



TEEN SERVICES COMMUNITY SERVICE TEEN BOOK REVIEW

Wishtree By Katherine Applegate Reviewed by Tyler Boggi

Name: Tyler Boggi

Grade: 8

Book Title: Wishtree

Author: Katherine Applegate

Number of Pages: 215

Rating (on a scale of 1-5): 4/5

Character List:

- **Red** – Red is a 216 year-old neighborhood tree that can talk and watches over the neighborhood.
- **Bongo** – Bongo is a positive thinking friend of the main character Red, the wishtree. He is a crow who lives in the tree's hollows and likes to collect things.
- **Samar** – Samar is a 10 year-old girl of a Muslim family that moves into Red's neighborhood. She is lonely and visits Red at night.
- **Nameless boy** – A young boy who uses Red, the wishtree, to write hurtful messages to Samar and her family.
- **Francesca** – Francesca is the owner of the two houses that share the tree, and decides perhaps it's time to cut it down.

Review:

The book "Wishtree" tells the story of an oak tree named Red. Red is referred to as the neighborhood wishtree. On May 1st every year, people from the neighborhood tie wishes to Red in the hopes that they will come true. Red also has many animal friends that live in his hollows and branches, one of them being Red's best friend Bongo, the crow. Red is 216 rings old and, though he can talk, he obeys the laws of nature to not speak a word. Red is allowed only to listen. Red is also known as the "wise old tree" by his animal friends due to how long he has lived and how much he has seen over the years.

In the tiny blue house next to Red, a Muslim family recently moved in. The rest of the neighborhood treated them different with hurtful messages and sayings towards them. Red looked over the daughter of the new family, Samar. Samar put a wish on one of Red's branches wishing for a friend. Red and Bongo helped make this wish come true. Red learned that the property owner believed he was a hazard and decided to make Samar's wish come true no matter what risks he had to take.

The story starts off with Red, who is also the narrator, explaining about himself and the animals that live there. This is great because it helps the reader get familiar with the characters and how trees are said to work. Some people may find the beginning a bit slow and uninteresting. To the people that make it past the first few chapters, the plot flows well and has a good amount of humor sprinkled throughout. I feel that the author has really captured what it would be like if a

“wise old tree” could talk. The topic of a talking tree could be a bit exotic, but it is also unique and there are not many other books like it. This book would appeal to ages 10 and up, as teens would be able to understand the theme of not fitting in and the humor presented throughout the book.