



TITLE: Cloud busting

AUTHOR: Malorie Blackman

INTEREST AGE: 8-12 Years

BOOKBAND: Dark Red and Black (G+T)

OUR REVIEW: Sensitive and imaginative, a nicely told relationship of bully and victim

EXPLORE DIFFERENT TYPES OF POETRY:

HAIKU (Chapter 3)

This chapter not only exemplifies Haiku; it even explains the five – seven – five syllable pattern, “a pure, paced rhythm.....so let your mind soar.” Sam’s Haiku for Davey is powerful partly because it is so simple: compacted, concentrated emotion. First allow children to talk about people, pets or experiences that they love or have loved; support their development of content, then help with vocabulary choices that will meet the syllable requirement of a Haiku.

Descriptions (Chapter 4)

Here, Blackman includes lines adapting the Kenning form. A Kenning is a word pair (or compound expression), which labels something without using its name: a cat could be a sofa-scratcher, mouse-catcher or milk-lapper, for example. Following a circle discussion around the impact that a bully has, children can generate compound expressions (for example, a misery-maker, a point-scorer, a fear-monger) from which to develop their own, Kenning-inspired poem. Ensure that the description evolves into an obviously negative picture, e.g. Lonely loser.

Limericks (Chapter 5)

The limerick form in chapter five is used to abuse and bully. Children might research limericks and notice how often they poke fun at individuals – but that they are largely fictitious. To avoid causing upset to anyone, use the limerick form (the rhyme pattern, the rhythm and the humour) to satirise well-known fictional characters for a younger audience (e.g. Mr Men, fairytale or nursery rhyme characters).

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- ❖ If you witnessed the key events of the story, what would you think? What would you like to think you would do? Who should take responsibility for tackling wrong-doing?
- ❖ Sam makes an almost lethal mistake and then regrets it. What does he learn? Why are mistakes important?
- ❖ Look at the role of Alex, particularly how he becomes the “kindly king”, befriending his victim. How does this make readers feel?
- ❖ Why does Blackman leave this wrong ‘un-righted’? Write a paragraph to show how Sam might have responded to Alex.
- ❖ Sam changes dramatically through the book. Is it for the better? He used to fit in; now he doesn’t. What does he have instead? Consider how people change. How might you change in the next few years?

Other books by Malorie Blackman include...

