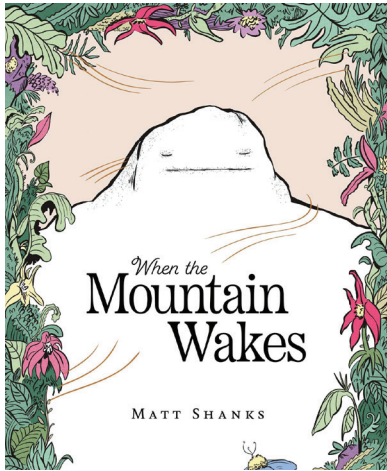




Teacher Notes

When the Mountain Wakes

by Matt Shanks

Teacher notes prepared by Bec Kavanagh

Publication Details

Publisher: Affirm Press
ISBN: 9781923419056
Size/format: 210 x 297mm, 64 pages, HB
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Reader ages: 5-99 years

Themes

- Loneliness,
- Environment
- Hope
- Growth
- Music
- Life-cycles
- Healing

About the Book

Somewhere, towards the beginning of time, a mountain rose from the ocean and came to rest above the clouds.

Life sang a lullaby, and the mountain slept for many millions of years.

Until one day, when the world became too silent for sleep...

From bestselling creator Matt Shanks comes a sweeping, profound and ambitious picture book. A powerful reflection on hope and healing, *When the Mountain Wakes* is a classic in the making.

About the Author/Illustrator

Matt Shanks is an internationally-published and critically-acclaimed author/illustrator of over twenty picture books. *Eric the Postie* (2018) and *Queen Celine* (2019) were both awarded Notables by the CBCA for Picture Book of The Year. *Rosie the Rhinoceros*, written by Australian rock legend Jimmy Barnes, and *Herman Crab*, written by one of Australia's favourite comedians, Peter Helliar, is available now. Matt is a two-time fellow of the [May Gibbs Children's Literature Trust](#) and an [Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation](#) ambassador. He works primarily in watercolour and ink. He lives on Boon Wurrung land with his partner and cat.

Before Reading

- Read the blurb of the book aloud – do you think the mountain waking is a good thing or a bad thing? What makes you say this?
- Would you describe the language of the blurb as fast and energetic, or gentle and reflective? Why? What does this tell you about the kind of story this is?

Comprehension Questions

- Explore the first five pages of the story closely. What are some of the signs that the mountain is about to appear?
- After the mountain rose from the ocean, where did it come to rest?
- What are some of the things that the mountain slept through?

Comprehension Questions cont.

- What makes the mountain wake?
- What changes in the illustrations of the mountain as it starts to wake up?
- What did the mountain go searching for? Why?
- What did the mountain find in its travels? How do you think it felt?
- What gave the mountain hope? Why does this small thing symbolise?
- Where does the mountain plant the flower to take it away?
- What happens as the mountain walks away?
- What do you notice about the mountain's expression at the end of the book? What do you think this expression means?

Literacy

Graphic narratives

In some of the pages, author/illustrator Matt Shanks uses comic book frames to break up the illustrations. Look closely at the images on the third page of the story. Discuss the way each of the frames changes the perspective – some are panoramic, while some are closer to actual size and others are zoomed in. What effect does this have on the story?

- Discuss how you might achieve this same effect (zooming in and out) across other mediums – in language, or film for example.
- Invite students to choose a section of the schoolyard and write three descriptions of it – one close up, one 'actual size', and one panoramic.

Circular stories

If you were to draw the shape of this story, it might look like a circle because the end connects so strongly back to the beginning.

- Discuss the use of repetition at the end of the story and the beginning. Think about the language, eg. 'the mountain slept/for millions of years' or the illustrations, eg. the mountain's posture, or the white planet in the dark night sky. What else is the same? What isn't the same?
- How does this circular narrative reflect the theme of growth, or the cycle of life? What other stories or cycles can you think of?

Final Reflections

- This book is dedicated to 'those who carry hope'. What kind of hope do you carry? What does this book make you hopeful for?
- How do you think the mountain and the flower changed each other?
- How did this book make you feel? What do you think the story is saying about the world?

Creative Activities

- Draw your own version of the mountain. What else do you imagine might have happened as it slept? Draw an image to illustrate your idea.
- Imagine that you are the mountain. Write a short paragraph describing how it feels to discover the flower, just as you're about to give up searching.
- What do you hope for? If you were about to give up hoping, what would be a sign that you should keep believing? Draw a picture of it.
- Create a small, barren diorama out of dirt. Plant a seed in your diorama and watch it grow. Keep a visual diary to track its progress. What do you notice? How does it make you feel? How does growth change the landscape you've created?
- What are some of the things that we can do to heal the mountains and other natural places around us? Make a poster that shows a threat to the natural environment and suggest one way we might take steps to heal it.