

ABOUT

the Author

RUTH VANDER ZEE, teacher and award-winning author, has written several other picture books for children, including *Erika's Story*,



Eli Remembers, and *Mississippi Morning*. When she isn't writing, Ruth is often visiting schools, speaking at conferences, and substitute teaching. Ruth lives in Miami, Florida.

ABOUT

the Illustrator

RONALD HIMLER is an accomplished artist who has illustrated more than 150 children's books, including *The Wall* by Eve Bunting and *Prairie Christmas* by Elizabeth Van Steenwyk. Ronald lives in Tucson, Arizona.

ALWAYS WITH YOU

Written by Ruth Vander Zee
Illustrated by Ronald Himler

Hardcover ISBN: 978-0-8028-5295-3 ❖ \$17.00
10.25" x 8.25" ❖ 32 pages ❖ Ages 8-12
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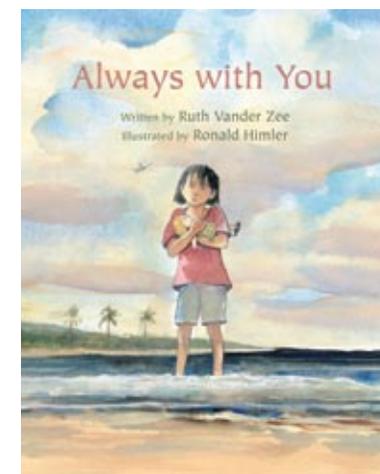
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ALWAYS WITH YOU

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Illustrated by Ronald Himler



"Kim, come to me."

"Don't be afraid."

"I will always be with you."

Those are the only words I remember my mama saying to me. Three short sentences.

THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

- ❖ Family relationships
- ❖ Vietnam war
- ❖ Emotional effects of war
- ❖ History

VOCABULARY

Look up the following terms: China Beach; hazy; orphanage; perch; secure; Vietnam



THINGS TO THINK ABOUT BEFORE READING THE BOOK

1. Read the title of the book and examine the cover illustration. What do you think this story is about? Where do you think it takes place?

2. What do you know about the Vietnam War? What questions do you have about it? Write down your questions on a sheet of paper. See if you can answer any of them while reading the book.

3. How would you react if you lost someone close to you? Why might you remember the last words he or she said?

4. What types of games do you play with your friends? Do you ever sing songs with them? What do you sing?



QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON AFTER READING THE BOOK

1. Who do you think was responsible for bombing Kim's village?

2. Kim calls the day her village was bombed "that blackout day." What do you think she means? Why hasn't Kim seen colors since that day?

3. Where were the soldiers from who rescued Kim? How do you know? Why do you think they gave her gum to chew?

4. Compare the illustrations on pages 12–13 to the illustrations on pages 22–23. How are the illustrations different? What do you think the illustrator is trying to show?

5. Why did Kim cry at night? Why did Kim tell her baby doll not to be afraid? How do you think this helped her to feel safe?

6. What trials did Kim face after she was rescued by the soldiers? In what ways did Kim show she was brave? How would you have reacted if you were in her situation?

7. Read the author's note. In what ways do you think Kim's life changed after she moved to the United States? What do you think her life might have been like if she stayed in Vietnam?



ACTIVITIES

1. Kim lived in Da Nang, Vietnam. On a map, locate Da Nang. How close is it to the South China Sea? How close is it to Ho Chi Minh City?

2. Write a short story about a time you were afraid. First, take a few minutes to journal about the event. Write down all that you can remember, including specific details. Then write a draft of the story. Describe the events in the order that they occurred. In your draft, make sure to tell how you overcame your fear. Finally, proofread your story for any spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors.

3. Kim and her best friend Vinh are Vietnamese. Use library sources to research what life is like for Vietnamese children today. Find out how children dress, what they eat, and what traditions they practice. Compare your findings to your own life. Communicate your research through a presentation to the class.

4. The Vietnam War was a civil war that took place between 1959 and 1975. Use library or online resources to research the major events of the Vietnam War. Then, with your classmates, create one time line on the board that shows the order of important events in this war.

5. Kim lived in the China Beach Orphanage during the Vietnam War. Use library or online resources to research what life was like for orphaned children during the war. What was the purpose of Operation Babylift? What role did the U.S. military play? What happened to the orphans who were rescued?