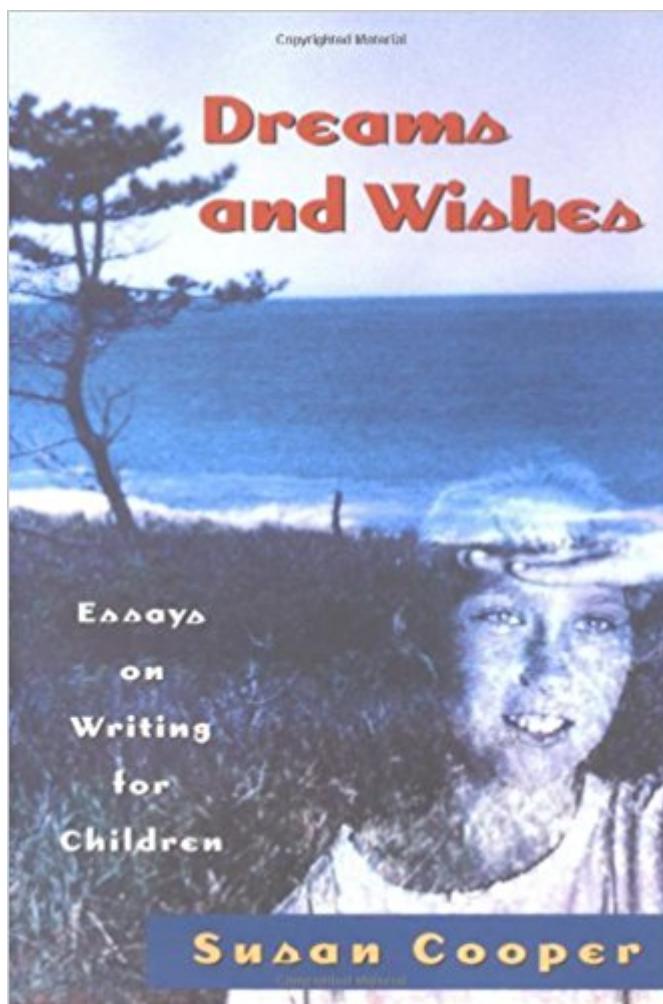


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Dreams And Wishes: Essays On Writing For Children



Synopsis

An informative book for young writers interested in the pursuit of writing and the writing process presents a collection of Susan Cooper's inspirational speeches, spanning from 1976 to the present, on the theme of creative writing for children.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Newbery award winner Cooper has collected 14 of her speeches in a compilation that should find a ready spot in library professional collections. The essays, presented in the order in which they were written, show an evolution in Cooper's thoughts about writing for children. When her *The Dark Is Rising* was voted a 1974 Newbery Honor Book, Cooper barely knew what the Newbery award was, and only after attending that summer's ALA convention did she realize that there was a world of people who enjoyed nothing better than discussing children's books. By the last essay, she is a beloved author, who draws readers in to her celebration of the mystery of creativity and keenly appreciates the many messengers who bring her works to the attention of children. Along the way, Cooper also examines her childhood relationship with books and the effect of her immigration to the U.S. on her writing and demonstrates clearly how we can all participate in bringing the magic of reading into children's lives. Ilene Cooper

Susan Cooper's sequence of fantasy novels has become a modern classic, internationally established on school and college reading lists and in the hearts of thousands of children. Writers of

fantasy, says Cooper, deal in "myth, legend, folktale, the mystery of dream and the greater mystery of Time. With all that haunting our minds, it isn't surprising that we write stories about an ordinary world in which extraordinary things happen." This fascinating collection of essays, compelling reading for any parent, teacher, librarian, or booklover, contains 20 years of an author's reflections on the nature of craft, imagination, and her young audience. Some of the topics are focused on fantasy; others range from the theater to literacy, from poetry to war. Although Susan Cooper is also a gifted playwright and television screenwriter (*Foxfire*, *The Dollmaker*, *To Dance with the White Dog*), her novels for young adults contain her best work. Her concern for children's literature permeates *Dreams and Wishes*, making it a book that is both entertaining and disturbing. At the heart of Cooper's work is a passionate plea for the recognition, in an image-oriented world, of the all-encompassing power and value of the written word.

If you're interested in writing, read this. If you like Cooper's books, read this. I'm interested in both. These are talks mostly given at writer's conventions, so you're like a fly on the wall. If you want to write well, you not only have to read well, but you have to listen to great writers. Cooper has the heart of a teacher and can show us a lot. Recommended.

Susan Cooper is probably best known for writing the superb *Dark Is Rising* sequence of five children's novels, one of which garnered the Newbery Medal and another a Newbery Honor. This book, however, is not fiction but about fiction, at least primarily. The essays and speeches contained here discuss experiences from Cooper's own childhood (in World War II England), the piercing nostalgia brought on by finding a new copy of a long-beloved though mostly-forgotten storybook, the author's experiences with the theater (and friendship with Jessica Tandy), and many other topics. The tone is often introspective, but never arrogant, and the book can be read in segments or in a single sitting. Definitely worthwhile for anyone with the slightest interest in children's literature . . . there is far more here than one might expect.

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