

## **Serena and the Sun Teaching Notes**

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Illustrator: Claire Westwood



### **SYNOPSIS:**

Serena and the Sun are good friends and play together every day after school in Serena's garden. But as the days go by, the Sun plays and stays less and less, and soon he is no longer there at all. Without her friend, Serena is sad, so she seeks the help of the Wise Wind to help her find light for her days once more.

However, can she get by without her friend?

### **In the Classroom**

## **Before Reading:**

### Discuss what is seen on the cover:

- Introduce the book by looking at the cover:
  - What do we notice about the characters on the cover?
  - How do you think they are feeling?
- What do you think this story will be about?
  - Why do children think this?

### Additional cover discussion:

- Do any children share the same letters from the title in their name?
- What colours can be seen on the cover?
- How many stars can you count?

## **During Reading:**

### Questions to ask children during the story:

- Why is Serena excited to see the Sun?
  - Why does the Sun feel like a friend to Serena?
  - Why does the Sun bring Serena happiness?
- What does Serena notice about the Sun?
  - Discuss why the Sun might start to leave earlier.
- Who does Serena visit when she feels sad?
  - Why is it important to support friends?
- What does Serena learn during the nighttime?
- What does Serena collect during the night?
  - How does this make Serena feel?
- How does Serena feel when she realises that the Sun has not left her?
- Why do the colours in the artwork change during the story?
  - What could this mean?

## **After Reading:**

### Seasons:

- What changes happen in Serena's garden during the story?
  - Why do children think this happens?
- What seasons can you name?
- What weather can we expect in each season?
- Are there different animals/plants that can be seen during a particular season?
- Ask children what their favourite season is.
  - What is the reason for this?

### Day and Night Cycle:

- Discuss the cycle of the moon/sun.

- Ask children about what happens to the sun/moon during the night/day.
- What differences can we expect between the night and day?
- Ask children about the different animals that can be seen during the night/day.
- Ask children if they prefer daytime or nighttime.
  - What is the reason for this?

### Friendships:

- Who helped Serena during the story?
- Ask if the children have helped someone recently?
- How did this make them/the other child feel?
- What do you need to do to be a good friend?
- What do others need to do to be a good friend?

### Gardens:

- Do children have their own garden/outdoor space to play in?
- What can they see in their garden/outdoor space?
  - Plants
  - Animals
  - Equipment/Toys
- Do children help to water or care for the plants in their garden/outdoor space?

### **Classroom Activities:**

- Seasons and sun display – Children are encouraged to create a display showing the sun's position throughout the seasons. Children can draw images from a particular season and add them to the display. They can then draw a picture of the sun and place this on the board to show the time of day. This can be an ongoing project to create awareness of time and season.
- Nature journals – Children are encouraged to think of the types of animals/plants that can be found at certain times of day/season. Children can record this information and add this to the seasons and sun display.
- Nighttime water play – Using a water tray, add biodegradable glitter and sparkling shapes to create a sky at night activity. Children can collect their own shining “stars”. Encourage children to count and compare amounts caught.
- Planets and stars display – Use planets and stars as an ongoing topic. Children can discuss what can be found in space. Using this knowledge, children can create a display including drawings of planets and stars. Children can also create their own spaceships using classroom resources.
- Sky at night drawing activity – Using images of constellations as examples, ask children to recreate their own starry night sky. Children can also be encouraged to look at the sky in the evening and talk about planets and stars.

### **About the Author:**

Alanna Alfaro grew up in a remote coastal town in Yolngu country, NT, Australia. When younger, she would listen to tall tales of unruly crocodiles and infamous bunyips. This inspired her to write, and she has been crafting her own tall tales ever since. Alanna now lives with her husband and

three children on a magical little farm in Birpai country, NSW. She fossicks for stories hidden along the creek, tree hollows, and hills around their home.

**About the Illustrator:**

Claire Westwood currently lives in Sussex, England. Using mixed media, Claire creates emotional expressions of spontaneous inspiration, with dreamlike, imagined scenes. Using colour as a main feature, her work is said to be ethereal with a story to be told. Claire studied Art at university and has a postgraduate degree in illustration. Her experience ranges from fine art, book, and magazine illustration to logos, web design, and advertising.