



STORY SUMMARY

It is time to plant the rice in Malini's Sri Lankan community, and the little girl is both excited and nervous to help for the first time. What if she does it wrong? Will she be responsible if the crop fails? When a flash flood separates Malini and the ox-cart full of seedlings from her family, Malini summons up courage she never

dreamed she possessed and resolves to save ox, cart, and seedlings, no matter what it takes.

Alma Fullerton's free-verse novels for juvenile and young adult readers have earned her multiple nominations and awards, including the Ruth and Sylvia Schwartz Award and the CLA Book of the Year Honour. Her first picture book, *A Good Trade*, has been a White Ravens Choice, a Bank Street Best Book, and a nominee for the OLA Blue Spruce Award and the Kentucky Bluegrass Awards. *In a Cloud of Dust* won the Rainforest of Reading Award, was nominated for the OLA Blue Spruce Award, and was a *Foreword Magazine* Best Children's Books of Fall 2015 selection. Alma lives in Midland, Ontario.

Kim La Fave is a multi-award-winning illustrator and designer in paint, pencils, and digital media. His honors include the Governor General's Literary Award for Illustration, the TD Canadian Children's Literature Award, the Ruth Schwartz Children's Book Award, and the Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Illustrator's Award. A graduate of the Alberta College of Art, Kim also honed his skills in Toronto and New York before returning to British Columbia where he now lives with his wife and family.

FURTHER RESOURCES:

<https://youtu.be/kxAEiHCeRrSA>

Eat Happy Project—Remarkable Rice: How Does Rice Grow?

A video geared for schoolchildren about how rice is grown in paddy fields.

<http://www.statistics.gov.lk/agriculture/Paddy%20Statistics/PaddyStats.htm>

Department of Census and Statistics—Sri Lanka

A brief explanation of rice cultivation in Sri Lanka, which is structured around the two monsoon seasons: Maha and Yala.

<http://nfwf.org/education-center/farm-worker-issues/timeline-of-agricultural-labor/>

National Farm Worker Ministry

A timeline of agricultural labor in the United States

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/ca-ra2006/agpop/article-eng.htm>

Statistics Canada: Canada's Farm Population

A timeline of farm families in Canada and statistics about farm families today

WHAT IS A MONSOON?

In many parts of the world, including South Asia, northern Australia, West Africa, and even parts of the United States, the wind will blow one way for an entire season, creating very dry conditions, and then blow the other way for the next season, bringing extremely heavy rains. Monsoon rains are an important part of life for these regions, but they can bring about dangerous flash floods.

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THEMES

Courage, Self-Reliance, Sri Lanka, Agriculture

BISAC CODES

JUV030020 JUVENILE FICTION / People & Places / Asia

JUV039140 JUVENILE FICTION / Social Themes / Self-Esteem & Self-Reliance

JUV024000 JUVENILE FICTION / Lifestyles / Country Life

BEFORE READING

Discuss

- Looking at the cover illustration of *When the Rain Comes*, what predictions can you make about the story?

AFTER READING

Discuss:

- How did Malini feel about helping with the rice planting for the first time?
- Have you ever felt nervous about learning a new thing? How did you deal with your nerves?
- Many children in Sri Lanka help with farm work as well as household chores. Some even work to earn money for their families, although many people are trying to stop this child labor. What chores are you expected to do at home? How does it make you feel to have these responsibilities?
- When the flash flood cut Malini off from her family, she could have reacted in many ways. What options did she have? Which one do you think you would have taken? Why did Malini make the choice she did?
- Most people will never be trapped by a flood with a huge bullock, but everyone faces situations that frighten them. What are some strategies we can use to help us face our fears?
- What changes did you notice in the illustrations when the storm began? Why do you think the illustrator made these changes?
- In some places, the book's designer has made words bigger, or moved them to different positions on the page. How does this help you feel the emotion of the story?
- The author's note at the end of *When the Rain Comes* shares information about Sri Lanka, the country where Malini lives. How could you learn more about Sri Lanka?

ACTIVITIES

- Retell the story from the point of view of another character: the bullock, the driver, or one of Malini's parents. Describe the emotions this character feels throughout the story.
- Paint a rainstorm picture in the style of Kim La Fave's art in *When the Rain Comes*. Start by making diagonal streaks across your paper with a white wax crayon, pressing firmly. Now paint your picture using water-based paint. The white crayon marks will resist the paint, leaving streaks of rain across the page.
- Compare the free verse of *When the Rain Comes* to another picture book that is written in prose. Discuss: What is different about the two texts? What is similar? Why might an author choose one writing style over another? As a class, re-write a section of *When the Rain Comes* in prose and compare the result to the original text.
- As a class, make predictions about how you think rice is grown. Watch the video *Remarkable Rice: How Does Rice Grow?* (see the Further Resources list above). Using the information you learned in the video, create a set of instructions that Malini might use to grow rice for the first time.
- Children in communities all around the world help grow the food their families eat. As a class, learn to grow some food for your own families. If you do not have access to a garden outside, lettuce is an easy option for growing in pots at a sunny window.
- Onomatopoeia is a big, funny name for words that imitate the sounds of the things they describe, like CRASH and BANG. See how many examples of onomatopoeia you can find in *When the Rain Comes*.
- What words in *When the Rain Comes* are new to you? How do the story and the illustrations help you understand what some of these new words mean?
- Using the links in the Further Resources section, learn about the families that farm in your own country. You can make connections to math by using some of this information to create charts and graphs.