ROSANNE PARRY
EDUCATORS' GUIDE

VOICE OF THE WILDERNESS

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Dear Readers,

I'm grateful for your support of these Voice of the Wilderness books. Thank you for everything you do to bring books and kids together. The letters I receive from readers assure me that you are helping to raise a generation of wilderness advocates. Thank you! The wild things of this earth need our protection more than ever.

So many readers asked me what happened to Wander's brother Warm that I dove into the world of wolves again to give a voice to the smallest and least confident wolf in the pack. A Wolf Called Fire was fascinating to research and a joy to write. New wolf research has shown that it is not always the biggest wolf pup who becomes the alpha. Often the pup who chooses the best game—the game everyone wants to play—becomes the leader, even if they are small.

I was inspired by one of the first wolves reintroduced to Yellowstone Park thirty years ago. Wolf 8 was the smallest of all his brothers, but in spite of being bullied by them, he became an alpha male with a talent for mentoring pups. He was gentle and collaborative in his leadership and never killed a defeated rival. His offspring carried on this leadership style and have dominated the park ever since.

I modeled Fire on Wolf 8 because I want readers to be inspired. I want them to remember all their lives that there are many kinds of leadership. That brute strength and intimidation is not the only way to wield power. There is enduring strength in choosing the better game—the wiser and kinder approach. I hope my readers will take young Fire into their hearts and their imaginations. I hope they look within themselves for the kind of leader they are meant to be.

Rosanne Parry

Photo by Brian Geraths

About the Author

Rosanne Parry grew up in Oregon loving its rainy days, wild places, and spectacular libraries. She is the author of many novels and picture books for young readers, including the *New York Times* bestsellers *A Wolf Called Wander*, *A Whale of the Wild*, and *A Horse Named Sky*. Rosanne is a bookseller at the legendary independent bookstore Annie Blooms. She lives with her family in an old farmhouse in Portland and writes in a treehouse in her backyard.

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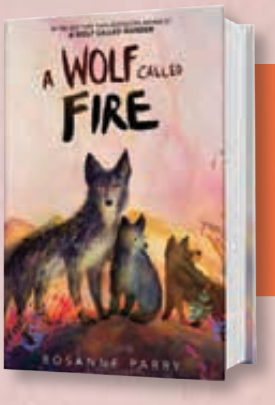

A WOLF CALLED FIRE

By Rosanne Parry • Illustrated by Mónica Armiño

Booktalk

Warm is not the biggest, strongest, or fastest pup. Although his mother tells him, "Big is not the only good thing for a wolf to be," Warm can't help but wonder how the smallest, most fearful pup could be useful. As he grows, his sensitivity and observational skills make it clear that he will become the pack's next Watcher, a role that Warm isn't sure he wants. But after an attack by enemy wolves, Warm is the only one who can save the new litter from certain death. Using stealth, courage, and patience, Warm journeys across unfamiliar territory to save the pups and reclaim the pack's home ground.

Discussion Questions

1. While Warm and his litter mates are still in the den, too young to face the dangers of the home ground, his mother tells the story of the pack, beginning with, "The pack belongs to the mountains, and the mountains belong to the pack" (p. 5). In your own words, describe what Warm's mother means. How do the wolves show their respect for the mountain?

2. The wolves have special names for things in their mountain home, such as the Do Not Pass (safe border of the den); lifebeat (heart beat); and black roof (night sky). What other terms did you notice in the story? How would you describe each word or term in the context of the story? Why do you think the pups received the names that they did? Do you think they are fitting names based on their personalities and actions?

3. Growl is the eldest of the pack and the Watcher. Discuss Growl's role in the pack and what he teaches Warm. What does Growl see in Warm as a pup that leads him to believe he will be a good watcher?

4. After Warm meets his father, the pack breaks into a group howl. Warm thinks, "Of course Sharp is louder than me and Pounce can hold a howl in her throat longer, but I stop listening to me and I start listening to us. One mighty howl." What does this thought tell you about Warm? Discuss other examples of how the pack mates care for one another.

5. As a pup and yearling, Warm is often fearful and cautious. When does Warm begin to believe in himself? What skills does he realize he has that his faster and stronger siblings lack? How does Warm show his intelligence and problem-solving skills in chapter 3? Discuss examples in the story in which Warm plays "a better game."

6. Discuss the relationship between Warm and Swift. After the encounter with the mother bear, Swift bows his head before Warm and says, "You are the best watcher of all" (p. 37). How is this a turning point for Warm? As Growl ages and is close to death, Warm takes his place as the guard of the Do Not Pass, watching over the new pups. From this point how does Warm's confidence begin to grow? What new roles does he take on for the pack? Why does he feel that he is now "...the wolf I am meant to be" (p. 51).

7. After the ice wolves attack Warm's pack, he leads the pups away from the fight. Describe how Warm uses resourcefulness and courage to help the pups survive. Why doesn't Warm let the failed deer hunt deter him? After he is trapped in the blowdown, how does his ability to watch and wait give him an advantage? How does he outsmart the ice wolves that are guarding him? How is Warm's stubborn personality beneficial?

8. After the pups find Warm, he asks how they found him. Leap announces, "We are stealthy!" (p. 127). What is stealth? Why is stealth one of the most important aspects of wolf behavior?

9. After Warm and the pups are reunited, Warm realizes that "a leader can be filled with doubt (p. 132)". What are the qualities of an effective leader? What leadership qualities does Warm have that he doesn't see in himself? On page 140, Warm roars at the pups after a failed hunt, and thinks, "This is how Glacier treats his pack. I know better, but I am too proud to make it right." What does Warm learn from this experience that helps him become a better leader? Why do Snow and Wag choose Warm to be their leader?

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10. Throughout the book, Warm never gives up hope, even in the most dire situations. When Leap asks Warm if they can defeat the ice wolves, Warm chooses his words carefully, because "hope is a tender flower." What do you think this simile means? Where else does hope appear in the story?

11. The author dedicated *A Wolf Called Fire* to "young leaders of every kind," with a wish that they "may grow in strength, courage, and wisdom." How did Warm grow in strength, courage, and wisdom to become the leader of his own wolf pack, and earn the name Fire? Why do you think the wolves renamed him with this word?

Extension Activities

Life of the Pack. Throughout *A Wolf Called Fire*, the pack hunts a variety of animals, from mice to elk. Explore the mountain biome ecosystem, its wildlife, and the food chain that sustains wolves throughout the year. Helpful information, including how wolves are a vital component to healthy ecosystems can be found here: https://www.livingwithwolves.org/

Learning to Listen. On page 6 of *A Wolf Called Fire*, Warm's mother explains, "Growl is our oldest, our wisest, our Watcher. You will learn much from him if you listen." Go on a sound scavenger hunt to hone your listening skills. Take a clipboard, sheet of paper, and a pencil outside. The only one who may talk during this activity is the teacher. Spend 15-20 minutes simply listening. Record all the sound you hear, even if you can't identify the source of a sound. Back in the classroom, share your lists and discuss the challenges of listening for a sustained time period. What did you learn?

I Am Good At... Over the course of the story, Warm slowly realizes his strengths and how those strengths benefit the pack. On page 39, he thinks, "I am good at safe paths. I am good at hiding." On a piece of paper, make a list of all the things you are "good at." Choose one item from your list and write a one-page essay describing why this is a strength of yours.

One Pack. One Hunt. From the very first chapter of *A Wolf Called Fire*, it is evident that wolves are social animals. Discuss all the ways the author describes the social behaviors of the pack. Research other animals whose survival depends on social ties, such as elephants, dolphins, chimpanzees, whales, ravens, crows, lions, mice, and rats. After researching, create a visual display to showcase your learning. Here is a helpful website to begin your research: https://wolf.org/

Photo courtesy of Mónica Armiño

About the Illustrator

Mónica Armiño is a Spanish illustrator based in Madrid. She has an extensive knowledge of both digital and traditional techniques and has published several books with various publishers and agencies in Europe and the US. Mónica also works in the animation industry as a character designer, background artist, and color and texture artist for feature films and preschool TV series such as the award-winning *Puffin Rock*.

A Wolf Called Fire *copy written by Colleen Carroll, literacy educator, content creator, and author of the* How Artists See *series (Abbeville Kids). Learn more about Colleen at www.colleencarroll.us*

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A HORSE NAMED SKY

By Rosanne Parry • Illustrated by Kirbi Fagan

Booktalk

Like his mustang ancestors before him, Sky was born to run. When a lack of water threatens his family's survival, Sky decides to leave for the good of the band. Alone in the mountains, Sky encounters drought, loneliness, and homesickness, until he is captured to run for the Pony Express. He tries to understand his human captors, some kind and some cruel, but the pull of home leads him to make a daring escape. Will Sky reunite with his family and find the Alone Mountain where his band can live in peace?

Discussion Questions

1. Sky's first memory is the sound of water. The wild horses refer to their place of birth as their "home waters." Discuss the importance of water in the story. Discuss what you think Sky's mother means when she tells him, "I am your first water" (p. 8).

2. Discuss how the horses refer to the other animals in their environment, using names such as scamper, howler, and claw beast. Why do you think they have named them in this way? Why do you think the horses are named for weather and the elements, such as Sky, Rain, Storm, and Thunder. How is Sky's name a fitting one for him? How is Storm's personality like her name?

3. Early in the story, young Sky has many self-doubts. Discuss examples in the book when Sky has to face his fears. How is leaving the thirsty band an act of courage and love (p. 38)? How does Storm teach Sky to be brave and determined? Why does the band make Sky their leader at the end of the story?

4. Discuss Sky's reaction to witnessing a human chop down a piñon tree (pp. 25–26). How does this event foreshadow the dangers that lie ahead for Sky? Sky considers bees: "Their rule about flowers must be the same as our rule about water—take what you need and move on" (p. 42). Based on their actions, particularly in the mines, do you think the humans have similar rules?

5. A black horse tells Sky, "Fighting will bring you pain" (p. 54). He also tells him to "settle" and to "give up" (p. 55). How does this advice confuse and scare Sky? How does this advice go against Sky's character? Discuss Sky's early encounters with the humans. What are his first impressions of them? How is the young human boy who Sky refers to as a colt different from most of the humans Sky encounters?

6. Sky makes a promise to the wind that he will never give up, and a promise to the stars that he will escape. How do these promises show his determination? Why does Sky finally give in and agree to have a rider on his back? In his sorrow, he is still happy that Storm has escaped. What does this tell you about Sky's character?

7. Discuss how the humans treat the captured horses. As Sky is branded, he experiences a pain like he's never felt, but still has empathy for the next horse to be burned by the brand. Why does he feel pain and shame? Discuss how the boy who cares for him and the "good riders" help Sky to begin to "look forward to our runs together" (p. 145). What makes Sky realize that even though some humans can show kindness, they will never be trustworthy?

8. Sky's hopes of escape begin to fade, and he cannot "find gratitude, even for the light, when my own horizons feel forever dark" (p. 86). What does he mean by this thought? How does Sky begin to gather hope from deep sadness?

9. Although Sky was tempted to give in to the humans, he never completely abandoned the idea of escape. Discuss what he means when he thinks, "I feel the tug of the homeward horizon, and no amount of water or crunchy bits will make me feel better" (p. 141). How does the boy's escape with his father inspire Sky's decision to open the gate and run?

10. Discuss the theme of leadership. How does Sky's character develop from a young foal playing and following Storm to a brave leader who finds the courage to lead his entire band and the mules to freedom?

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Extension Activities

The Pony Express. Use the information on the Pony Express presented on pages 248–250 as a jumping-off point to learn more about the Pony Express. Pick one aspect to focus on. You could research why the Pony Express was created and how the difficult ride impacted the riders and horses, the cultural mythology of the Pony Express, or any other facet that sparks your interest. Prepare a written or visual presentation with your findings.

Scampers, Bounders & Slitherers. Throughout *A Horse Named Sky*, many different animals from the Sierra Nevada mountains appear in the story. Choose an animal from the list on pages 240–243. Prepare a poster or visual presentation describing the animal and its place in the mountain ecosystem.

Water Is Life. The lives of the horses and other animals revolve around water, for without water, no animal can survive. Think about how you use water on a daily basis. For one week, keep a journal of your water use. At the end of the week, share what you discovered with your class. Brainstorm ways in which you and your family can use less water on a weekly basis.

Wilderness Advocates. In the note to readers, author Rosanne Parry writes, "The letters I receive . . . assure me that you are helping to raise a generation of young wilderness advocates. We have never needed them more." She dedicates *A Horse Named Sky* to: "all those who fight for clean air and water and advocate for creatures who cannot speak for themselves." Research local wildlife in your community and brainstorm how individually or as a classroom you can be an advocate for the natural world and the animals we share it with.

Where the Wind Runs Beside Us. At the end of the story, the band has found a new home, safe from danger. Write a one-to-two page epilogue that takes place one year after the conclusion. How will Sky and Storm help the other horses and mules settle in this new place? What challenges will they face? Share your stories with a classmate or with a small group.

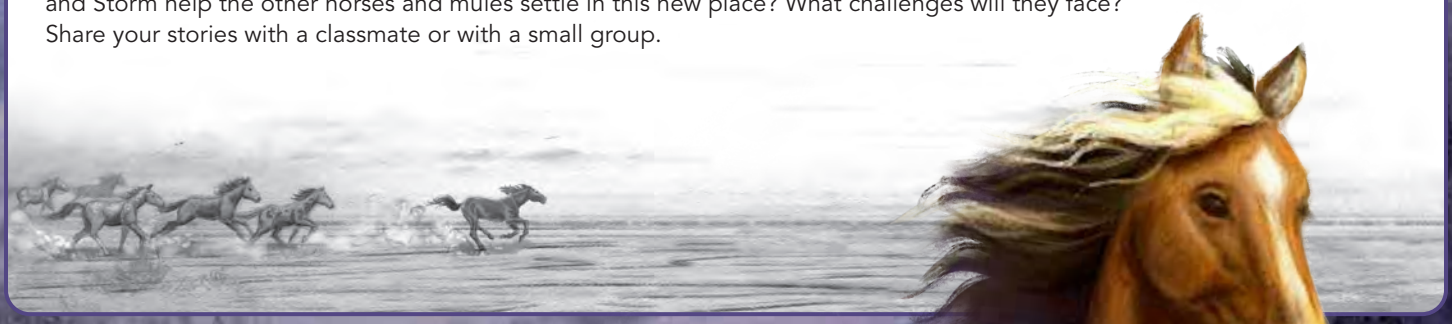

Photo courtesy of Kirbi Fagan

About the Illustrator

Kirbi Fagan is a Michigan-based illustrator who specializes in creating art for readers and who loves to draw horses. She is recognized for her numerous covers for comic books on projects such as *Black Panther/Shuri* and *Firefly*.

A Horse Named Sky *copy written by Colleen Carroll, literacy educator, content creator, and author of the How Artists See series (Abbeville Kids). Learn more about Colleen at* **www.colleencarroll.us**.

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A WHALE OF THE WILD

By Rosanne Parry • Illustrated by Lindsay Moore

Booktalk

For Vega and her family, salmon is life. And Vega is learning to be a salmon finder, preparing for the day when she will be her family's matriarch. But then she and her brother Deneb are separated from their pod when a devastating earthquake and tsunami render the seascape unrecognizable. Vega must use every skill she has to lead her brother back to their family. The young orcas face a shark attack, hunger, the deep ocean, and threats from human activity on their journey. Will Vega become the leader she's destined to be?

Discussion Questions

1. Describe each member of the kinship. Why do you think they are named after stars or constellations in the night sky? What do their names indicate about their personalities? Which of the younger ones would you want to have for a brother or sister? What role do each of the adults play in the daily life of the whales?

2. Discuss the meaning of the term "wayfinder." Is there more than one meaning to the word? What does Greatmother mean when she says to Vega, "Eat a little beauty every day . . . It will give you strength" (p. 3)? What is Vega's reaction?

3. How does Vega feel when she takes the family too close to a human boat during her first attempt at being the leader? Why do you think her mother asked her to be the wayfinder at this particular time? Why does she swim away from the family after their close call?

4. Describe Vega's feelings about her cousin Aquila. How has their relationship changed from when they were younger? How do Vega's feelings toward Aquila change over the course of the events described in this story? How do their roles change after the difficulties they encounter?

5. Discuss Greatmother's saying, "Always remember, together is better than apart" (p. 63). What is the importance of the stories and memories that Greatmother relates to Vega and Aquila? Can you compare them to personal or historical stories that humans pass on through their generations?

6. Describe Vega's emotions when her baby sister dies. Why does she take Capella's body away? Why does she want to take the baby's body to rest in Blood Cove? Compare Deneb's experiences to Vega's as he tries to follow her. Why does he leave the family to find Vega?

7. Describe how Vega and Deneb survive the earthquake and tsunami. Discuss the importance of the family legends that help them understand what is happening and how the different types of sea creatures support one another in a crisis.

8. Discuss the relationship between the orcas and the humans. Why does Greatmother say, "The wayfinders do not agree about whether humans make families" (p. 93)? How do Vega's feelings about humans change as she observes them? Why does Deneb help humans back to their boats? How do they assist the humans to help the salmon?

9. Describe the way Vega and Deneb's environment changes when they go into the Blue Wilderness. Why does the sight of the enormous whale fill Vega with hope and wonder rather than fear? How does she use her knowledge of the sea and sky to find her way homeward?

10. How does Vega know where the salmon need to go? What does she do to help the salmon get back to the river? In how many ways does she save her family? What does Deneb mean when he says, "Vega knows more than she thinks she does!" (p. 285)?

Extension Activities

Dangers in the Salish Sea. Study the map in the back of the book. Find the location of the Salish Sea on a map of the United States. Make your own map of this region and identify the sources of danger to the wildlife that live in these waters. Create graphic images on your map to indicate how life-threatening each of these dangers are to the orcas in particular.

Writing from a Different Perspective. The orcas in this story describe other inhabitants of the area in terms they understand; for example, they talk about a human's "flippers" and "grabbers." Choose one of the other creatures listed at the back of the book or humans who live in this area, and write a short story from their perspective. Describe the orcas the way that creature or person might see them.

Be a Friend to the Orcas. Choose one of the suggestions listed under "How Can I Help the Orcas?" Write up a plan for what you can do individually to help the environment, and then expand that plan into what you can do with other people to make an impact. Ask your friends and family for help with your plan. Make a timeline and set deadlines to put your plan into action.

A Special Kind of Navigation. You can get a sense of how echolocation works for the orcas by reading this story. Now do some research on what scientists have learned about the ways different animals use this unique skill. Make a list of these animals and the various ways they get around in their own environment using echolocation.
https://www.discoverwildlife.com/animal-facts/mammals/what-is-echolocation/

Photo by Veranda Studios

About the Illustrator

Lindsay Moore is an artist and writer with roots in northern Michigan. She studied marine biology and fine art at Southampton College on Long Island and figure drawing at the Art Students League of New York, and earned her master of science in medical and scientific illustration from Medical College of Georgia, now Augusta University. She is the creator of the picture books *Sea Bear: A Journey for Survival*, *Yoshi and the Ocean: A Sea Turtle's Incredible Journey Home*, and *Sun Bird: The Amazing Journey of the Arctic Tern*. Lindsay Moore lives with her family in Michigan.

A Whale of the Wild copy written by Connie Rockman, Youth Literature Consultant.

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A WOLF CALLED WANDER

By Rosanne Parry • Illustrated by Mónica Armiño

Booktalk

Swift, a young wolf cub, lives with his pack in the mountains learning to hunt, competing with his brothers and sisters for hierarchy, and watching over a new litter of cubs. Then a rival pack attacks, and Swift and his family scatter. Alone and scared, Swift must flee and find a new home. The trip is full of peril, and Swift encounters forest fires, hunters, highways, and hunger before he meets a mate and they start a new pack of their own.

Inspired by the extraordinary true story of a wolf named OR-7 (or Journey), who traveled a remarkable one thousand miles across the Pacific Northwest, this is an irresistible tale of survival. It invites readers to experience and imagine what it would be like to be one of the most misunderstood animals on earth.

Discussion Questions

1. Describe each of Swift's sibling pups. How do their names describe their personalities? Which of them would you want to have for a brother or sister? Describe the adult wolves in Swift's pack. What role does each of them play in keeping the pack safe?

2. What does Mother mean when she tells Swift to "Wait until you have a fighting chance" before venturing outside the den (p. 5)? How do the adults in the pack teach the pups about survival in the outside world? What are the most important things Swift learns from them to help him survive on his own?

3. Compare the characters of Swift and Sharp. How are they similar and how are they different? What different paths do they choose when the pack is attacked and scattered? What do you think Father meant by his last song, "Carry on. Carry on. Carry on . . ." (p. 44)?

4. Why does Swift head away from his home territory? Discuss his thought: ". . . if my pack is not in the mountains, then it is no home to me" (p. 48). What makes him choose a different path than Sharp? Why doesn't he try to join the two wolves he spots attacking a sheep? What does he mean when he says, "They must have learned to hunt from watching coyotes" (p. 53)?

5. How does Swift survive his injuries after trying to hunt an elk on his own? What help does he receive from the raven? How do they help each other to survive? Why does Swift follow the raven away from the territory that is familiar to him?

6. Why did Swift's mother tell him "Men are the worst of all dangers" (p. 70)? How does Swift experience the world of men? What does he mean when he talks about a black river, lightning, and noisemakers? Why do you think men were hunting Swift and his brother?

7. How does Swift feel when his raven ignores him after they encounter more birds? What does he mean when he says, "My raven has her pack now" (p. 141)? What advantages does he gain after the raven leaves him on his own again?

8. How is Swift affected by watching the foal being born? What are his emotions as he watches the herd of wild horses? Why does Swift risk his life to lead the cougar away from the horse herd?

9. How do Swift's instincts help him escape the wildfire? What are the signs that tell him he has found a place where he can make a new home? How does he find his mate?

10. Why does Swift create a new name for himself when he meets his mate? What does the new name mean to him? How, exactly, has he changed from the "young wolf that ran away from his home ground" (p. 197)?

Extension Activities

Myths about Wolves. There are many myths about dangers that humans might experience from wolves, but few of them are true. Look up the facts about wolf populations and the ways they help conservation and ecosystems, especially during and after the recent reintroduction of wolves into Yellowstone Park.

The Social Network of Wolves. Wolves, as you have learned from this book, are social animals that are happiest when they are part of a pack. Research the facts about wolf families and how they interact and communicate with each other. Discuss these lines from "The Law for the Wolves," by Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936) and how they relate to what you have learned about wolf families:

> Now this is the law of the jungle, as old and as true as the sky,
> And the wolf that shall keep it may prosper, but the wolf that shall break it must die.
> As the creeper that girdles the tree trunk, the law runneth forward and back;
> For the strength of the pack is the wolf, and the strength of the wolf is the pack.

Partners in the Wild. In the story, Swift partners for a while with a raven that helps him hunt and find his path. Look up information about the symbiotic relationship between wolves and ravens. Write a report about the activities between wolves and ravens that have been observed by naturalists. How many ways can these "partners" benefit each other in the wild?

Where Wolves Wander. Using the map in the back of the book, trace the path of OR-7, the real-life wolf that inspired the story about Swift. Divide your class or reading group into teams to research different habitats along that journey, creating a complete picture of each area, including terrain, water sources, food sources, and suitability for sustaining a wolf pack.

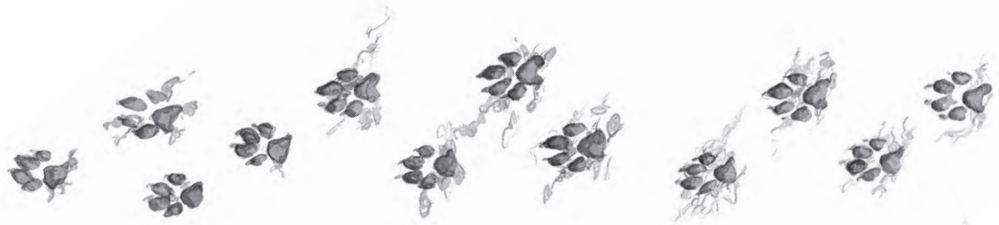

Photo courtesy of Mónica Armiño

About the Illustrator

Mónica Armiño is a Spanish illustrator based in Madrid. She has an extensive knowledge of both digital and traditional techniques and has published several books with various publishers and agencies in Europe and the US. Mónica also works in the animation industry as a character designer, background artist, and color and texture artist for feature films and preschool TV series such as the award-winning *Puffin Rock*.

A Wolf Called Wander *copy written by Connie Rockman, Youth Literature Consultant.*

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