

Teacher Notes

Bubbay: A Christmas Adventure
written by Josie Wowolla Boyle and illustrated by Fern Martins

Magabala Books

Teacher Notes prepared by Christina Wheeler (Teacher Librarian)

SYNOPSIS

Bubbay lives in the outback, spending his days protecting his herd of goats. He sleeps under the stars, but is lonely. His greatest wish is to have a Christmas tree of his own and to share Christmas with a family. When he makes this wish, he is amazed by what follows.

Bubbay: A Christmas Adventure is a warm picture book that shows how the natural and spiritual worlds can intervene to create hope and magic.

THEMES

Friendship/Loneliness

- Bubbay and Mrs Timms are both lonely; the magic of Christmas helps bring them together.
- The stars are Bubbay's friends; they help his wish become reality.

Christmas

- Christmas is a time to celebrate with family and friends.
- Miracles and hope are a feature of both the Christmas story and *Bubbay: A Christmas Adventure*

Hope

- Hope is an important theme in *Bubbay: A Christmas Adventure*

WRITING STYLE

Bubbay: A Christmas Adventure is written in third person, past tense. It combines aspects of the spirit of Christmas with Bubbay's situation. The text shares the innocence and simple desires of Bubbay, a boy who wants nothing more than what many take for granted.

STUDY QUESTIONS

- The title *Bubbay: A Christmas Adventure* gives us clues about the story. Use the end covers of the book to make predictions about the setting and plot of this text.
- Bubbay looks after a herd of goats. Compare Bubbay and the shepherds from the nativity story. How are they similar and different?
- When you first meet Mrs Timms, what are your impressions of her situation? What do we learn about Mrs Timms' character from the text?
- Bubbay waits up on Christmas Eve. He watches for the reindeers and thinks about how people are getting ready to celebrate Christmas. Write a reflection that describes how you spend Christmas Eve.
- Bubbay makes wishes to the stars. What are his wishes? Why does he wish for these things?
- When the stars sparkle and 'flash their fiery tail' across the sky, what do you think will happen next?
- Were you expecting the Christmas tree to be able to talk? Why do you think the author decided to include a talking Christmas tree in the story?
- What five special things would you use to decorate the tree?
- Old Grandma Gubarlee comes to help Bubbay realise his dreams. Discuss the role that Gubarlee plays in the story. What other stories can you think of that include a special character like her?
- How does this story interweave indigenous and non-Indigenous beliefs and values?
- There are many parallels between *Bubbay: A Christmas Adventure* and the Christmas story. In small groups, brainstorm any similarities such as the miracles, the giving of gifts, the importance of the star etc.
- The desert animals choose their best objects to give to Bubbay. Why do they do this? How is this similar to the gifts the wise men give to Jesus?
- Why did the tree also want a shell, knowing how hard that would be to find in the desert? How did you feel when Gubarlee gave Bubbay her shell? What does this show about Gubarlee and her relationship with Bubbay?
- Look carefully at Bubbay's face when he is given Gubarlee's shell. Imagine you are Bubbay. Write a journal entry to explain what you're feeling at this point in the story.
- Often, a star is put at the top of the Christmas tree. Why does Bubbay place his shell there?
- What do you think is the author's message in *Bubbay: A Christmas Adventure*?
- How important are the stars to Bubbay?
- Use watercolour pencils to recreate your own illustrations that show the magic of Christmas.
- Discuss the illustrator's choice of colours in this text. Use a colour wheel to look at these choices. Also consider the colours of the outback and of Christmas.