**CLOUD TEA MONKEYS**

**by Mal Peet and Elspeth Graham**

**LOUISIANA YOUNG READERS’ CHOICE NOMINEE 2013**

**GRADES 3-5**

*Submitted by:*

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Peet, Mal. **Cloud Tea Monkeys.** New York: Candlewick Press. 2010. unp..

**SUMMARY**

A young girl named Tashi lives with her mother somewhere in the Himalayas on the outskirts of a prominent tea plantation where her mother works picking tea leaves. As her mother and the other women leave the village each day, Tashi scampers away to share her lunch and enjoy the antics of the monkeys who come down from the mountains. Tashi’s mother develops a terrible cough and eventually becomes too ill to carry and fill the large wicker baskets of tea leaves. Tashi is too small to help her but tries anyway, leaving with the group of women, dragging the huge basket. She is only able to place a few dusty leaves in the basket before the sneering overseer kicks it over. The sobbing Tashi takes refuge in the company of the chattering monkeys who take off with the basket and return it filled with special leaves, the “color of emeralds …with a rich sweet scent.” When the Royal Tea Taster himself arrives, he is mesmerized by the delicious Cloud tea, a rare, high altitude delicacy. She is paid with gold coins from the enthralled tea taster who purchases them for the “Empress of All the Known World and Other Parts That Have Not Been Discovered Yet.” Her mother retires and they are able to enjoy the delicious tea themselves!

**AWARDS**

Children’s Books of the Year, 2011.

**BIOGRAPHY-AUTHORS**

The authors of this book are husband and wife. They live in the United Kingdom in a house not too far from the sea. Mal and Elspeth have written many picture books for children some of them were published by Oxford University Press. Elspeth is usually the one to provide the idea that launches their next picture book project. Mal Peet is best known for his young adult novels: Keeper, Tamar, The Penalty, and Exposure. American Library Association chose Tamar: ANovel of Espionage, Passion, and Betrayal for the BBYA (Best Books for Young Adults) top ten list in 2008. Hopefully Cloud Tea Monkeys is just the beginning of these authors’ collaboration to create picture books about folktales that can be enjoyed in countries around the world.

**BIOGRAPHY-ILLUSTRATOR**

Juan Wijngaard grew up in a house with an artist and as a result he had access to materials that allowed him to cultivate his own artistic talents. He said he was not considered to be a gifted artist or overly talented compared to the other students his age. As an adult artist he has illustrated over 30 children’s books and his style of illustration changes over time. Juan gives a listing of 10 things you didn’t know about him at the Walker Books website.

1. I was born in Argentina; I went to art school in England; I live in California; but I’m actually Dutch.

2. I make, restore and play hurdy-gurdies.

3. I’ve been shot in the head, been in a bus that was hit by a train, been hit by a car while crossing a road-and I’m still in one piece!

4. My studio is in an airport hangar.

5. I have five sons. So far, three have chosen to be artists.

6. I play music at the Hollywood farmer’s market on Sundays.

7. I’m a vegetarian. My wife has been a vegetarian since she was seven!

8. Before becoming a vegetarian, my favourite food was lardy cakes.

9. I once walked along Hadrian’s Wall in Victorian costume.

10. I speak five languages, but don’t say much.

**OTHER TITLES BY THE AUTHORS**

**Elspeth Graham**

Graham, Elspeth, and Mal Peet. **Painting Out The Stars.** London: Walker Books, 2011.

Graham, Elspeth, and Ian Newsham. **A Windy Day*.***Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Graham, Elspeth, and Ian Newsham. **Lots of Spots**. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

**Mal Peet**

Peet, Mal. **Keeper.** Cambridge, MA.: Candlewick Press, 2005.

Peet, Mal. **Tamar.** Cambridge, MA.: Candlewick Press, 2007.

Peet, Mal. **The Penalty.** Cambridge, MA.: Candlewick Press, 2007.

**OTHER TITLES ILLUSTRATED BY JUAN WIJNGAARD**

Lewison, Wendy Cheyette. **Going to Sleep on the Farm**. Dial Books for Young Readers, 1992.

Heller, Julek, Carolyn Scrace, Juan Wijingarrd, David Larkin, and Sarah Teale. **Giants.** London: Pan Books, 1980.

Mark, Jan and Juan Wijingaard. **The Midas Touch.** Cambridge, Mass.: Candlewick Press, 1999.

**SIMILAR READS**

**Call It Courage.** Armstrong Sperry. Macmillan. 1940. 60p. Grades 4-8.

In this Newbery award winning book, Armstrong Sperry creates a timeless story by retelling an ancient Polynesian legend. It depicts the universal human emotions of love, fear, and courage---all of which remain relevant in today’s world. The hero, Mafatu, must prove his worth by leaving his family, setting forth on a quest, and undergoing a series of trials. It is a survival story in the purest sense of the word and readers will suffer with Mafatu’s setbacks and rejoice in his triumphs.

**May Bird and the Ever After: Book One** by Jodi Lynn Anderson. Athenaeum. 2005. Grades 4-7.

The average person would not feel comfortable or safe in the woods of Briery Swamp. However, May Bird is very comfortable in the woods of Briery Swamp where she is safe from the teasing of other kids. In the haven of the swamp May is a warrior princess and Somber Kitty is her guardian. In the course of the story May falls into the lake and finds herself in an alternate world where people walk through walls. The Book of the Dead has all of the answers. May could be turned into nothing if discovered by the evil villain Bo Cleevil.

**RELATED BOOKS**

Say, Allen. **Tea With Milk.** Houghton Mifflin, 1999.

Lipp, Frederick. **Tea Leaves.** Mondo, 2003.

Sate, Shozo. **Tea Ceremony.**Turtle Publishers, 2005.

Gleason, Carrie. **Biography of Tea.** Crabtree, 2007.

**CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS**

**READING/LANGUAGE ARTS/VISUAL ART**

**Vocabulary**

Indigo jumble sprig

Plantation emerald porcelain

Overseer canopy turban

embroidered

The Carnegie Greenaway website has ideas for lessons centered on the visual and literary clues and suggestions in the artwork of the illustrations of Cloud Tea *Monkeys*. The art teacher and the librarian could team up to do cooperative lessons using this study guide for the book.

<http://www.carnegiegreenaway.org.uk/shadowingsite/groupleaders/resources/2011/CILIP%20Shadowing%20Cloud%20Tea%20Monkeys.pdf>

**SOCIAL STUDIES/ART**

The Wanborough Primary Page has many activities and lesson plan suggestions that could be used to expand a unit of lessons on Cloud Tea Monkeys.

<http://www.wanboroughprimary.org/dove%20topic%20web_sept_10.pdf>

A lesson centered on the research of mountain ranges in the world and where the highest peaks are could extend students knowledge of the setting for this story. The teacher/librarian can either set up the icons for the chosen websites on the library computers or he/she could make a webquest that would include the websites.

<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0001771.html> <http://www.factmonster.com/atlas/>

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/kids-world-atlas/> <http://www.worldatlas.com/>

**SCIENCE**

Reader’s Digest has a listing of 22 ways tea can be used for beauty, home and garden. The classroom teacher can ask the librarian to read and introduce the book Cloud Tea Monkeys . Then he/she can have students participate in a science experiment in groups of two to three students. Each group will have the materials and instructions needed to test a few of the suggestions for uses of tea beyond drinking it. The ideas that could be tried in the classroom would include dying clothing, cleaning a mirror, making sachets, experiments with plants, enhancing compost piles.

<http://www.rd.com/home/22-ways-to-use-tea-for-beauty-home-and-garden/>

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**1. How is this little girl’s life different from yours?**

**2. Why does she go to work with her mother?**

**3. What does she do while her mother works?**

**4. What would you have done?**

**5. Do you think you would have made friends with the monkeys?**

**6. When her mother is sick, why does she try to do her mother’s job?**

**7. Why do you think the overseer is so mean to her?**

**8. How do you think he should have treated her?**

**9. Why couldn’t the other women help her out?**

**10. How does tea grow?**

**11. Where does most of it come from?**

**12. Where does this story take place?**

**13. How can you tell? Look at the scenery and the clothing for clues.**

**14. What do you think was so special about the Cloud Tea?**

**15. Do you think it really exists?**

**16. Do you really think it is picked by monkeys?**

**17. How could you find out?**

**WEBSITES**

**Wanborough Primary Page of Activities & Lessons Including the *Cloud Tea Monkeys* Book**

<http://www.wanboroughprimary.org/dove%20topic%20web_sept_10.pdf>

**Highest Mountain Peaks of the World Infoplease website**

<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0001771.html>

**World Atlas at Fact Monster**

<http://www.factmonster.com/atlas/>

**National Geographic World Atlas for Kids**

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/kids-world-atlas/>

**World Atlas**

<http://www.worldatlas.com/>

**Cloud Water Tea**

<http://www.cloudwatertea.com/tea.html>

**Carnegie Greennaway** <http://www.carnegiegreenaway.org.uk/shadowingsite/groupleaders/resources/2011/CILIP%20Shadowing%20Cloud%20Tea%20Monkeys.pdf>

**Pekoe Tea**

<http://www.pekoetea.co.uk>

**W Tea**

<http://wtea.com>

**Time for Learning Social Studies Lesson on Mountain Ranges**

<http://www.time4learning.com/scope-sequence/4th_grade_social_studies.shtml>

**I Like 2 Learn**

<http://www.ilike2learn.com/ilike2learn/mountainmaps/MountainRanges.html>

**Reader’s Digest 22 Ways to Use Tea**

<http://www.rd.com/home/22-ways-to-use-tea-for-beauty-home-and-garden/>