

Carpet Of Dreams

Written by Tessa Duder and illustrated by Mark Wilson

Teaching notes written by Christine Sarandis



Book Description

When Sara goes to stay with her grandmother, she discovers a dusty old Turkish carpet in the attic. Mesmerised by beautiful animals woven into the carpet, she embarks upon a magical and dreamlike journey that takes her back through time and place, to ultimately discover the roots of her family.

An exquisitely illustrated picture book that celebrates the importance of family and cultural history and the special bonds between grandparent and grandchild.

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Author biography

Tessa Duder is a leading New Zealand author for both children and adults. She has an international following for her multiple award-winning *Alex* and *Tiggie Tompson* series, and her work also includes short stories, plays, non-fiction and anthologies. *Alex*, the first book of the acclaimed Alex Quartet, was made into a feature movie, while among her recent books for adults is an acclaimed portrait of the 2006 Hans Christian Andersen Medal winner Margaret Mahy.

A recurring theme of her work is Tessa's love of the sea and related activities such as sailing and swimming, which she says reflects her upbringing as an Aucklander. Earlier in her life, she won a Commonwealth Games silver medal for swimming, and currently she serves on the Spirit of Adventure Trust which operates New Zealand's youth development tall ship.

Among Tessa's awards are the Storylines Margaret Mahy Medal and in 2003, New Zealand's most prestigious literary fellowship, the Meridian Energy Katherine Mansfield Fellowship to Menton, France. She lives and works in Auckland and has four daughters and two grandchildren.

For more information on Tessa, go to: <http://www.tessaduder.com/>

Illustrator biography

Mark Wilson is an artist who has won numerous awards for his children's book illustrations. He won a CBCA Award in 2006 for *Young Murphy: A Boy's Adventure* and in 2004 won the Whiteley Award and the Wilderness Society Environment Award for Children's Literature for The Extinction Trilogy. His previous book, *Yellow Eye*, won both awards in 2002.

On his website, Mark says:

I was born in Melbourne in 1949. I always loved drawing, and spent most evenings drawing on huge sheets of paper that my dad brought home from work. I then spent my teenage years pretending to be a drummer in a rock band.

I studied Mural design, painting at C.I.T. (now Monash-Caulfield Campus), and did a diploma in education the following year. In the early seventies, I became designer and illustrator for The Education Magazine and Pursuit magazine still playing drums though!). For the last seventeen years, I have been freelance illustrating children's books, also doing history, sport, architecture and conservation books and kits.

Much of my painting is involved with conservation and wildlife, particularly endangered species. My new book for Lothian, *Prayer for the Animals*, deals with this subject, as do many of my books with Gary Crew, like The Extinction trilogy for Lothian.

For more information on Mark, go to <http://www.markwilson.com.au/>

Characters

Sara, Babaanne, other members of their family referred to in the story

The story opening

- How often did Sara stay with her grandmother?
- Why had Sara's grandmother planted cheery and apricot trees in her garden?
- What was different about this recent visit and what did Sara notice for the first time?
- Which sensations did Sara experience as she entered the room?
- Describe the things Babaanne told Sara about the carpet?
- Why did Sara want the carpet in her room?
- Who had enjoyed adventures with the carpet before Sara?
- Where might the carpet have come from?

Themes and thematic study

Dreams

Dream 1

Roses

- In Sara's first dream she meets a girl who will lead her on her journey. Discuss who this girl might be and her role in Sara's dreams.
- In this dream, what was the first thing Sara noticed?
- What did Sara learn about roses from the dream?
- Describe the link between the rose dream and what Sara learns from Babaanne when she awakes. (Please refer to the rose jam recipe below.)
- Try making the Rose Jam recipe listed below.

Pink rose petal jam

You will need:

6 cups white sugar

2 cups rosewater

1 cup orange flower water

1 cup water

24 sweet scented pink roses

1 cup boiling water
2 tsp lemon juice

Method:

Combine sugar, rosewater, orange flower water and water in a non aluminum saucepan. Bring to the boil and cook rapidly until mixture is syrupy.

Prepare roses by removing white 'heel' from petals and place in a large china bowl with the cup of boiling water. Stir gently. Add petals and liquid to boiling syrup continuing to stir constantly. Boil for a further 30 minutes, pressing petals down into syrup. When petals are tender and syrup has clarified, add lemon juice and continue to boil again until gel point is reached. Spoon into sterile glass jars and cap securely.

Dream 2

Buffalo

- In this dream, Sara learnt about the buffalo or bison. What was his complaint?
- Which activity did Sara's discussion with Babaanne lead to in this instance?

Dream 3

Dolphins

- What did Sara learn about dolphins in this dream?
- And when she awoke, Babaane told her more about them. Which activity did Sara and her grandmother decide to do after this dream?

Dream 4

Lions

- In this dream, the lion reveals the threat to his species' existence. What is it and how has it affected his species?
- And Later, Babaanne explained how lions live in family units as part of a pride. Discuss and compare this with other animal species' way of life.
- How did Babaanne and Sara plan to learn more about lions?

Dream 5

Peacocks

- What did Sara learn about the peacock and its feathers in this dream?
Refer to the following links for comparative information about this superstition and their association with good or bad luck.
http://www.khandro.net/animal_bird_peacock.htm
<http://www.crystalinks.com/peacocks.html> In this link, refer to the section entitled *Superstitions About the Peacock and Their Feathers*.
- How did Sara and Babaanne live up the vase of peacock feathers together?

Dream 6

Elephants

- Describe what is revealed to Sara during this dream.
- And afterwards, which reasons did Babaanne give Sara to explain the history behind her ivory bracelet and the keys on her piano?

Dream 7

Camels

- In Sara's dream, to what did the camel liken itself? Discuss.
- What did Sara learn about camels in this dream?
- Afterwards, Sara learnt something new about her grandfather. How and when had he been involved with camels?
- Investigate the differences between camels with one hump and two and find out where they live. Refer to the following site for some brilliant kid-friendly information about these amazing creatures.: <http://www.kidskonnnect.com/Camel/CamelsHome.html>

Dream 8

Horses

- In this dream Sara learnt that horses played many different roles as working animals. List these.
- As a child Babaanne had ridden a horse. What had she dreamt of during her rides?
- Where did Sara and Babaanne plan to go after this dream?

Dream 9

Donkeys

- Why did the donkey say it was better than a horse or camel in this dream?
- Explore the role that a donkey played prior to the birth of Jesus?
- Investigate other important roles donkeys have played throughout history? Refer to the following links for relevant information:
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donkey>
www.diggerhistory.info/pages-heroes/simpson.htm
<http://www.diggerhistory.info/pages-heroes/simpson.htm#untold>
- After Sara awoke from this dream, why did Babaanne say that there were animals on the carpet? Discuss

Dream 10

The carpet

- How long did it take the girl in Sara's dream to make the carpet?
- What did she say about the pattern on the carpet and what would happen to it once it was finished?
- Who was the girl in Sara's dream and what was her name?
- When she awoke, Babaanne showed Sara an inscription on the carpet. What was it and what was its meaning?
- When Sara realized that the girl in her dream was Babaanne, what other discoveries did she make?
- How is the name 'Rose' significant to the women in Sara's family?

Dreams – general questions

- Do you think Sara is dreaming or daydreaming? How are these experiences different?
- What pattern is repeated in this story? Describe how each of Sara's dreams is followed by a discussion with Babaanne and then a link is made with something from the past; then in most instances how an action follows the discussion.
- Compare the different dreams and the things Sara learnt from each one?
- Compare two of Sara's dreams and highlight any similarities or differences?
- Discuss the children's own dreams and whether they might relate to incidents that they imagine or that may have happened to them during the day?
- How do dreams and nightmares differ?

Memories

- Babaanne's memories are awakened by her discussions with Sara. Discuss.
- What sorts of things can invoke memories? Discuss the place of sounds, smell and other sensory experiences as memory triggers.
- Read and discuss another book about memories: *Wilfrid Gordon Macdonald Partridge* by Mem Fox

Carpets and weaving

- Explore the history of carpet making and create a project based on the rugs from different cultures.
- Discuss the images, patterns, materials, techniques and dyes used to make the carpets. What do some of the images and patterns represent and do they tell a story?

- Make a large scale class weaving project using many different materials woven into a branch frame.
- Children create a story to illustrate a carpet. They then sketch and later paint individual carpets onto a large sheet of paper or fabric such as calico.
- Visit a traditional rug shop and look at the different images on the rugs. Discuss the different images and patterns and their meaning.
- Visit the **Handweavers and Spinners Guild of Victoria Inc**, 12-20 Shakespeare Street, Carlton North, Victoria 3054 Phone / Fax Phone: +61 3 9347 3008. Children's classes available. See the following link for further details: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~handspin/>
- An alternative venue is the **Victorian Tapestry Workshop** which holds viewing sessions and runs tours of the workshop. You can find them at Park Street, South Melbourne, Victoria, 3205. Telephone 61 3 9699 7885, fax: +61 3 9696 3151 262-266. Follow this link for further details: <http://www.victapestry.com.au/>
- In New Zealand, you can visit the **Dilana Rugs Workshop & Gallery** at 50 Salisbury Street, Christchurch. Collaborating with leading New Zealand artists, Dilana produces a unique collection of signed limited edition and original rugs. Visiting offers a unique insight into New Zealand's contemporary design culture. See <http://www.destination-nz.com/specialinterest-t71/canterbury-r62/nz-1414.html> for further information.
- Also in New Zealand, visit this web site for information regarding tours and classes in spinning and weaving. <http://www.ashford.co.nz/home/home-frameset.htm> or visit the home of the **New Zealand Spinning, Weaving and Woolcrafts Society** at <http://www.creativefibre.org.nz/>

Adventures/journeys/time and place

- Discuss the night-time journey Sara experiences while dreaming about the images on the carpet. In these dreams she is taken from modern New Zealand back in time and place, to the carpet's 19th century origins in Turkey. Look at other objects from history and discuss their journey from the past to the present. Some examples to explore include ancient artifacts such as pottery and architectural relics. Children could also choose an everyday object such as a bowl, or an item of clothing and investigate its route from raw material to finished object.
- Then look at and discuss the map on the back page of the book.
- Whose journey is represented by the route on the map?
- Does a journey have to be a physical one or can it be enjoyed through retelling or imagination?
- Investigate one or more of the places on the map and find out something interesting about its history or from the present day. Children could focus on a craft from each country; find a recipe or some information about the animals of the region. These investigations could lead to oral or another form of presentation to the class.

Family history

- Why had Babaanne planted cherry and apricot trees in her garden?
- How were Sara and her father's boyhood experiences with the carpet similar or different?
- Discuss family histories, stories told and the history or significance of certain objects that may have been passed down through the generations.
- Children could create a project on an item from their own family history.
- Alternatively, children could work on a personal family tree after a discussion with their family. (This activity may need to be handled sensitively with adopted or foster children.) A note may need to be sent home asking for families to work together to compile lists detailing birth dates of immediate family, then dates and birth places of cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents - maybe even some great-great-grandparents. With some knowledge of when and where their ancestors lived, children could discuss and research what their lives might have been like. Once all information is collected, children might want to draw a tree on a large piece of cardboard, leaving places for photographs and a brief story about each person.
- Some useful web links for exploring family histories include: <http://www.ancestry.com.au/trees/> or <http://www.nla.gov.au/oz/genelist.html> or

http://www.genealogy.com/67_taylor_print.html for some excellent child-friendly ideas and activities for children.

Grandparent/grandchild relationships

- Do the children have grandparents?
- Discuss the things children do with their grandparents.
- Invite grandparents in to class for morning tea. Ask a few to bring an activity that they enjoy doing to demonstrate or share with the class. It might be a favourite recipe, a craft activity or something else of their choice.

Cultural practices

- Turkish food and cooking – make a traditional Turkish dish such as baklava or falafel to share with the class. (See recipes below.) Share a cup of Turkish apple tea. (Buy the mixture ready prepared from a Middle Eastern grocer or specialist tea shop).
- Visit a Middle Eastern grocery and look at the different ready-to-eat foods and ingredients available for sale. How do these foods differ from the ones eaten at home each day?
- Recipes – look for other Turkish recipes and make a class recipe book to photocopy for each family in the class.

RECIPES

Baklava

You will need:

450 g of chopped walnuts
200 g of chopped almonds
450 g of filo pastry
200 g of unsalted butter
1 cup of sugar
1 cup of water
2 teaspoons of powered cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon of nutmeg

For the syrup:

1 cup of Greek honey
1 cup of sugar
1 cup of water
juice of 1 lemon

Method:

Heat half the butter with one cup of sugar and one cup of water. Add the chopped nuts. Line a well-buttered baking tin with three or four sheets of filo, brushing each one well with melted butter. Spread a thin layer of the nut filling on the pastry, sprinkle with cinnamon and cover with two more sheets of buttered filo. Continue in this way, using alternate layers of nut mixture and filo. Tuck the ends and sides in to contain the filling. Cover the last layer of nut mixture with three or four sheets of filo, ensuring that each one is liberally brushed with melted butter. Brush the top with melted butter and score into diamonds or squares with a sharp knife. Bake in a moderate, preheated oven about 150 C, 300 F for about an hour or until golden brown and crisp. To make the syrup, boil the sugar, honey, water and lemon juice and while still hot pour it over the cooked baklava and leave to cool.

Falafel

Serves 6

You will need:

500 grams tinned Chick peas
1 medium onion, finely diced
1 clove of garlic, crushed
1/4 bunch parsley, chopped

1/4 bunch coriander, chopped
1/4 bunch mind, chopped
Pinch of cayenne pepper
Pinch of salt and pepper
1 teaspoon baking powder
2 teaspoon cumin, ground
Oil for frying

Method:

Heat a little oil in a frying pan and sauté the onions and garlic. Add the ground cumin, and continue to gently sauté to release the flavour.

Add the drained chickpeas and warm through.

Place the rest of the ingredients into a large bowl and mix together, and then add the chickpea mix.

Place it all in a food processor and puree to as smooth a consistency as possible. A few drops of warm water may help in obtaining the required consistency. By this stage the mix should begin to hold together.

Form the mix into even sized balls using your hands and remember to be firm in your rolling to ensure the balls hold together.

If desired you can leave the falafel in small ball shapes or they may be flattened a little.

In your fry pan gently heat approximately 1 cm. of oil and fry the falafel until they are golden brown and crisp. This should take about 3 or 4 minutes.

Remove from the pan and allow to drain on some absorbent paper.

To serve place the falafel onto a serving dish and scatter some chopped coriander over the top, and serve with some tahina flavoured yoghurt and a green salad or tabouli. You could also wrap the falafel and salad in Turkish flat bread.

Animals

- Investigate some of the animals in this story further. Find out about their habitats and the potential threats to their lives. Create a project or artistic activity based on one of the animals featured in the book.
- Artistic representations of the animals in the story could be in the form of a painting or illustration using different medium, a sculpture using clay or Papier Mache, a diorama which includes elements of the animal's habitat or a collage using new and recycled materials. The children could work individually or as a group to make a class mural of the carpet in the story.
- Alternatively, the children could create a project on the impact that changes brought about by man or the environment are having on animals in the wild.

Other recent books by the author

Margaret Mahy: A Writer's Life by Tessa Duder

Too Close To The Wind, And Other Stories by Tessa Duder

A Book of Pacific Lullabies, edited by Tessa Duder, illustrations by Anton Petrov

Down to the Sea Again, sea stories for young readers edited by Tessa Duder

The Alex Quartet (reprint, 4 books)

A full list is published on www.tessaduder.com

Other books by the illustrator

Please follow the web link below

<http://www.markwilson.com.au/Children's%20Books.htm>

Web links

Turkish carpets

http://www.hyeetch.nareg.com.au/culture/history_p1.html

<http://www.turkishmagic.com.au/>

<http://www.turkishmagic.com.au/Pages/aboutcarpet.htm>

Animals and their natural habitats

A fun interactive site where children can see how different habitats inhibit or help an animal's ability to remain camouflaged.

<http://www.abc.net.au/beasts/fossilfun/camouflage/camouflage.swf>

All of these sites have heaps of information on many different animals and their habitats and informative facts sheets to print. An excellent source for project work.

<http://www.zoo.nsw.gov.au/content/view.asp?id=46>

<http://www.zoo.org.au/>

http://www.zoo.org.au/visiting.cfm?zoo_id=3