

Reader's Guide
For
Dragon Wishes
by
Stacy A. Nyikos
A Debut Middle Grade Novel

About the Book

Eleven-year-old Alex is searching. So is Shin Wa. They both need to find a path out of the darkness that surrounds them. Shin Wa's journey leads her to the Black mountains of the far north in China. There she discovers more than just the last surviving dragons. She finds a way to save mankind. It all lies in a single pearl of wisdom. The gem is also the key to Alex's own journey. The pearl travels through the ages to find the struggling young girl and her sister. But it is not until Alex discovers how to use the pearl that she finds her way out of the darkness.

About the Author

Author, Stacy A. Nyikos, loves to travel. Her characters do too. Her award-winning picture book, *Shelby*, plunges readers deep under the ocean into the mysterious world of sharks. *Dragon Wishes*, her debut middle grade novel, flies them high above the earth and into the mythical world of Chinese dragons. And her current project, *Euromutt*, whisks even the most timid traveler far across the ocean and into foreign lands. When she isn't traveling—either through her imagination or around the globe—Stacy lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma, with her two daughters and husband.

Discussion Questions

1. There are two heroes in this story, Alex and Shin Wa. But they do very different things. In your opinion how are Alex and Shin Wa similar? How are they different?
2. Alex cannot talk about the death of her parents. It is too big for her. In fact, it actually becomes a character, IT. When Alex finally talks about IT, that character becomes weaker. Why? How can talking about important issues in your life change them?
3. If enough people recognize an object as standing for something, a symbol is born. In this story, a pearl represents wisdom. What are some other symbols in our culture? How are symbols born?
4. Isa is a supporting character, but she doesn't say anything until almost the end of the book. Can a silent character be as strong as one who talks? Explain.
5. The dragon story takes place thousands of years ago and seems very far away from our lives today—for instance, we don't have to find dragons to help people stop fighting. But people still fight each other today.

Activity

When I was young, I was always trying to come up with new ways to make money. In *Dragon Wishes*, Alex and Maddie come up with the idea to paint people's faces at the soccer games to earn money. Can your class come up with a fun activity you can do to earn money for the class? Once you've come up with it, try it out. Use the money from your activity to buy books for the class, take a field trip, or have a class party. See how creative you can get!