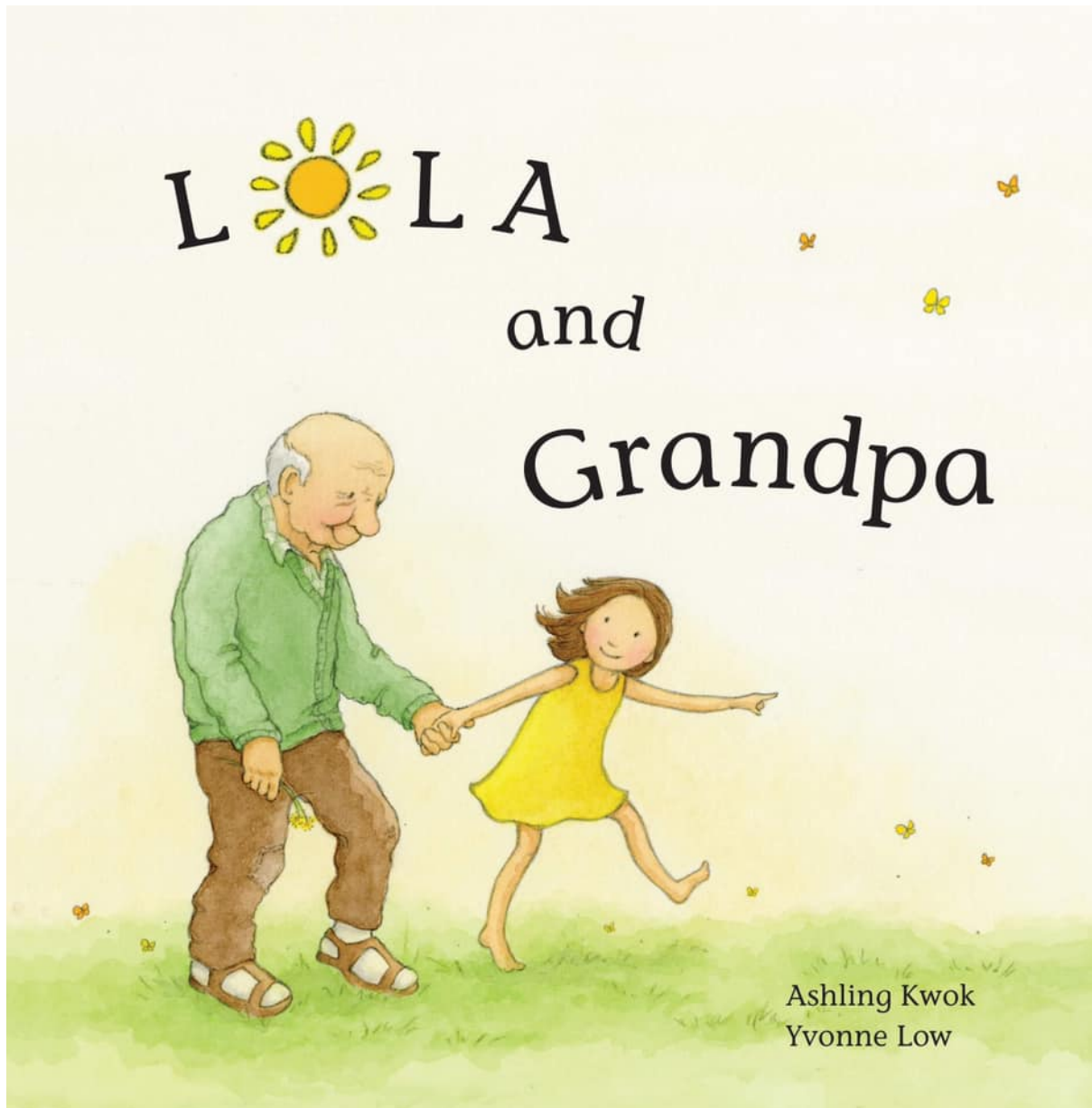


LITTLE PINK DOG BOOKS
TEACHER NOTES



Title: Lola and Grandpa

Author: Ashling Kwok

Illustrator: Yvonne Low

Publisher: Little Pink Dog Books

Price: \$24.95

ISBN: 978-0-6486528-0-9

Publication date: May 2020

Audience age: 5-10

Key Curriculum Areas: English,
Humanities, Health, Arts

SYNOPSIS: Every Sunday Lola visits her Grandpa. They spend the day examining the universe and teaching each other about the world. But one day, Grandpa isn't there anymore. Lola struggles to deal with the loss. But as time goes by Lola realises that her Grandpa will always be with her - in her heart and in the memories they made. A beautiful and reassuring story of love, loss, and the value of memories.

LITTLE PINK DOG BOOKS

TEACHER NOTES

THEMES: Love, Loss, Grief, Coping, Despair, Emotional Resilience, Happiness, Family, Relationships.

SELLING POINTS:

- Gentle, endearing and relatable characters.
- Tender, whimsical illustrations that depict love, joy, despair and hope.
- Universal appeal - a topic that everyone can relate to.
- Highlights the special relationship between grandparents and grandchildren.
- Emphasises how important it is to spend time with loved ones.
- Teaches children to live in the moment and make the most of every day.
- A great resource for supporting childhood mental health and helping children deal with loss.
- A good tool for discussing traumatic events that we all have to deal with.
- Offers practical, non-didactic support to anyone helping children deal with grief and traumatic life events - parents, teachers, counsellors, grief support organisations, psychologists.

WRITING STYLE:

Tender, sensitive, and emotional.

AUTHOR MOTIVATION:

To introduce the concept of grief and death to young children. I believe that it's important for children to understand that loss is a part of life. But it's more important to help children build resilience so they can deal with traumatic events. I also think it's imperative to remember how important it is to spend time with loved ones, value the simple things in life, and treasure every moment.

LITTLE PINK DOG BOOKS TEACHER NOTES

AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR BACKGROUND:

Ashling Kwok is a freelance journalist and children's author who is obsessed with words. When she's not dreaming up new ideas or working on her latest manuscript, Ashling can be found scouring local bookstores, marveling at all the wonderful books being created by talented children's authors. Ashling lives in Sydney with her husband, two children, and energetic border collie, Jed.

Yvonne Low is a writer, illustrator and award-winning artist who enjoys playing with words and colours and is particularly inspired by nature. As an artist, Yvonne works in pencil and watercolour, pen and ink, acrylic, pastel and digital media. Yvonne writes poetry, picture books and short stories, and you can find her work at Little Pink Dog Books, Christmas Press, ABC Commercial and *The School Magazine*.

INTERVIEW:

AUTHOR – Ashling Kwok

What is the inspiration for this story?

This story was inspired by my dad and the unconditional love he has always shown his family. Thankfully my dad is still with us but all I had to imagine how we would feel if we lost him. The premise for the story came from the standing at my parent's kitchen window watching my dad and daughter stroll around his garden. They would examine everything around them and talk about the meaning of life. Then my dad would lift my daughter up into his arms so she could touch the sunflowers and cuddle him tight. Seeing this reminded me of my childhood and the special moments I shared with my dad.

What was the most rewarding part of this project?

Every single part of this project was rewarding. It only took me a few weeks to write this book because the words poured from my heart. Being able to hand my dad a copy of my book has been a highlight of my life, and he is overwhelmed to know how much he is loved.

What was the most challenging part of this project?

The most challenging part was trying to say everything I wanted to in a few hundred words. I could write tomes about the wonderful man that I am lucky to call my dad.

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INTERVIEW:

ILLUSTRATOR – Yvonne Low

What is the Illustrator's Process?

When Publisher Little Pink Dog Books approached me to illustrate Ashling's story, I was immediately struck by the beautiful narrative and the obviously tender relationship she had so effectively portrayed between Lola and her grandfather. There were tears in my eyes, when I finished reading.

The job of the illustrator is to illuminate the story in ways which are not necessarily obvious in the text, and to provide an even more immediate and emotional connection with the reader. I hope I've managed to do this.

I initially read the story a few times, trying always to remember that first emotional connection I'd had myself, and to look for the special moments in the text, which could really reveal Lola and Grandpa's love for each other. Luckily, Ashling had given me plenty of scope to use my imagination and explore different approaches, without having 'spelt out' what the two characters might get up to when they spent time with each other.

This meant I could think about my own experiences when I was young with my grandparents, and also the treasured moments my own children have had with their grandparents. Grandpa has a dog called Patch and also owns chickens, and he enjoys being out in the garden with Lola. I'm inspired by nature and love drawing animals especially, so I very quickly came to the conclusion that Grandpa would be living somewhere out in the countryside, but not too far away so that Lola could easily visit him each Sunday. This also meant I could easily create the right environment for plenty of fun discoveries and exploration by Lola with Grandpa.

The most challenging part of the project was creating the character of Grandpa, as I had never actually drawn an old man before! So I started taking more notice of elderly gentlemen I might see on the street, looking at old photos and thinking about my own father and grandfather as they aged.

The other tricky part was when Grandpa dies and Lola's world changes around her. The key for me in the end was Ashling's words 'Overnight the world has altered and changed shape.' I literally created a 'boxed in' world for Lola, as well as changed the warm, happy colour palette I was using, to become cold - grey, blue and a little washed out, just like the rain which was now falling in the story.

I used various motifs in my illustrations throughout the book as well, to subtly thread through the story the important emotional connections which the two characters have, from the beginning. Watch out for the butterflies and the birds, for example.

The illustrations were created in pencil and watercolour, with some touching up digitally in Photoshop.

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TEACHER ACTIVITIES/NOTES:

ENGLISH

Before Reading

- Examine the Front cover. What do you think this book is about?
- How do the colours make you feel?
- Now read the blurb on the Back Cover. What else have you learnt about the story?

After reading

- Now what is the story about? Is it different to what you originally thought?
- What sorts of words describe how Lola is feeling in the beginning of the story (eg. Happy, Excited)
- What do Lola and Grandpa like to do when they're together?
- What made Lola sad?
- Have you ever felt this way? If so, when?
- How did you deal with those feelings? Did someone help you feel better?
- Why are grandparents and loved ones so important to us?
- What made Lola feel better?
- Do you like how the story ends? Why or why not?
- What sorts of words describe how Lola is feeling at the end of the story? (eg. Joyful, Loved)
- Why does she feel this way?
- Have you ever felt this way? If so, when?
- What were your favourite pages? Why?

LITTLE PINK DOG BOOKS TEACHER NOTES

TEACHER ACTIVITIES/NOTES:

ART

- What colours has the illustrator used in the book to tell the story? eg. Warm, happy colours (red, orange, yellow) or Cold, sad colours (Blue, grey). Did this affect the way you felt about different moments in the story?
- What colours did the illustrator choose for the two main characters? What colours are Lola's clothes? What colours are Grandpa's clothes? Why were these colours chosen?
- A 'motif' is a word or image, which recurs throughout a story and is used to emphasise a feeling or idea, which is important to the storyline or the characters themselves.

The illustrator has used a number of motifs throughout the book, including in the Covers and the Endpapers. Can you spot the use of 'birds', 'butterflies', 'daisies' and 'stars' in the book? Why has the illustrator chosen to repeat these throughout the story?

- The illustrator used her imagination to depict the moments which Lola and Grandpa might enjoy together, such as picking strawberries, collecting lemons to make lemonade, dancing in the garden. What do you like to do with your grandparents? Can you draw your favourite shared activities?
- How did the illustrator show that Lola's world had changed? How are these pictures different to the happy moments in the story?
- How did the illustrator show that Lola was sad? How do you know that Lola was feeling lost and alone?
- What are Endpapers? Endpapers can set the tone of the book, and introduce the reader to the characters or a motif in the book.

Examine the endpapers used in *Lola and Grandpa*. Why did the illustrator include Grandpa's watering can in the back endpaper – what special flowers are sitting inside the watering can?

Try drawing your own story and include front and back endpapers.

- What were your favourite images? Why?

LITTLE PINK DOG BOOKS TEACHER NOTES

ACTIVITIES:



Sunflowers

Lola and Grandpa love the garden and enjoy planting flowers together. One of their favourite flowers is the Sunflower.

What is your favourite flower? Do you have a garden?

SUNFLOWER FUN FACTS!

What colour are sunflowers?
Most sunflowers are yellow, but they can even be red or purple!

Where do sunflowers grow?

Sunflowers are native to North America, but are now grown around the world.

How high do Sunflowers grow?

The American Giant Sunflower can grow as high as 4 metres!
Their flower heads (or faces) can be 30cm wide!
Not all sunflowers are tall – some don't grow higher than about 60cm.

How fast do Sunflowers grow?

Sunflowers can grow very quickly – even up to almost 4 metres tall in 6 months.

Many painters are inspired by the Sunflower.

Dutch artist Vincent van Gogh was probably the most famous artist to paint these beautiful plants. Why don't you take a look at his Sunflower paintings?
You could even try painting a picture yourself.



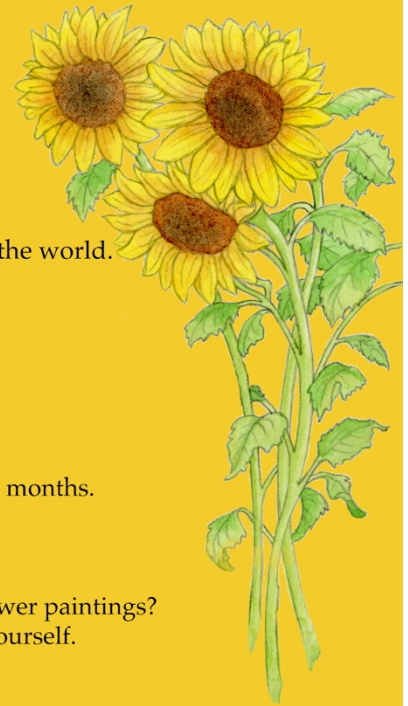
Naturally, sunflowers love the sun!

But more than that, young sunflowers 'track the sun', which means their flower heads follow the sun from sunrise to sunset every day.
A mature flower usually points east, without turning during the day.

Can you eat sunflower seeds?

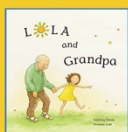
Yes! You can find them harvested and packaged in shops to eat as a snack.
You might even find sunflower oil in cooking or as margarine to spread on your bread.

The head of the sunflower is made up of lots of tiny flowers, called 'central florets', while the beautiful brightly coloured petals surrounding these are also 'flowers'. They are called 'ray florets'. After pollination, usually by a bee or bird (though they can self-pollinate), each of these 'florets' produces a seed.



**If you have a sunny garden, or maybe a balcony with pots -
why don't you plant some beautiful Sunflowers . . .**

and watch them grow!



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**LITTLE PINK DOG BOOKS
TEACHER NOTES**



GROW YOUR OWN SUNFLOWERS

What you will need:

3 white plastic cups
Sunflower seeds
Soil (and Compost)
Plant sprayer (optional)
3 large flowerpots



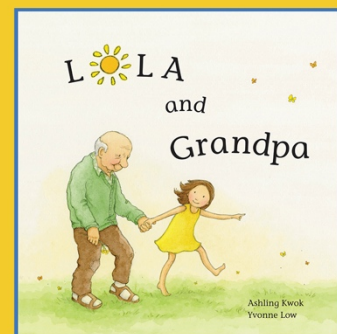
Instructions:

1. Put some damp soil in a plastic cup so it comes almost to the top.
Then poke your finger in the soil to make a hole for your sunflower seed.
2. Place a sunflower seed in the hole and cover it with soil. Sprinkle some water on top.
3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 with the other two cups.
4. Put the cups in a sunny spot in the garden. Spray the soil with water whenever it feels dry.
5. Your plants should pop up through the soil after about 1 or 2 weeks.
6. When your plants grow too big for the cups, plant them in bigger flowerpots.
7. Your plants should flower after about 8 weeks.
8. Measure your sunflower plants once a week. Write down how tall each one is.



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Make your own Home-made Lemonade

Note: This recipe requires adult supervision

What you will need:

- 8 to 10 large lemons
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 6 cups cold water
- Ice
- Lemon slices, for serving (optional)

Equipment:

- Measuring cup
- Medium bowl
- Knife (for an adult to use)
- Cutting board
- Jug
- Fine-mesh strainer

Instructions:

1. Ask an adult to cut the lemons in half.
2. Squeeze the juice from the halves into a large measuring cup.
3. Strain the juice through a fine mesh strainer into a bowl to remove the pulp before making the lemonade.
4. Add the sugar to the strained lemon juice and whisk until the sugar is completely dissolved.
5. Pour into a jug, then add the water and stir to combine.
6. Chill the lemonade for at least 1 hour before serving.
7. Serve the lemonade over ice with lemon slices if desired.



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