Krzysztof Rybak, "Entry on: Pax by Jon Klassen , Sara Pennypacker ", peer-reviewed by Elżbieta Olechowska and Elizabeth Hale. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/590. Entry version as of October 31, 2026.

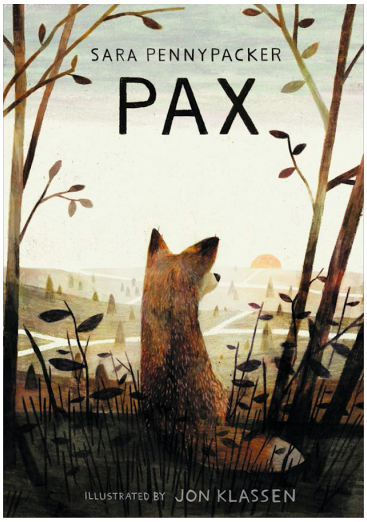
Jon Klassen , Sara Pennypacker

Pax

USA (2016)

TAGS: Latin (Language) Teumessian Fox





Courtesy of the publisher.

General information	
Title of the work	Pax
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	Worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2016
First Edition Details	Sara Pennypacker, *Pax*. New York: Balzer & Bray, 2016, 276 pp.
ISBN	9780062377012
Official Website	findpax.com
Genre	Fiction, Illustrated works, Novels
Target Audience	Children
Author of the Entry	Krzysztof Rybak, University of Warsaw, rybak.km@gmail.com
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Creators



Jon Klassen by Moranne Keeler, 2016. Retrieved from Wikimedia Commons, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0 (accessed: December 21, 2021).

Jon Klassen , b. 1981
(Author)

Jon Klassen (1981) is an award-winning Canadian writer and illustrator. He studied animation at Sheridan College, Ontario and now lives in Los Angeles, CA. He received the Caldecott Medal and the Kate Greenaway Medal, both for his book *This Is Not My Hat* from 2012 (a sequel to *I Want My Hat Back* from 2011, the third book about the hat – *We Found a Hat* – was published in 2016). He has also illustrated other books, including Lemony Snicket's *The Dark* (2013), Bernett's *Sam and Dave Dig a Hole* (2014) and Sara Pennypacker's *Pax* (2016). His books have been translated into many languages, including Chinese, Danish, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, and Thai.

Bio prepared by Krzysztof Rybak, University of Warsaw, rybak.km@gmail.com



Sara Pennypacker , b. 1951
(Author)

Sara Pennypacker (1951) grew up in Massachusetts, USA. She currently splits her time between Cape Cod and Florida. She is best known for the *Clementine* series (2006–2015, seven titles). To date, she has written seventeen children books, including *Summer of the Gypsy Moths* (2012) and the *Stuart* series (2002–). She has received many awards, among them, the Christopher Award for *Clementine's Letter* (2008) and the Golden Kite Award for *Pierre in Love* (2007). Her *Pax* (2016) was longlisted for National Book Award (Young People's Literature) in 2016 as well as named New York Times Bestseller and Amazon.com Best Book of the Year. More information about the author and her work at the official website: sarapennypacker.com (accessed: October 8, 2018).

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Bio prepared by Krzysztof Rybak, University of Warsaw, rybak.km@gmail.com

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Additional information

Adaptations	Film rights were acquired by Sidney Kimmel Entertainment (announced in March 2016).
Translation	Chinese: □□□□□□□*Pax* [Bide yu ta de bao bei Pax], ill. Jon Klassen, trans. □□□[Xiaoyin Huang], □□□ [Taibei Shi]: □□□□□ [Xiao mai tian chu ban], 2017. Czech: *Pax: můj liščí přítel*, ill. Jon Klassen, trans. Eva Kadlecová, Brno: CPress, 2017. Dutch: *Pax*, ill. Jon Klassen, trans. Suzanne Braam, Tiel: Aerial Media Company, 2016. English Braille: *Pax*, ill. Jon Klassen, New York: Balzer + Bray, 2016. French: *Pax et le petit soldat*, ill. Jon Klassen, trans. Faustina Fiore, Paris: Gallimard jeunesse, 2017. German: *Mein Freund Pax*, ill. Jon Klassen, trans. Birgitt Kollmann, Frankfurt am Main: Fischer SAUERLÄNDER, 2017. Hebrew: □□□□□□ □□□□ [Bilti nifradim], ill. Jon Klassen, trans. □□□□□ □□□□-□□□□ [Dorit Brill-Polak], □□□ □□ [Ben Shemen]: □□□ □□ [Modan] 2017. Italian: *Pax*, ill. Jon Klassen, trans. Paolo Maria Bonona, Milano: Rizzoli, 2017. Japanese: □□□□□□□□ *:* □□□□□□ [Kitsune no Pakkusu: ai o sagashite], ill. Jon Klassen, trans. □□□□□ [Satō Mikamu], □□ [Tōkyō]: □□□ [Hyōronsha], 2018. Korean: □□ [Pax], ill. Jon Klassen, trans. □□□ □□ [Sŏn-hŭi Kim], □□ [P'aju-si]: Arte (□□□) [Pugishibil Arte], 2017. Polish: *Pax*, ill. Jon Klassen, trans. Dorota Dziewońska, Kraków: Wydawnictwo IUVI, 2016. Portuguese: *Pax*, ill. Jon Klassen, trans. Regiane Winarski, Rio de Janeiro: Editora Intrínseca Ltda., 2016.

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Russian: *Пакс* [Paks], ill. Jon Klassen, trans. Nataliâ Kaloshina i Evgeniâ Kanishcheva, Moskva: Samokat, 2018.

Spanish: *Pax: una historia de paz y amistad*, ill. Jon Klassen, trans. Ricard Gil Giner, Barcelona: Nube de Tinta, 2016.

Summary

The story is about young boy Peter and his beloved pet–a fox named Pax. When war breaks out and friends have to separate, so Peter – convinced by his father, who was called up for military service – leaves Pax far away from home, in the middle of nowhere. The boy, however, can not come to terms with such a drastic parting and runs away from his new home – he wants to find the fox at all costs. Similarly, Pax, though lost and confused at first, decides to find a friend. Construction of the novel is very interesting, because the author tries to presents the events through Pax's eyes: every chapter focused on Peter is followed by one told from Pax's perspective. The only visible classical motif is the fox's name – Pax (in Latin: peace); however, the story is an extended meditation on the nature of peace, and the nature of war: Peter loses his father for some time and the journey through the wilderness and mountains to find the fox is very dangerous as the front line moves every day. Animals are also the victims of war: abandoned in the forest, Pax meets other foxes with which he travels around the country and sees how the barbed wire is set and the mines are laid. The reader is kept in suspense until the very end, and the final happy meeting of friends is far from a happy end.

Analysis

Peter himself explains that Pax was named after the backpack brand Paxton, because one day he found the inside the backpack ("I was seven then, and I figured, 'Paxton,' that's a good name. It had an X in it, like 'fox,' you know?"). Besides his explanation the boy is aware – because many people told him so – that "pax" means "peace", though there is no information about the language of origin (Latin). The meaningful name may be interpreted in many ways. First, Peter searches for Pax as for a state of peace in the horrifying time of war. It is important that the war not only affects its main actors (humans), but also animals, including Pax and other foxes he meets on his way. Second, when Peter finally finds Pax after a long journey he is a

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different person, he changed a lot and at the end he made peace with himself, making crucial decisions considering not only him, but also his beloved pet.

Pennypacker's novel is also an original approach towards homecoming stories, like the classical one – Homer's *Odyssey*. A separation forced by war is hard to accept and homecoming in this context may be interpreted not as finding a geographical goal, but rather psychological and emotional stability in a friend, human (Peter) or animal (Pax). In the context of classical journey myths I propose another interpretation rooted in ancient culture, although it is neither mentioned in the text – a mythical story of the Teumessian fox (Alopex Teumessius, Τευμησ(σ)ία ἀλώπηξ / ἀλώπηξ τῆς Τευμησσοῦ). According to ancient mythographers, i.a. Pseudo-Apollodorus (Apollod. 2.57), Amphitryon, stepfather of Heracles invited Creon, king of Thebes, to join him in a campaign against Teleboans. Creon agreed to do so, if first Amphitryon would free the Thebes of a local fox, who was threatening the land. It was fated that no one would tame this fox, so the task was not easy and Thebans once a month would sacrifice one of the citizen's children, for otherwise the fox would have seized many of them. Amphitryon went to Cephalus at Athens, and persuaded him to bring to the fox-hunt the dog (Laelaps), because it was fated that this dog would catch whatever it chased. Consequently, when the fox was chased by the dog, Zeus turned them both to stone, as a resolution to a paradox of fate: one would never be caught and the other would catch whatever it chased. In the Pennypacker's *Pax* this paradox is revised, because both the fox and the boy try to find each other, but at the end they decide that it would be better to separate and live on their own.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Latin (Language) Teumessian Fox
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth	Abandonment Adventure Animals Authority Depression Disability Emotions Environment Family Friendship Heroism Individuality Initiation Isolation/loneliness Journeys Nature Obedience Survival Truth and lies War

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Culture

Further Reading

A Special Message from Sara Pennypacker on Pax (video), available at findpax.com(accessed July 23, 2018).

Apollodorus, *The Library of Greek Mythology*, trans. Keith Aldrich, Lawrence, Kansas: Colorado Press, 1975.

Teumessian Fox (Alopex Teumesios), available at www.theoi.com (accessed July 23, 2018).

Why I wrote Pax*? A letter by Sara Pennypacker*, available at assetlibrary.supadu.com (accessed July 23, 2018).

Addenda

Discussion guide for the novel, available at sarapennypacker.com (accessed: July 23, 2018).

Pax classroom kit, available at assetlibrary.supadu.com (accessed: July 23, 2018).

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