

Pine and the Winter Sparrow

Alexis York-Lumbard

Beatriz Vidal, Illustrator

Wisdom Tales Press (February 2015)

Hardcover \$15.95 (28pp)

978-1-937786-33-5

This simple, easy-to-read folktale focuses on universal lessons of love and kindness.

Pine and the Winter Sparrow is old native folklore retold by Alexis York Lumbard (with a foreword by Robert Lewis), and illustrated by Beatriz Vidal. In this delightful tale of a sparrow that must overwinter due to a hurt wing, children are taught the value of kindness and friendship, as well as a legend about the trees that has been passed down from the old storytellers.

The story starts out with Sparrow singing a song to the Creator. He is unable to fly south for the winter and reassures his family that he will be just fine. Hopping from tree to tree, kindly asking if they will shelter him, he is told “no” by each one. After many rejections, he cries and gives up until a gentle pine offers his branches for warmth and comfort. When Sparrow’s family returns in spring, they are happy to see his wing is healed, and he tells them it is all because of Pine, his best friend. The legend continues as Pine receives a gift from the Creator for his generosity to the little bird.

In this simple tale, “the Creator” is mentioned twice; however, it is not overtly religious and focuses mainly on the universal lessons of love and kindness. The writing and story are perfectly in sync with tone and thought, and the full-color illustrations are at once detailed and simple, pleasing to look at, and attention grabbing. When Pine says to Sparrow, “If you don’t mind my sticky branches and my needle-sharp leaves, then all that I am and all that I have is yours,” the theme of gentleness and humility are fully revealed.

With the beautiful pictures, easy reading style, and the fun of folklore, children ages four to seven, and their parents, will enjoy reading this sturdy hardcover book time and time again.

SHANNAN SPITZ (January 12, 2015)

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