



The Raspberry Room

Alison Lohans

illustrated by Gillian Newland

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AR Quiz # 106571

About the Book

Abby loves to play outside and has found a special hidden room in the raspberry patch in her backyard. In her raspberry room, she can play brave explorer or anything else she'd like to be. But Abby's best friend Laura doesn't like to get dirty. Instead of coming to see Abby's secret place, Laura goes home just when Abby sees somebody looking at her through the hole in the fence. Mom always seems to be busy with Brayden, Abby's baby brother, and Abby has no one to help soothe her hurt feelings. So she takes Brayden's blue monkey out to her raspberry room, where she finds a little toy tractor hidden under the leaves. Where did it come from? Who was looking through the fence? Later, what wrecked Brayden's monkey? Running away seems to be the only solution...In the course of facing the consequences of her actions, Abby finds a new friend who shares her love of imaginative play outdoors...and also finds new ways to understand and appreciate her friend Laura.

About the Author

Alison Lohans has been writing since early childhood and was first published at the age of twelve. She has published seventeen books for young people, ranging from picturebooks to books for teens, and also a poetry chapbook. She has published many short stories, poems and non-fiction articles, and has also won several awards for her writing. She lives in Regina, Saskatchewan.

About the Writing

As a young child, Alison used to love to play outside. She says that sometimes there was almost a magical feeling about being up in a tree or sitting outside creating imaginary worlds as she played in special places out in the field amidst the tall weeds and wildflowers. There was quite a selection of fruit and nut trees and vines at her parents' home, and in the summer, picking fruit was something she did to help her parents. Her favorites were figs, apricots, strawberries and especially youngberries. When she moved to Regina, she was delighted to find a raspberry patch in her backyard. Often when she went to pick berries, her mind would go back to those special moments of playing outside. And after a while, the idea for *The Raspberry Room* was born.

Teaching Ideas—Curriculum Connections***Prereading Ideas***

Best friends don't always agree about what they'd like to do. Discuss friendly problem-solving tactics. What could Abby have done differently? Would the story outcome be the same? How?

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. Do you and your best friend ever disagree about what you'd like to do together? How do you solve the problem?
2. Some children have free time for playing. Others are very busy, with a lot of activities to go to. What types of games, sports or creative activities do you participate in? Is it important to have free time to play as well?
3. What is the right thing to do if you find something but don't know who it belongs to?
4. Do you use your imagination when you play? What is fun about using your imagination?

Suggested Activities

- Some people are scared of bugs. Discuss the different perspectives. How could you help a friend get over a fear of bugs? Do a research project on one of the insects that Abby and her friends encounter in the raspberry jungle, and draw pictures of the insect in its natural environment.
- Draw a map of Abby's backyard and show the raspberry room. Show the hole in the fence, and what Abby can see in Thomas's backyard. Draw a map of how Abby walks to Laura's house.

- Figure out and role-play a discussion between Abby and Laura. How could they have solved their disagreement about what to play in a way that wouldn't have hurt Abby's feelings?
- Discuss what Abby did with Brayden's blue monkey. How would you feel if you accidentally ruined someone else's favorite toy? What would you do? Draw a picture of Abby with Brayden's monkey that shows Abby's feelings.

Other Titles and Websites of Interest

Kelly's Cabin by Linda Smith (Orca Echoes)

Sam and Nate by PJ Sarah Collins (Orca Echoes)

Other Books by the Author from Orca Book Publishers

Nathaniel's Violin (picturebook, 1996, out of print)

Reviews

"*The Raspberry Room* touches on a few issues, such as being honest; running away from home; and having an accident when you just cannot make it to the bathroom on time. All these are dealt with in a serious, yet loving, way...This chapter book will surely be enjoyed by everyone who appreciates imagination...and secret rooms. Highly recommended."
—*CM Magazine*, starred review

"Lohans' simple story contains enough mystery and character tension to keep the pages turning...There is an excellent sense of the closeness and "fort-like" atmosphere of Abby's secret outdoor room. Abby is an enjoyable character...Teachers and parents could use this story to build on topics such as friendship, family, siblings, and secrets. This was a good read."
—*Resource Links*