

The Wish and the Peacock

Wendy S. Swore

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Emotional and rich, *The Wish and the Peacock* concerns families, loss, and acceptance.

After the death of her father, twelve-year-old Paige is determined to fill the gaps left by his absence. She works hard to keep their farm running, caring for the land and the animals just as her dad would have done. Despite her efforts, her mother and grandfather decide to sell. As Paige, her brother Scotty, and her two best friends, Mateo and Kimana, plot to prevent the sale, they also try to care for an injured peacock that they found in the barn.

The story grapples with the pain of losing a parent. Paige conflates the farm with her father; its loss would be too much to bear. The fact that Paige cannot care for the farm on her own is a hard lesson. She and her friends plan multiple pranks to sabotage the sale, leading to the central conflict, which contains humor and sadness in equal measure.

Set in Idaho, the story includes educational details about growing crops and tending to livestock. The families of Paige's friends work together and help one another out, creating a sense of a close-knit community.

The peacock is an important character. Paige and Scotty decide to keep it hidden in the barn while it heals, even when a reporter who claims to be writing about the decline of family farms asks the children if they have seen or heard a peacock. As Paige and Scotty learn about the bird, it becomes a symbol for all that they want to protect, and ultimately of all of the things that they must let go.

The Wish and the Peacock is a thoughtful novel about love, loss, and the hope of a new beginning.

CATHERINE THURESON (January / February 2020)

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