



# The Wind in the Wall

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Editor's Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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*?Wishes are such sweet profanities, they fall so carelessly from the mouth...?*

If you had one wish, how would you use it? You might think you'd be wiser than the narrator of this picturebook for older readers ? but under the same pressure, you too might find yourself wishing for something you did not intend.

In the cold climate of Northumberland, an eighteenth-century Duke orders his gardener to grow a pineapple ? a feat that is almost impossible to achieve, as this newly-fashionable fruit is ?sun-obsessed? and must be given very special treatment. The gardener does his best, but his pineapples do not thrive. The Duke, anxious for the prestige that such a novelty will bring, employs a Mr Amicus from Brazil who arrives with a mysteriously shrouded birdcage and moves into the hothouses, where he proceeds to grow a perfect specimen.

The ousted gardener suspects that Mr Amicus isn't Brazilian - or indeed the expert that he claims to be. Spying on him, the gardener discovers the magical secret in Mr Amicus's birdcage ? a feathered fairy-wife, capable of granting wishes. The gardener wants to help her, but it takes a summer storm to free the fairy-wife. She spends the night with the gardener before granting him a wish that must be used ?wisely? if he wants to see her again. But the gardener is attacked by a jealous Mr Amicus and finds himself in a dead-end corner by an enormous wall. He forgets the fairy-wife's advice. ?I wish it would hide me,? he thinks - and the stones part. The gardener is trapped.

?On good days when the wind doesn't moan down from the moors, I think she will come back to free me,? he says. But the gardener is still waiting inside the wall?

**The Wind in the Wall** was written when Sally Gardner was writer in residence at Alnwick Castle, and although some of the site-specific details add depth and context to her story, there's a sense that it doesn't wear its research as lightly as it could. That said, it's always a pleasure to welcome new picture books for older audiences and there is much to admire here, from Rovina Cai's atmospheric artwork to the gothic flavour that permeates Gardner's historically-inspired text, evoking classic ghost stories and inviting readers to view their surroundings with new eyes.

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