

The Enchantment of Golden Eagle

AUTHOR

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ILLUSTRATOR

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower to Mid Primary



SYNOPSIS

One day, Ella and her little brother, Leif, found a fledgling with a broken wing. They took him home, wrapped and fed him, and watched over him for seven days and seven nights.

In time Golden Eagle was well enough to fly away, but he loved the children, so he promised to stay with them at the edge of the dark forest.

Until one day, the wind whispered and the breeze caressed his feathers, and Golden Eagle forgot his promise . . .

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Margaret Wild's thoughtful, award-winning children's books have been published with great success in many countries. They include *Old Pig* (shortlisted, CBCA Picture Book of the Year), *Fox* (winner, CBCA Picture Book of the Year), *The Dream of the Thylacine* (honour book, CBCA Picture Book of the Year), and *On the Day You Were Born*, all illustrated by Ron Brooks, plus many more, including *Chalk Boy* illustrated by Mandy Ord (shortlisted, CBCA Picture Book of the Year). Margaret has been the recipient of the Nan Chauncy Award and the Lady Cutler Award for her contributions to Australian literature.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Stephen Michael King has been described as an artist who 'draws from the inside out', and it is this gentle, intuitive truth that gives heart and playfulness to his work. Stephen Michael King is an internationally renowned, award-winning author and illustrator whose career has spanned over thirty years, producing more than one hundred titles. He has worked with a stable of Australia's best children's book authors including Glenda Millard, Margaret Wild, Nick Bland, Peter Carey and Tim Winton. Books that Stephen Michael King has written and illustrated include: *Three*, *Rainbow Bear*, *Mutt Dog!*, *Leaf and Milly* and *Jack and the Dancing Cat*. His books have been translated into over twenty languages, and he is frequently honoured in children's book award categories—including winning the CBCA Book of the Year Award, and the Prime Minister's Literary Award.

STUDY NOTES

- Before opening *The Enchantment of Golden Eagle*, look at the title and cover design. Discuss what students think the story might be about and the clues in the picture that make them think that. Ask questions, such as:
 - What part of the image grabs your attention right away?

- What feelings does this picture give you? Does the image feel happy, sad, exciting, or something else? What colours, shapes, or characters make you feel that way?
- How does the artist use colour to tell part of the story? Are the colours on the cover warm or cool? Bright or dark? What mood or message might the artist be showing?
- If you could step into the picture, what might you hear, smell or feel?
- What do you think might happen in this story?

Comprehension Questions

- What did Ella and her little brother, Leif, find?
- How did Ella and her family save the fledgling?
- What name was the fledgling given once it grew big and powerful?
- How did he protect the family?
- Why did he decide to stay with the family when he could have flown away?
- What did Golden Eagle do to make Ella and Leif angry?
- What did Ella do to punish Golden Eagle?
- Do Ella and Golden Eagle forgive each other at the end of the story?
- How does Ella change after Golden Eagle returns?
- Would you say the story ended ‘happily ever after’ for Golden Eagle and the family?

THEMES

Compassion & Caring

- Ella and Leif take great care of the hurt eagle. What do you think made them so kind? Have you ever looked after someone or something in need, like a pet or a friend? How did that make you feel?
- Golden Eagle feels like he owes the children everything because of their kindness. What does that say about how powerful kindness can be? Can you think of a time when someone’s kindness made a big difference in your life?

Anger & Reactions

- Ella is angry with Golden Eagle when he flies away and doesn’t protect her, and she curses him to fly for a year and a day. Why do you think she reacted that way? Have you ever been so angry that you said or did something you didn’t really mean? What helped you feel better?

Forgiveness & Saying Sorry

- At the end of the story, Ella forgives Golden Eagle—and she says sorry too. Why is it important for both people to apologise sometimes? Can you think of a time when someone said ‘I’m sorry’ to you, or you had to say it? How did it change things?
- Ella cursed Golden Eagle but later she admits the curse wasn’t real. What made her change her mind? What do you think helped her forgive Golden Eagle?

Family & Belonging

- Even though Golden Eagle is a bird, the family treats him like one of their own. What makes someone feel like part of a family? Can family mean more than just people you’re related to?
- Golden Eagle promised to protect the kids but succumbed to the temptation of flying. Do you think he broke his promise, or did he still try to care for them in his own way? What does it really mean to ‘look after’ someone?

Change, Growth & Connection

- How did the characters change from the start of the story to the end? What do these changes tell us about love, growing up, or learning to understand each other better?
- If you could talk to Ella or Golden Eagle at the end of the story, what would you say? Would you talk to them about anger, love, forgiveness, or something else? What message would you want to share?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Fairytale Symbol Hunt—Visual Comparison Activity

- Look closely at the images in *The Enchantment of Golden Eagle* and you will find lots of references to fairytales. Match the fairytale character below to the scene in the book where you find it and then answer a question to explore what it might mean in this story.

- The Wolves— Look for the pictures where wolves appear near the children’s home. Are they like the ‘big bad wolf’ in other fairytales? What do you think they represent here?
- The Three Billy Goats Gruff Crossing the Bridge—Find the scene featuring three goats and a bridge. Why did the billy goats need to cross the bridge in the original story? Why might Stephen Michael King have put them on this particular page?
- The Magical Flying Horse—Find the scene where Golden Eagle is flying in the sky with a giant magical horse. What does the horse help us understand about Golden Eagle’s plight?
- Choose one fairytale symbol from the book. It may be the wolves, the goats, the horse or something entirely different but related to fairytales. Draw the scene from *The Enchantment of Golden Eagle* where you see that symbol most clearly. Then write a few sentences about the following:
 - What’s happening in that moment?
 - What fairytale does it remind you of?
 - What feeling or message does the picture give you?

AUTHOR OF NOTES
CAROLYN WALSH