

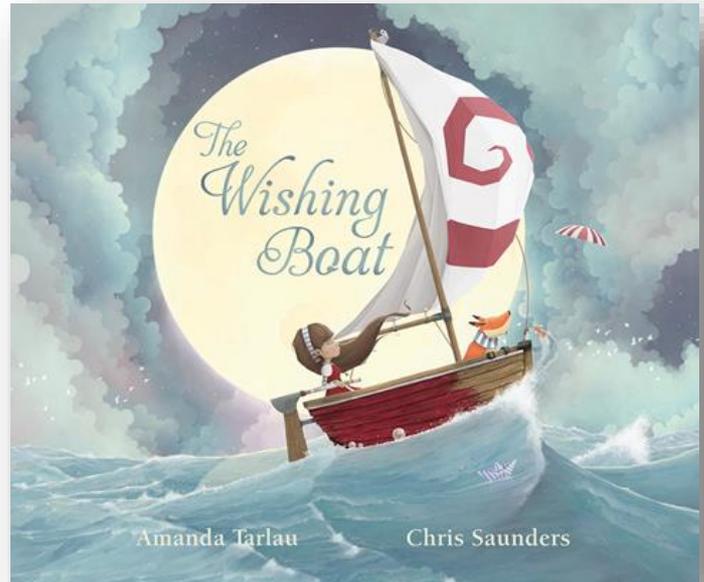
# The Wishing Boat

Author

Amanda Tarlau

Illustrator

Chris Saunders



*In my little wishing boat,  
I cast off with moonlit tide,  
Unfurling sails to chase the wind  
And explore the oceans wide.*

A little girl sets sail in her sleep and becomes an adventurer, exploring the ocean and seeing wonderful things. At the end of her dream, she heads for home, because there is no place quite like it. Drift along into a dream world of adventure, where anything is possible.

## TEACHER NOTES

Themes:

- Sea
- Sailing
- Marine life
- Dreams
- Journeys / adventures

### Writing Style

Amanda Tarlau uses onomatopoeia to harmonise the text with the images. Her descriptions are poetic and vague, letting Chris Saunders' illustrations take over in filling in the gaps. She uses short paragraphs to rhyme and create a flow within the book.

### Illustrating style

Chris Saunders creates his art from pencil sketches and then uses a digital medium to develop the artwork into full-blown illustrations. The artwork is colourful, detailed and quirky.

### Author Motivation

*Enid Blyton's natural environments — the whispering trees of the Enchanted Wood and the mysterious seaside villages inhabited by the Famous Five gang — were literary escape hatches which I eagerly jumped into. This diving out of reality into another world inspired me to develop The Wishing Boat, which was directly inspired by another favourite, the 1973 picture book Amanda, Dreaming by Barbara Wersba, with surreal, slightly ominous watercolour illustrations by Mercer Mayer. Given to me at a very early age by my grandmother, who died shortly after, it provided a tangible link to her and I believed for many years that the story was written in fact, about me!*

*From a young age I enjoyed writing short stories and poems, letting my imagination run amok, playing with words and experimenting with rhythm and rhyme. My previously published stories are all humorous, but I really wanted The Wishing Boat's character and her dream adventure to have a more contemplative and emotional tone, similar to Amanda, Dreaming. I found it challenging to adapt to this different writing style but I'm so pleased with the way the story resolved itself and how it matches so well with Chris's gorgeous whimsical illustrations.*

– Amanda Tarlau

### Author Background

Born in Sydney, Amanda spent much of her childhood sitting cross-legged in bookshops, reading lots of adventure stories and dreaming of one day becoming an author.

Although always a keen story-writer, Amanda's path meandered through fine arts and graphic design before she took the exhilarating leap into the world of words and publishing.

Amanda enjoys creating worlds where whimsy and magic happen in ordinary life, with characters who love to explore their worlds, learn a little and laugh a lot.

She lives on the Central Coast of NSW with her partner and two children.

### Illustrator Background

Chris Saunders was born 1988 in Bishop Auckland, Northeast UK, where he lives and works today.

He received an Illustration BA Honours Degree (First Class) from the University of Northampton and, prior to this, had attained an Art & Design BTEC National Diploma Foundation Studies with Distinction. Thanks to his experience in creative design and print companies, Chris has a good understanding of print and print ready artwork. He has helped create and design a variety of projects from the launch a national craft magazine to illustrating artwork sold on the *Ideal World* shopping channel.

Chris is largely self-taught and works mainly digitally these days; however, his pencils and watercolours are never too far away. Chris likes to create cute, gentle, floating, atmospheric imagery with an edge, blending stylised shapes with realistic texture and exaggerated physics. He likes to tell a story.

### Study Notes/Activities

- After reading the book, look at the first two pages and the last two pages where the girl is in her bedroom. What are the differences? In the last two pages list the things that have appeared in her bedroom which were from her dream.
- Look at the sailboat in the book and, as a class, see if you can name its parts (e.g. bow, mainsail, keel, hull etc.).
- With your knowledge of the parts of a boat, design your own sailboat. How big will it be? What colour? What design will it have on the sail?

- On pages 15-16, the girl makes origami paper boats and they float. Watch this tutorial and make boats as a class <http://bit.ly/1wMAX1X> Test out the boats and see if they float. In the book, the boats then turn into origami cranes. If the children excel at the paper boats try to make the much harder origami cranes <http://bit.ly/18ZSfCU>
- Using the design you made for a boat earlier, draw it onto your origami boat. Stick a paper sail to a pencil and use tape to stick that to your boat.
- The little girl in the book has been traveling. Have you been traveling before? Where did you go? What did you do? Use a map, and as a class, mark everywhere that you have been.
- As a class use a world map to decide where you would go on a sailing trip. Decide on the locations and work out how long it would take you to get there and how far you would travel.
- The character in the book says she travels without a compass or a map. Make your own compass using this technique: <http://bit.ly/2ldTZ4W> Test out the children's compasses in the playground. Ask them to navigate their way to a spot marked with an X using instructions such as '10 steps north, 5 steps east etc.'
- On page 9-10, the little girl is writing to her friends about her travels. Imagine you are the character and you've gone on the great adventure she has. Write a letter to a family member or friend describing everything you have seen and done.
- The little girl's toy fox comes to life and goes on the adventure with her. Do you have a toy that you would like to come to life and go on adventures with? Bring that toy to show and tell.
- List all the marine animals you noticed when you read the book, e.g. koi fish, jellyfish, octopus, humpback whales. Brainstorm what you know about these creatures. Find out what they eat, where they live etc.
- On pages 11-12, look at the way the illustrator, Chris Saunders, made the stars and the moon reflect on the water. Make your own stars by poking holes in a piece of paper. In a dark room put a torch under the piece of paper and see the light on the ceiling through the paper.

- When reading the book, note all the different colours in the sky. The sky changes colour frequently throughout the day, becoming a variety of different, vivid colours. In an exercise, create similes using the colour of the sky and tell the children to be as creative as possible (e.g. the sky is orange like a fox). Use a colour wheel to be accurate.