



THE BOY WHO WOULD BE A HELICOPTER

Vivian Gussin Paley

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How does a teacher begin to appreciate and tap the rich creative resources of the fantasy world of children? What social functions do story playing and storytelling serve in the preschool classroom? And how can the child who is trapped in private fantasies be brought into the richly imaginative social play that surrounds him?

The Boy Who Would Be a Helicopter focuses on the challenge posed by the isolated child to teachers and classmates alike in the unique community of the classroom. It is the dramatic story of Jason-the loner and outsider-and of his ultimate triumph and homecoming into the society of his classmates. As we follow Jason's struggle, we see that the classroom is indeed the crucible within which the young discover themselves and learn to confront new problems in their daily experience.

Vivian Paley recreates the stage upon which children emerge as natural and ingenious storytellers. She supplements these real-life vignettes with brilliant insights into the teaching process, offering detailed discussions about control, authority, and the misuse of punishment in the preschool classroom. She shows a more effective and natural dynamic of limit-setting that emerges in the control children exert over their own fantasies. And here for the first time the author introduces a triumvirate of teachers (Paley herself and two apprentices) who reflect on the meaning of events unfolding before them.

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