

The Fun We Had

by Charissa Coulthard & Sam Usher

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE

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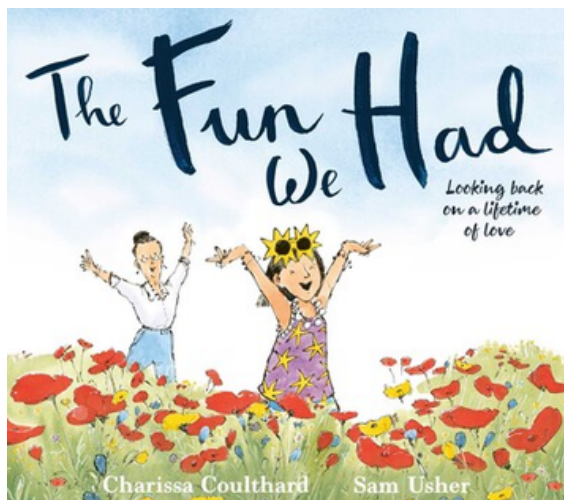
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Season by season, a girl visits her poorly Nana as they look back on a lifetime of adventures shared and treasures collected...

This moving poignant story of love and loss reminds us of the comfort our memories can bring when we need it the most.

A beautiful rhyming text from debut author Charissa Coulthard is perfectly paired with exquisite illustrations by Sam Usher.

Discussion topics and activities:

- Before reading *The Fun We Had*, take a look at the title, sub-title, and front cover. What do you think the story is about? After reading the book, take turns sharing using the following sentence starter: My predictions about *The Fun We Had* were correct/incorrect because...
- After reading the book, answer the following comprehension questions:
 - What season does the book start in?
 - Where did the girl and her Nana go camping? What did they sail down the river?
 - What did the girl and her Nana do when they went to the beach?
 - List some of the ways that the girl tries to make her Nana feel better.
 - What did the girl and her Nana do at Christmas time? What season was it?
 - What did the Nana leave for the girl on her bed at the end of the book?
- Language: The author of this book uses repetition and rhyme throughout the story. What does 'repetition' mean? Can you give some examples from the book? What does 'rhyme' mean? Can you give some examples from the book? Think about the language choices (including repetition and rhyme) the author made and try to explain how you think they impacted the story. How did the language make you feel?
- Language: This book switches back and forth from present tense to past tense. What does that mean? Why do you think the author changes tense throughout the story?
- Visual literacy: Most picture books have images that help tell the story, and sometimes even show the reader things that the words do not. Look at each of the pages where the girl is leaving her Nana's house. What is happening in each picture? How does it change throughout the book? What do you think the illustrator is trying to tell us?
- Visual literacy: This book is told through the four seasons. Can you describe how the illustrator expresses each season through the pictures? Think about the colours, the setting, the characters' clothing, and the small details on each page.
- Spend some time thinking about the purpose of this book. Why do you think it was created? Who is it written for? Then take turns sharing using the following sentence starter: I think the author and illustrator of *The Fun We Had* want the reader to feel/think about...
- How does the girl remember her Nana after she is gone? Do you think this is a good way to remember someone? Discuss in pairs, then share with the class.

Discussion topics and activities:

- Choose one double-page spread from the book and spend some time reading the words and looking at the illustrations in detail. Then, have a think about what queries you have and write three questions that start with: I wonder...
- Ask students to look through the book and find:
 - An old-style radio
 - A crab
 - A paper boat
 - A rainy day
 - A book about birds
 - A photo album
- There are lots of memories shared between the girl and her Nana. Can you think of one memory you have with your grandparents (or special family friends)? Write a short paragraph or poem reflecting on the memory in a similar style to the book. You may even like to make it rhyme! After you've written about your memory, try drawing a simple illustration to match it. As a class, you could collate these memories into a folder or book.
- Memories are often linked with the senses. You may remember a walk through a beautiful garden because of the strong smell of flowers, or remember a party because of a catchy song that was playing, or remember a favourite pet because of the way their fur felt when you scratched their back. What senses are there in the memories in *The Fun We Had*? List a few of them.
- How do we hold onto our memories? It may be with photographs, videos, or — like the box that the Nana leave for the girl in the book — objects. Can you think of an object that reminds you of something? It might be a fridge magnet from a holiday, a ticket from a movie, or something you found on a hike. Choose one object to bring in from home and take turns sharing the memory that is connected to the object.
- Incursion: invite grandparents (or special family friends) to the classroom to share their favourite memories with students, and vice versa.