

Lighthouse Seeds

Fran Hodgkins

Pamela Love

Linda Warner, Illustrator

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Miles away from the mainland population and the convenience of ample supply sources, Sarah's hard-working family accepts the lighthouse as their new residence, a structure perched above a foundation of rock, barren of all soil and vegetation. Not much time passes before Sarah witnesses the decline in her mother's spirit as she realizes that there will never be a flower garden on the lighthouse property. When Sarah spies a dandelion growing in a rock crevice, she concocts a clever plan to remedy her mother's grieving heart—a plan with unexpected, far-reaching effects.

The author of *Loon Alone*, Love has published several stories, as well as poetry and plays, in such prestigious magazines as *Ladybug*, *Cricket*, and *Children's Playmate*. Torn from the pages of Maine's history books, this tale is based on a true story. Twenty-six miles off the coast of Maine, Mount Desert Rock is the site of the magnificent lighthouse once operated by lighthouse keepers, now managed by the United States Coast Guard.

Love places the story's problem directly in the lap of a child, whose compassionate nature moves her to seek a satisfying solution. Sarah makes the connection between the thriving dandelion and the miraculous, adaptive characteristics of nature. Showing her strong will and eagerness to improve her family's quality of life, Love's heroine implements an ingenious plan in clear, decisive steps.

Just as Sarah completes her task, her mother discovers her on the dangerous rocks in the dark of night. Her anger may at first seem a bit harsh and overstated, but the realities in such a dangerous locale quickly draw the concern into a proper perspective. The story's resolution is both uplifting and genuinely hope-filled, and speaks to the unrelenting will and survival of a human spirit under less than desirable conditions or circumstances.

The artist is a professor of illustration at Savannah College of Art and Design in Savannah, Georgia. Her passionate watercolor portrayal of the harsh, rugged life on Mount Desert Rock has an authentic, historic quality that lends itself well to Love's true-life tale.

Written for ages four through eight, this book would fare well with curriculum studies of admirable character strengths and values as well as history and Americana.

CHARISSE FLOYD (November / December 2004)

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