



## **Five Stars for Emily**

**Kathleen Cook Waldron**

1-55143-296-X

\$7.95 CDN / \$4.99 US, PAPERBACK

5 X 7 1/2, 144 PAGES

AGES 8-11

To order this book or for a current catalogue:

ORCA BOOK PUBLISHERS

PHONE 1-800-210-5277 FAX: 1-877-408-1551

[www.orcabook.com](http://www.orcabook.com)

Consider the following question as you read *Five Stars for Emily*:

**How can a lack of electricity actually brighten Emily's view?**

### Story

When Emily's Aunt Hannah takes her to a northern cabin without electricity in the dead of winter instead of to Disneyland, Emily is furious.

*I like non-scary fun, like shopping at a mall where everything is marked down to half price or less. My biggest dream is to go to Disneyland because it has fun, safe rides and shopping.*

*I may never find the mall of my dreams, but I am going to Disneyland. In December, Aunt Hannah is taking me for what she calls our 'five-star holiday.' She doesn't have any kids of her own, so when her nieces and nephews turn ten years old, she takes us for a five-star holiday. This year it's my turn! I'm ten-and-a-half and ready to go. I only have one more month to wait.*

Emily is horrified when Aunt Hannah tells her that for their holiday they are heading north to a house-warming party at an isolated cabin with no electricity or indoor plumbing. When they arrive, it is even worse than she imagined. The snow is deep. The work is hard. Aunt Hannah is bossy. And Blossom, the girl her age, wants her to play ice hockey on a nearby lake. Is it possible that this could turn into the five-star holiday Emily had dreamed of?

### Author

Kathleen Cook Waldron lived for thirteen years in a log home that she and her husband built. They had no electricity, no running water, (even no road for the first five years) and she home schooled their two children until there were ten children in the area, enough at that time to open a one-room school. She said that it was surprising to discover how much there is to simple things. Visitors would ask Kathleen, "What do you do all day out here?" In *Five Stars for Emily*, Emily learns what Kathleen learned long ago, that there is more to the simple things of life than someone used to malls and movies might at first realize.

## Curricular Connections

### Language Arts

- Emily and her aunt are having a disagreement about their trip. Emily says, “Fair? What’s fair?” (p. 102). Divide students into groups to discuss fairness. Have them come up with a definition and some clear examples that illustrate their meaning.
- Emily feels everything is her fault (p. 83). She has had enough and runs away. As a whole class, discuss the buildup to and the result of Emily’s feelings. Brainstorm alternate choices Emily could have made. Discuss how these alternate choices might be used in other situations students may find themselves in.
- Writing haiku is a wonderful way to express feelings or emotions. Have students think about an event from *Five Stars for Emily* to use as a guide. For example: As Emily is trying to fall asleep her first night away from home (p. 43) or when Emily and Blossom have a discussion after Emily has run away (p.88). Students might want to write their haiku from Emily’s point of view.
- Several interesting items are mentioned in *Five Stars for Emily*. Find the meanings and/or origins for the following words: toque, sawhorses, ukulele, zamboni, toboggan, spud, shinny, drawknife and venison. Have students illustrate each word.
- If your school is close to groups of trees or other natural surroundings, take your class on a short nature walk. It may be just in your own schoolyard. Have students take along a notebook, pencil and cameras if possible to record what they experience using all of their senses.
- As students are reading *Five Stars for Emily*, have them keep a reading response type journal and write down the events that occur during the day in the story. Have them divide their writing into morning, afternoon and evening time periods. Once they have finished the book, have them use this information to write about how they would spend their time at Blossom’s cabin if they had been invited.
- Drawing situations in comic strip format can help students to see things in a different way. Have students select an event from *Five Stars for Emily*

and illustrate it in this way.

### Art

- Emily is looking out her bedroom window (p. 14) wishing for her dream vacation to come true. Have students construct a window out of construction paper and draw different scenes from Emily's actual vacation to fit behind the window. You may want to assign chapters to groups of students to ensure events from the whole book are represented.
- The Group of Seven Canadian artists have many good examples of outdoor scenes as does Emily Carr. For example: Frank Johnston's *Northern Spires: A Prospector's Cabin* or A.Y. Jackson's *The Edge of the Maple Wood*. Show such examples to the class and decide which one reminds them the most of the setting in *Five Stars for Emily*. Have students draw a picture that would extend the chosen picture on one of its four sides. Create a wall display of the artwork.
- Using the information on pages 30–32, have students draw the setting that is described. Have them compare their drawings and discuss the similarities and differences they see.
- Read through the more than twenty-six suggested art and writing activities on the Humanity Quest site listed below that look at ways to illustrate disappointment. Choose one or more to explore with your students. Suggested activities include creating masks of the many faces of disappointment, creating a cartoon or a recipe for cooking up disappointment.
- As a class project construct a mural of the various plants and trees that grow in your area. Using a book that identifies trees and plants, label the ones you can find.

### Drama

- Emily doesn't know how to skate, and she tries it out with Blossom's help. Select something you know how to do and try to explain it to someone who doesn't.
- Take the role of one of the characters in *Five Stars for Emily* and carry on a conversation with other characters at a location in the story. For example; at

the ice rink, in the kitchen or when Emily and Aunt Hannah arrive at the cabin.

- In *Five Stars for Emily*, the illustrator Hannah Lore Koehler, with suggestions from the editor and art director, chose six scenes plus the cover to illustrate. Divide the class into six or seven groups and have them create a short skit around one of the illustrations.

### Science

- Becky and Emily are discussing the fact they have no electricity at the cabin (p. 49). Have students brainstorm a list of as many things as they can that require electricity. Once the list is created, divide them into essential and nonessential items. Have each group rank the top three items in each section and give reasons for their choices.
- Hydroelectricity is the most common way in which the electricity we use is produced. There are several other ways that also work. Find out more about windpower, dynamo-generated power and solar power. Choose the one type you feel would be successful where Blossom lives and explain the reason for your choice.
- Electricity is a vital part of our lives, wherever we are. Emily finds out that she has to change what she wants to do because there isn't any electricity. Here is a list of inventors who have some connection to electricity: Alexander Graham Bell, Thomas Alva Edison, James Watt, Lewis H. Latimer, Edna Schneider Hoover, Benjamin Franklin, Michael Faraday and George Westinghouse. Research each inventor to find out his or her contribution to electricity.
- Aunt Hannah and Emily play the alphabet game on their way to the cabin (p. 23). Use the same game format but have students say things that rely on electricity to function. Use the same game to name items found in the wilderness.

### Music

- Using the music of *The Four Seasons* by Antonio Vivaldi as inspiration, have students draw a picture or make a collage of their favorite season and then their least favorite one. Compile the information and then play Vivaldi's

music that connects to each of these seasons. Discuss how the music impacts the student choices.

### Social Studies

- Using a map of British Columbia label some of the place mentioned by Emily and her aunt: Hope, Hell's Gate, Fraser River, Fraser Canyon. You may also add other places you have heard of or visited. These may include Vancouver, Victoria, Vancouver Island, Whistler or Kelowna. Read about the importance of the Fraser River to the people of British Columbia.

### Suggested Resources

#### Fiction

Baker, Jeanne. *Window*.

Bondar, Dianna. *Accidental Alphabet*.

Clements, Andrew. *Big Al* (Al is lonely and all he wants is a friend), *Janitor's Boy* (Another perspective on family relationships).

Harrison, Troon. *The Courage to Fly* (How you can find friendship in new or different places).

Jacques, Brian. *Mossflower* (Fantasy set in a forest world which contains only animals).

Landstrom, Olof. *Wallace's Lists* (Wallace discovers the joy of friendship).

Reynolds, Peter H. *The Dot* (Sometimes success is a matter of perception).

Ruurs, Margriet. *A Pacific Alphabet*.

Spalding, Andrea. *The Keeper and the Crows*.

Turney-Zagwyn, Deborah. *Long Nellie* (Friendship can be found in the strangest places).

Van Allsburg, Chris. *The Garden of Abdul Gasazi* (a story that causes the reader to question what is illusion and what is reality).

Wilde. Oscar. *The Selfish Giant*.

**Nonfiction**

(Dewey Decimal Classification numbers appear in parentheses where applicable.)

Booth, David. *Images of Nature: Canadian Poets and the Group of Seven* (811).

Caviglioli, Oliver and Ian Harris. *Thinking Visually* (370.15).

Cole, Joanna. *The Magic Schoolbus and the Electric Fieldtrip* (537).

Galat, Joan Marie. *Dot to Dot in the Sky: Stories of the Stars* (523).

Harvey, Stephanie. *Strategies That Work* (372.6).

Lauw, Darlene. *Science Alive! Electricity* (537).

Miller, Debbie. *Reading with Meaning: Teaching Comprehension in the Primary Grades* (372.4).

New, William. *Llamas in the Laundry* (811.5).

Roalf, Peggy. *Looking at Paintings: Families* (757).

Swartz, Larry. *The New Dramathemes* (372.66).

Wakan, Naomi Beth. *Haiku: One Breath Poetry* (808.1).

**Online**

“Character Above All Quotes”

[www.pbs.org/newshour/character/quotes/#presidents](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/character/quotes/#presidents)

“good character.com: Being Friends”

[www.goodcharacter.com/YCC/BeingFriends.html](http://www.goodcharacter.com/YCC/BeingFriends.html)

“Humanity Quest Lessons on Disappointment”

[Humanityquest.com/topic/art\\_activities/index.asp?theme1=disappointment](http://Humanityquest.com/topic/art_activities/index.asp?theme1=disappointment)

“Dealing with Disappointment”

[www.goodcharacter.com/YCC/Disappointment.html](http://www.goodcharacter.com/YCC/Disappointment.html)

“Being Friends” [www.goodcharacter.com/YCC/BeingFriends.html](http://www.goodcharacter.com/YCC/BeingFriends.html)

“B.C. Hydro Hydro Energy” [www.bchydro.com/education/4-7/4-7\\_2471.html](http://www.bchydro.com/education/4-7/4-7_2471.html)

“Timeline of Electricity-Electronic Inventions”

inventors. [about.com/library/inventors/blelectric2.htm](http://about.com/library/inventors/blelectric2.htm)

“How Electricity Works” [science.howstuffworks.com/electricity.htm](http://science.howstuffworks.com/electricity.htm)

“Teaching Haiku Poetry: Links, Resources, Ideas”  
[www.gardendigest.com/poetry/haiku4.htm#Three](http://www.gardendigest.com/poetry/haiku4.htm#Three)

“Trees of North America” [www.domtar.com/arbre/english/p\\_06.htm](http://www.domtar.com/arbre/english/p_06.htm)

“Identifying and Comparing Trees”  
[interactive.usask.ca/ski/forestry/tree/identifying.html](http://interactive.usask.ca/ski/forestry/tree/identifying.html)

“The Group of Seven Artists”  
[www.artcyclopedia.com/history/group-of-seven.html](http://www.artcyclopedia.com/history/group-of-seven.html)

### **A Few Words From the Author**

Dear Readers,

Everything I write has autobiographical elements. Many of my stories have grown from experiences I've had and people I've known. In *Five Stars for Emily*, for example, I used names of many people I know. Jake, Justin, and Tamara are my cousins. I had a great-aunt Hannah who was as bossy as Aunt Hannah in the book. I blended her with my wonderful Aunt Jerri, who had no children of her own but was like a grown-up friend to all of her nieces and nephews. The characters Dale and Becky in the book are a lot like my friends Bruce and Wenda.

Like Emily, I grew up in the city and spent most of my time there. Every summer, my parents took my younger brother and me on a fishing trip, but we always stayed in cabins or a motel. Only once did we stay in a place with an outhouse. For some reason we can't remember, my cousin Patti and I thought it would be funny to lock sweet Aunt Jerri in it. She was not amused.

After I married my husband Mark, we bought some undeveloped land in the Cariboo district of Central British Columbia. When we finished university and had our first child, Levi, we decided to try living there.

It was an amazing adventure, especially for someone like me who could take three steps into the woods and completely lose my sense of direction.



We built our own log house from the ground up and had to walk or four-wheel drive in and out for five years before we finished our 1.5-kilometer (3/4 mile) long driveway. Our daughter Rosy was born in the 100 Mile House hospital and came home to her hand-made cradle in our still quite rustic house.

Like Emily, I had my doubts about life away from the city. I worried about mice getting in our house (lots did) and about being far from a doctor (no problem). While there were things in the city I missed, like instant electricity, long hot baths, museums, and plays, I kept discovering new natural wonders, not the least of which were the wildflowers, wild creatures, and the wildly spectacular sky at night.

Happy reading!

Kathleen Cook Waldron