



Aunty Jane Knits Up A Storm

Steve Wolfson

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FriesenPress

(38pp)

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This inspiring picture book acknowledges the realities of loss and highlights the healing power of love.

Steve Wolfson's tenderhearted picture book *Aunty Jane Knits Up a Storm* concerns the healing powers of creativity and love.

Aunty Jane is happiest when she is knitting; her beautiful creations decorate the whole town. Naomi and Xavier love visiting her and Uncle Wally, watching her needles flash as she hums a happy tune. Then, one evening, Uncle Wally's chair is empty; he is in the hospital. Aunty Jane's knitting slows.

The day the knitting stops, Aunty Jane, Naomi, and Xavier cry together until their tears soak every scarf in the room. With her last tear, Aunty Jane jumps up, clicks her needles in a drum roll, and hums a low, rumbling tune. Knitting faster than ever, she turns gray balls of yarn into huge, dark clouds and lightning bolts. Her humming rumbles like thunder; her needles hiss like the wind. Darkness engulfs the whole town until the children find a way to bring laughter back into her life and remind her that she is surrounded by love.

Here, children are catalysts for healing, and creativity brings joy and meaning that can be shared with others. Such messages are demonstrated throughout, via both the story and the expressive illustrations that complement it. The images are detailed and colorful, conveying each person's and pet's feelings with heart. The expression on Aunty Jane's face as she trots down the street, knitting all the while, is the perfect picture of bliss, and so is that of Stitch the cat as he follows her.

The illustrations include humorous touches—as with a scarf-related brush with disaster and with a picture of a baby so swathed in knitted clothing that he rolls like a ball—and gentle ones, too: the interracial older couple is respected and cared for by others in their town. Further, the textures of Aunty Jane's knitting are captured in tactile terms, and their colors are vibrant and appealing.

Beautiful and inspiring, the picture book *Aunty Jane Knits Up a Storm* acknowledges the realities of loss and highlights the healing power of love.

KRISTINE MORRIS (August 11, 2022)

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