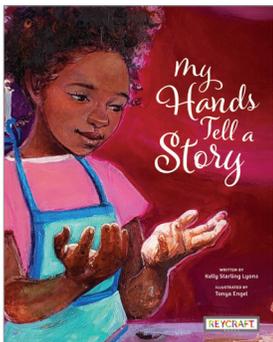


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My Hands Tell a Story
by Kelly Starling Lyons
illustrated by Tonya Engel

SUMMARY

A little girl baking bread with her grandmother becomes transported by the tales her grandmother's hands tell—those that spring from her rose-painted nails, a flower-banded wedding ring, and the way her fingers move and glide. These hands have many tales to tell. But only if you listen.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL PERSPECTIVES

- In this story, Zoe and her grandma have a strong intergenerational relationship. As Zoe helps her grandma bake cinnamon bread, she enjoys listening to her grandmother's stories and wonders what kinds of stories her hands will tell.
- For more about relationship skills and other social-emotional competencies, visit: <https://casel.org/>.

Book Talk Blurb

When the little girl in this story looks at the palms of her hands, she can see memories in every line. Look at your hands. Where have they been? What have they done? What stories would your hands tell? Read about the stories that Zoe's grandma's hands tell in *My Hands Tell a Story*.

Set Purpose: Invitation to Readers

Do you have a special grown-up in your life? What are some of the activities you like to do together? (Invite students to share their experiences with older relatives or friends.) This story is about a girl and her grandma. What are they doing together? (baking) Let's read to find out why this book is called *My Hands Tell a Story*.

Read-Aloud Conversation Starters

(Note: It may be helpful to number the pages of this book for reference, where the title page is page 1.)

- Page 5: *Her hands tell a story if you listen. What do you suppose Zoe means when she says her grandma's hands tell a story?* (Pause and discuss.) *Have you figured out who is narrating or telling the story?* (Zoe)
- Page 9: *"Like this," she says, sprinkling flour like fairy dust and placing her hands over mine. Can you picture the flour falling on the dough? What words help you to do this?* (like fairy dust)
- Page 13: *Grandma holds her palms in front of her like a map. Let's read the words on the grandma's palms. Why do you think the lines that look like roads "go places only she knows?"* Ask your neighbor what they think.
- Page 19: *Eating at their house always makes me feel special. Which of Grandma's stories was your favorite? Why?*
- Page 27: *"Time for the oven," Grandma says, rising to go inside. What is the power in your hands? What can they do? Share with a friend.*

For read-aloud videos of the Reycraft books, visit <http://www.reycraftbooks.com/videos.html>.

Respond, Reflect, React, or Research

- **Reflect on Comprehension—Ponder the Title:** Why do you suppose Kelly Starling Lyons chose the title *My Hands Tell a Story*? Do you think the title makes sense with the story? Why or why not? If you were going to give this story a different title, what would it be?
- **Reflect on SEL Competency—Relationship Skills:** Zoe has a healthy relationship with her grandmother. Look back in the book and notice what they do to make their relationship strong:
 - Help each other
 - Talk and listen
 - Tell stories
 - Work together
 - Enjoy food together

What is something you do when you're together with your family members or friends? How does it help your relationship grow?

- **Respond—What Stories Do Your Hands Tell?:** On pages 12–13, Zoe's grandma's palms are filled with words and pictures that tell her stories. On a piece of blank paper, turn your hand palm up and trace around it. Write or draw words or pictures that tell your story. You can write them on or around your hand outline. Pick one word or picture and write or video-record the story it represents.

Real World Action

Write About a Memory

At the end of the book, Zoe is writing about her memories of the time she spent with her grandma. Ask students to make a list of memorable moments they've had with the people they love in their writer's notebook or on a self-stick note. When they are looking for an idea for their writing, instruct them to reread their lists and see if any of the memories spark a story idea. If they decide to write about a memory, ask if they are willing to share their piece with the class.

 If your students liked this book . . .

Grandpa and Me

by Lu Xu

illustrated by Javier Zabala

New York: Reycraft Books, 2021

A Chinese boy shares sweet memories of growing up with his grandfather in a small mountain village—including caring for the farm animals and protecting them from a hungry wolf. To this day, the boy carries with him not only these memories, but the habits his grandfather instilled in him for a happy life.

Big Papa and the Time Machine

by Daniel Bernstrom

illustrated by Shane W. Evans

New York: HarperCollins, 2020

When a boy is reluctant to go to school, his grandfather takes him back in time to hear family stories and learn some important life lessons.

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