



Teachers' Notes

Tanglewood

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Illustrated by Vivienne Goodman

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OMNIBUS BOOKS

Category	Picture Book
Title	Tanglewood
Author	Margaret Wild
Illustrator	Vivienne Goodman
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About the Story

On a small island far away from anywhere is a tree named Tanglewood. All alone with no one for company, Tanglewood calls to the creatures of the sea but none answer. One day a storm brings a seagull seeking shelter and a friendship between the two begins. But now that Tanglewood has experienced companionship, the tree's loneliness is greater than ever when the seagull leaves. This is a lovely story about the trials of solitude and the importance of friends and family, with wonderfully emotive illustrations.

About the Author

Margaret Wild is one of Australia's leading children's book authors. She has worked as a journalist and an editor, and now writes full time. Her many award-winning titles include *Toby*, *Our Granny*, *Miss Lily's Fabulous Pink Feather Boa*, and *Woolvs in the Sitee*.

About the Illustrator

Vivienne Goodman is renowned for her beautifully detailed artwork, which has appeared on many book covers including *The Barrumbi Kids* by Leonie Norrington and even on postage stamps. Her previous picture books are *Oodoolay*, written by Robin Klein, *Guess What?* by Mem Fox and *Where the Whales Sing* by Victor Kelleher. In 2008, Vivienne collaborated with Omnibus Books on the reissue of *Guess What?* for its 20th anniversary.

Study Notes for Teachers

1. *Tanglewood* is a great starting point for creative fun and teaching children to think about what they read. It's important to reread picture books, as children will notice new elements and learn with each reading.

- The first time you read through the book, teach children how we read from left to right. On this reading just show the children the illustrations instead of reading aloud to them. Have them come up with their own story on what the illustrations convey.
 - Read through the story once without showing the children the illustrations. As a class have them create tableau scenes in response to each page.
 - For older children, ask them to write down what they think as you read the story and when you've finished, talk about the questions and ideas they've come up with.
 - Read the book and ask children to mime the actions of what they hear.
 - Ask the children what they think the story is about.
 - Assign each child a word from the book and ask them to use it in a sentence.
2. Use *Tanglewood* as a platform for activities and discussions on family:
- Find out how children define family. Go around the class and ask each child to finish the sentence 'family is' or 'family means'.
 - Have a discussion about what makes a family. Does the definition extend to our friends or pets? Talk about why family is so important to us. Talk about what a family offers – companionship, love, shelter, support, etc., and how *Tanglewood* has none of these things to begin with and how this makes the tree feel.
 - Have children draw a family tree showing their connection with their family members.
 - Talk about the different family groups in *Tanglewood*; there are seals, birds and dolphins. Do children think of animals having family like people?
 - Ask children to draw a family portrait.
3. *Tanglewood* is an ideal book to discuss nature and the environment:
- See if children know why trees are so important to our existence. Explain their many functions: they provide food for humans and animals; they provide shelter for all kinds of wildlife; we use trees to build houses and furniture and to make paper products like picture books; trees clean the air we breathe and create oxygen, which we need to live.
 - Have a discussion about the cycle of life and how there are many reciprocal relationships. Explain that birds carrying seeds and creating new growth is one

of many events that takes place in our environment that stimulates life and growth. A very simple example is humans care for plants that produce food.

- Start a nature club for children to teach them about our relationship with the natural world. Part of their role could be to document natural objects in illustration, using the pictures from *Tanglewood* as a guide.
- Build a bird shelter together to hang in the yard and as a class monitor the different bird species that make use of it.
- Use *Tanglewood* to introduce the concept of seasons and show how the illustrations reveal the passage of time. Ask children to describe each season.

4. *Tanglewood* can be used to talk about the ocean and our relationship with it.

- Ask children what they think you would find in the ocean.
- Turn the classroom into an ocean and make fish mobiles to hang up. Turn your desk into the island and have a small paper tree to represent how small *Tanglewood* is compared to the vastness of the ocean.
- Birds are able to fly over oceans. Ask children if they know how people travel the seas.
- Tell children that Australia is a big island and show them on a map how the ocean surrounds us.

5. This is a story about resilience and the sorrow that accompanies loneliness. Use these themes for activities and discussions about feelings:

- Ask children to describe how they feel when they are lonely. Find out how they felt when they heard that *Tanglewood* was all by itself.
- Make a list of the emotions in *Tanglewood* and have children express these emotions through mime.
- Talk about how caring for one another is very important and emphasise the importance of friendship. Ask children what they want in a good friend.
- On a read through of the book, map the change in *Tanglewood*'s emotions. Ask children to respond to *Tanglewood*'s determination to live on. Explain that sometimes we will feel sad and lonely but these feelings won't last forever.
- At the novel's end, there is a strong sense of hope for *Tanglewood*'s future. Ask children what they think of the book's ending.