

New South African children's series releases this month

The first book in a new children's series, *Blue Star and Lionheart*, releases in South Africa in October 2012, coinciding with Animal Awareness Month. Targeted at children, the book aims, through a beautiful simple story, to stir awareness that humans need to preserve and reconnect with nature in a sustainable way. It combines eco-psychology and storytelling, well illustrated by artist Stephanie Gillett.



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The author, psychologist Bea Potgieter was raised in the bushveld on a nature conservancy and notes Africa as being integral to her very being. Whilst choosing psychology as her career, wildlife conservation and writing continued to be lifetime pursuits. Connecting eco-psychology and her passions, the children's story was a natural outcome.

"Reflecting on my childhood today, I now know that as a little girl, nature and animals protected and preserved my essence, and kept the ember inside of me burning. Although I was not consciously aware of the incredible wisdom that lies within the connection between the natural world and me, I somehow knew it on a deep level, as I never felt alone under a tree or with an animal. It is this knowing that I wish to stir within every child and adult who reads this book."

The book features two characters, *Blue Star and Lionheart*. Blue Star is human and Lionheart animal, with each possessing the qualities that are representative of living a life of harmony with one's inner soul and the outer natural world. The two characters bridge the gap between the human and animal worlds and together combine their gifts of love and hope, as they embark on a courageous journey together.

A journey of loss and one of light

For the characters, it is a journey of loss and one of light, demonstrating the need to return to one's inner self in order to reclaim and re connect with a soul purpose and universal truth. A message that aptly shows no one is ever alone and that there indeed is a common connectedness.

The book on a higher level also symbolises the greater loss experienced in all people in modern day to day living, a collective disconnection from animals and nature and the cry for a return to balance, harmony and equilibrium. The book

brings awareness to a greater need for balance and synchronization.

Work on the second book is currently underway. The first book will be translated into Afrikaans, Zulu, Xhosa and Sotho so that more South African children may enjoy the story. The book will be available through the online bookstore www.publisher.co.za at a cost of R125 excl postage and shipping.

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