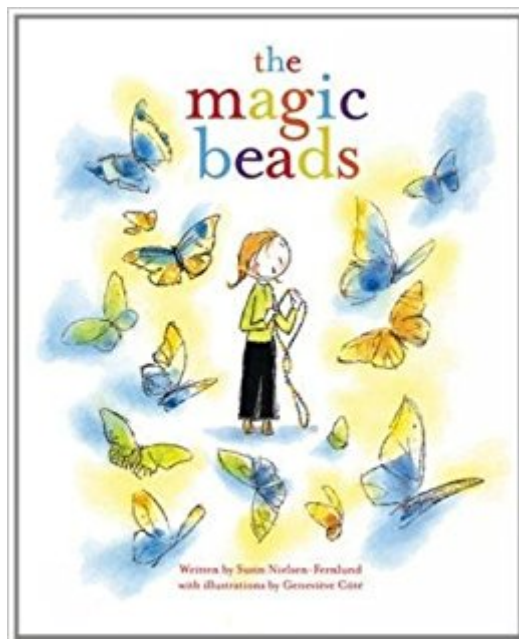


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# The Magic Beads



## Synopsis

It's seven-year-old Lillian's first day at a new school, and she's got butterflies in her tummy, but those butterflies turn into grasshoppers when she learns she has to bring something for Show and Tell at the end of the week! Lillian and her mother have just moved away from Lillian's abusive father and into a family shelter, leaving behind all of their possessions. Every day that Lillian anxiously watches her classmates bring toys with which she has nothing to compare, the creatures in her stomach change and grow, until finally, she realizes that imagination can make anything magical, even an ordinary string of beads.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 32 pages

Publisher: Simply Read Books (August 28, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1894965477

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Product Dimensions: 8.6 x 0.4 x 10.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 3 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #708,658 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #197 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Homelessness & Poverty](#) #3918 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > School](#) #7917 in [Books > Children's Books > Activities, Crafts & Games > Activity Books](#)

Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## Customer Reviews

Genevi C is an award-winning illustrator of many children's books, including her own *What Elephant?* and *With You Always*, *Little Monday*. She is the winner of the 2007 Governor General's Literary Award for Children's Book Illustration, French Text, for *La petite rapporteuse de mots*, and the winner of the Elizabeth Mrazik-Cleaver Award 2005 for *The Lady of Shalott*. Susin Nielsen-Fernlund has written for internationally-acclaimed TV series and many award-winning children's TV series. She co-created the animated pre-school series, "Franny's Feet," and recently adapted Susan Juby's "Alice I Think" trilogy into a TV series. *The Magic Beads* is Susin's third children's book, following the Mr. Christie's Silver award-winner "Hank and Fergus, and Mormor

Moves In." Susin Nielsen lives in Vancouver, BC.

I love this book. It helps teach a very important lesson.

Trying to fit in as the new kid in a different school can be a challenging experience for many children, including Lillian. The butterflies she feels in her stomach on her first day steadily feel like larger animals churning around as the week progresses. The main culprit behind this anxiety is the upcoming Show and Tell: as the children bring in some rather impressive toys in preparation for the big event, Lillian grows increasingly worried because she has nothing comparable to bring in. She and her mom had to move suddenly to a family shelter because of her dad's bad temper, and they left all their belongings behind. Lillian's mother is saving every penny to rent an apartment and cannot afford to buy Lillian a new toy. Only when Lillian comes up with a creative solution to her predicament and comes to terms with her current living situation at the shelter do the butterflies go away. *The Magic Beads* is an excellent example of a children's book that broaches a difficult topic--in this case, domestic violence--in a sensitive and age-appropriate manner. The expressive illustrations work effectively to communicate the conflicting emotions that the protagonist feels. Woven into the compelling story are some powerful economics lessons about scarcity, wants and needs, and the economics of conflict. This book offers a hopeful message that Lillian and her mother, who experienced extreme conflict at home and a change in living standards at the shelter, are able to find help and support as they transition to a new chapter in their lives.

When Lily thinks about what to bring in for Show and Tell at school, the butterflies in her stomach turn to grasshoppers, bunny rabbits, donkeys and buffaloes. Her classmates are bringing in expensive toys -- but Lily and her mother are currently staying in a homeless shelter, and she doesn't know what to share. She doesn't foresee that her magic beads will be the most popular Show-and-Tell item of all. Kudos to this talented author and illustrator team for crafting a book that is approachable to young children, while capturing the experience of temporary homelessness in such a powerful way.

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