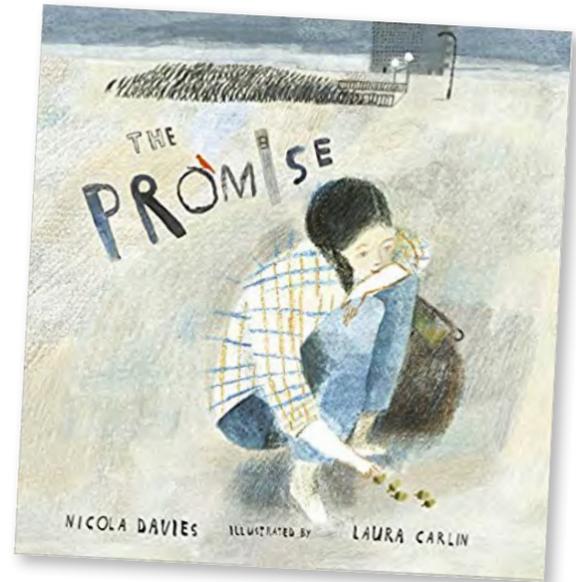


THE PROMISE

By Nicola Davies

Illustrated by Laura Carlin



Key Stage 2

ABOUT THE BOOK

On a mean street in a mean city, a thief tries to snatch an old woman's bag. But she finds she can't have it without promising something in return – to 'plant them all'. When it turns out the bag is full of acorns, the young thief embarks on a journey that changes her own life and the lives of others for generations to come.

Inspired by the belief that a relationship with nature is essential to every human being, and that now, more than ever, we need to renew that relationship, *The Promise* is the story of a magical discovery that will touch the heart and imagination of every reader, young and old. With poignant simplicity, honesty and lyricism, Nicola Davies evokes a powerful vision of a world where people and nature live in harmony. And Laura Carlin's delicate illustrations capture a young girl's journey from a harsh, urban reality to the beauty and vitality of a changed world. This is a picture book of great beauty and hope about the power we have to transform our world.

TEACHING NOTES

These notes have been created to support students aged 7-11 years to explore the characters, storyline and issues in this book.

TALKING POINTS

Before reading:

- What clues are there on the front cover of the themes the novel may explore?
- Explore the illustrations first, before reading the story. What kind of feeling do you get when you look at the pictures? Why? Think about the bleak colours and ask if there is anything in the pictures to lift the bleakness, eg in the bleak grey city there is a hint of optimism in the presence of the red bird.

After reading:

- Ask the children to write down any questions, thoughts, feelings that the book has stirred for them.
- Talk about how the story ends. What do you think happens to the narrator? How does the story continue? Are there any messages in the story for us, the readers? If yes, what are they?

ACTIVITIES

- The use of colour is powerful throughout this book. When we think about communities, how are we responsible for creating colour in our environment? What can we do to improve our environment?
- Take a walk in the local community. Make notes of where improvements can be made. Who can help support these changes? Write letters to ask for help to keep your local areas tidy, full of colour.
- Organise a community day to clean up an area, eg park, beach, school grounds.

USING FICTION TO EXPLORE HUMAN RIGHTS

THEMES EXPLORED

- Community
- The power of nature in humans
- Environment

HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

- **Article 17:** Everyone has the right to own property
- **Article 27:** Everyone has the right freely to participate in the community.
- **Article 29:** Everyone has duties to the community.

OTHER TEXTS WITH SIMILAR THEMES BY AGE PHASE

Article 17:

- *I Want My Hat Back* by Jon Klassen, Key Stage 1;
- *Creature of the Night* by Kate Thompson, Key Stage 4

Article 27:

- *Footpath Flowers* by Jon Arno Lawson, Key Stage 1
- *The Midnight Zoo* by Sonya Hartnett, Key Stage 3

