



# **The Red Tree**

*Shaun Tan*

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## **The Red Tree** Shaun Tan

When a child awakens with dark leaves drifting into her bedroom, she feels that 'sometimes the day begins with nothing to look forward to, and things go from bad to worse.'

Feelings too complex for words are rendered into an imaginary landscape where the child wanders, oblivious to the glimmer of promise in the shape of a tiny red leaf.

Everything seems hopeless until the child returns to her room and sees the red tree. At that perfect moment of beauty and purity, the child smiles and her world stirs anew.

With sensitivity and wonder, Shaun Tan's evocative images in *The Red Tree* open a window to our inexplicable emotions and tell a story about the power of hope, renewal and inspiration.

## **The Red Tree Details**

Date : Published April 15th 2003 by Simply Read Books (first published 2000)

ISBN : 9780968876831

Author : Shaun Tan

Format : Hardcover 32 pages

Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Sequential Art, Graphic Novels, Fiction, Art

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# From Reader Review The Red Tree for online ebook

## Sam Quixote says

Shaun Tan's "The Red Tree" is a sparsely scripted book with incredible paintings telling the story of depression and how a person copes with it, from waking up and struggling to get out of bed, to finding the energy to walk to work as well as constantly battling the negative thoughts in your head.

One of the most haunting images in the book is of an ordinary street scene rendered nightmarish by a giant fish with a gaping mouth and bleeding eyes hovering above the main character. It's a more frightening rendering of the traditional metaphor of depression as the "black dog".

The artwork is varied and beautiful on every page with Tan's imagination lending itself enormously well to simple lines like "sometimes you just don't know what you are supposed to do" followed by an elaborate stage filled with grotesques and strange creatures surrounding the main character doing unfathomable things dressed up as a magician while playing to a mysterious audience of hats!

It's a supremely creative book dealing with everyday questions that we never answer. Profundities manifested in paintings. The human condition told as a picture book.

The book is labelled as "children's" which I feel is a mistake as it would dissuade some adults from picking it up for themselves as it's a book that people of all ages can get something from.

Shaun Tan has crafted a wonderful book about a difficult subject and it is something to be enjoyed and seen by all. Ultimately uplifting, "The Red Tree" won't necessarily help people with depression but might help people who don't go through it to gain a perspective on it that they might not have had before.

The book's worth picking up for the sublime paintings alone. "The Red Tree" is a great work by a remarkable artist.

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## Lisa Vegan says

This picture book is for readers of all ages and I've never seen anything quite like it. The art is gorgeous and truly interesting, the story of despair and hope is well done. I wish there had been picture books like this years ago; it doesn't at all underestimate children. This could also make a wonderful gift book for older children, young adults, and adults going through a difficult emotional time, especially those suffering with depression or facing a challenge that seems overwhelming. It didn't really strike me as something that would cheer readers up in a big way, but the empathy expressed and the light at the end of the tunnel philosophy might be a comfort to some. It's a beautifully done book and the art alone is worth reading this.

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## Renée Paule says

I love this book. It's so true to life and deeply meaningful.

## Rana Heshmati says

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**Erin says**

Have you heard of Shaun Tan? I was first introduced to his beautiful books at an English Language Arts workshop a few years back, *The Arrival* remains one of my favorite "wordless" books. Stunningly beautiful illustrations, I recently used this book in my class as a writing prompt for my grade 7 and 8 students. It was so interesting to hear the different ways in which they interpreted the message or theme of the book. Highly recommended!

## Shaikha Alkhaldi says

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## Sandra says

Este objeto NÃO É um livro.

É uma obra de arte.

Só me apetece digitalizar algumas páginas e emoldurar as ilustrações.  
Tanta beleza!

Este é um livro aparentemente simples mas com uma mensagem poderosa para quem se sente triste ou desanimado.

Shaun Tan - um nome a reter.

PS - Só um comentário acerca da publicação portuguesa, do qual, apesar de excelente qualidade, acho o preço absolutamente exorbitante. Por acaso tenho-o porque vi-o muito barato.

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## Nojood Alsudairi says

This is the best book I read lately. It is about the feeling of despair! Very easy, yet very complicated! I loved the page that goes, "Sometimes you wait and wait and wait and wait and wait and wait and wait but nothing ever happens" and the eight pictures zoom out the picture of the main character writing on the the floor counting days. You find out on the fifth picture that the girl is sitting on the back of a snail that goes in circles! In the end, a red tree grows into the girl's room.  
Simply, breath-taking!

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## Alan says

Clare bought this to read to her children (she's a teacher), but they're 5/6 years old and she said the subject matter is probably too grim for them. It's about dealing with depression, if that's not too strong a term for the isolation and hurt a child can feel, and features the darkness seen in Tan's graphic novel 'The Arrival' (about immigration to a strange land). Somehow he captures exactly what it feels like to be alone and sad, but with the glimmer of hope that can happen too..  
and in - what - 20 words? It's all down to the superb illustrations. It'll go in the school library and will maybe be read to older kids.

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## Suzanne says

This book was on the hold shelf at work, waiting for a student to pick up. I have just read it at work. What a beautiful book! This is a gentle, beautifully illustrated and simply gorgeous story in all senses! I love when I witness fabulous art, it is divine. Simply told, we see darkness envelope a small soul, feel the angst and the desperation, and finally the fog begins to clear. It is bleak for some time, but there is a break in the stifling clouds. A gradual relief to a burdensome feeling. I think we all know what it is like to feel some kind of darkness in our wake from time to time. This shows that hopefully, it will always lift and move away. It is such a lovely book. One for all ages and all walks of life.

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## Liz\* Fashionably Late says

2014 has been a crappy year for me. It has. And I'm not complaining, I'm just saying that when I opened this book I was aware of that fact. And it spoke to my heart through words and colors and emotions you can't just express with words.

You might feel alone, you might sense a grey cloud over you, you might feel the need to define yourself every day but know this: when you least expect it, something good will be waiting for you.

You just need to be patient and it will find you.

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## Manny says

An absolutely stunning picture book which conveys, in visual language easily accessible to a five year old, what it's like to suffer from a bipolar affective disorder. Move over Sylvia Plath, Tan has done it better.

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## Homa Sharifmousavi says

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PrmMF...>

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## Hilary says

2.5 stars. I found this gloomy, I get the idea, when things are bad there's light at the end of the tunnel. The red tree at the end of this girls depression was like the red leaf at the end of Crime and Punishment, that little bit of hope. Perhaps this book would be comforting to a child who felt depressed, I don't know.

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## notgettingenough says

I completely disagree that this book is about manic depression, which is Manny's take. It is simply about feeling bad and realising that this won't last forever and that things will get better. It is about the irrationality of this process.

The author's take is that you can read it however you like. But having said that, he says:

A nameless young girl appears in every picture, a stand-in for ourselves; she passes helplessly through many dark moments, yet ultimately finds something hopeful at the end of her journey.

That is not manic depression and indeed, it would be distinctly odd to make manic depression out to be something which has a positive aspect to it, since the 'up' side of it is pretty lousy too.

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### **Brooke says**

Shaun Tan has been one illustrator/author I've had my eye on for awhile! I liked how, "The Red Tree", is for the young or old and how emotions are displayed as metaphors through these gorgeous illustrations. Can't wait to read more from him in the future!

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### **Trudie says**

This is a book I keep on my shelf to reread after particularly trying days. I adore it.

First picked up in my favourite bookstore at the time, Readers Feast, in Melbourne, circa 2002. It is everything I love about Shaun Tan, a kind of beautifully illustrated melancholy that you can return to again and again.

Since then I have slowly collected up most of his works and would count him as my favourite illustrator.

*The Arrival* is his masterpiece but this book will always be my first love.

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### **Miriam says**

This is included in Lost & Found with interesting comment from Tan that in general adults were more likely to assess this book as too depressing while children pointed out details of hope or encouragement sprinkled throughout the illustrations. I didn't really lean one way or the other but felt that it was an accurate portrayal of a mood or feeling. Some days (or weeks, or months) ARE really bad. Kids can be depressed, too, and telling them they aren't does them no service. I really appreciated the author's acknowledgement that children can have these feelings.

That grumpy black angel cat is my favorite.

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### **April (Aprilius Maximus) says**

\*REREAD ON 31ST DECEMBER 2015 TO REACH 200 BOOKS LOL\*

This is perfection in a picture book.

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### **Jen Campbell says**

Quite possibly the most beautiful picturebook I've ever read.  
(Also, it made me cry.)

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