? Write an imaginative report explaining how you think a carpet could fly.
 - Choose an animal to be the main character in a story. Where will the story be set? What will be the problem the character will have to solve? Will the animal character talk? [Writing tip: when using an animal character they still need to be written about with the same care as you would write about a human character. So, Pepper can have emotions and thoughts, but she has cat behaviour too.]
 - Have you ever lost a pet? Write a story about the adventure it may be having.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- In the story, the carpet is flying on the wind at first. When can you tell it may be remembering how to fly?
- Why do you think Zam can now understand Pepper's meowing?
- Do you think the camel driver has a right to take Zam and Pepper? Why do some people do this? How should children stay safe?
- What do you think of having a cat as a character?
- Why do you think Hamood's family need to sell the carpet?
- What did you think of the souq, the marketplace? What do you think was an interesting stall? What else do think might be sold in this marketplace?
- What is the kindness that Pepper and Zam show for Hamood's family?
- The author, Rosanne, originally wrote Pepper Masalah's Cat Fact Files for herself while writing the story, then she thought readers might like to see this too. Do you think it's a good idea to include the cat file? Why?
- What information are you discovering in the news section? Why do you think the author included this?
- Can you guess why the author wrote this story about a lost cat and boy?
- Draw a circle for Pepper, surrounded by other circles to represent the other characters (Zam, Zam's dad, Hamood). In each circle draw a picture of that character. Underneath the picture write a list of adjectives to describe that character—for example: bossy, brave, kind, funny.
- Write a letter from Zam to his dad telling him about his adventures.
- Write a diary entry from Pepper's perspective, on how she felt about the events of the book.