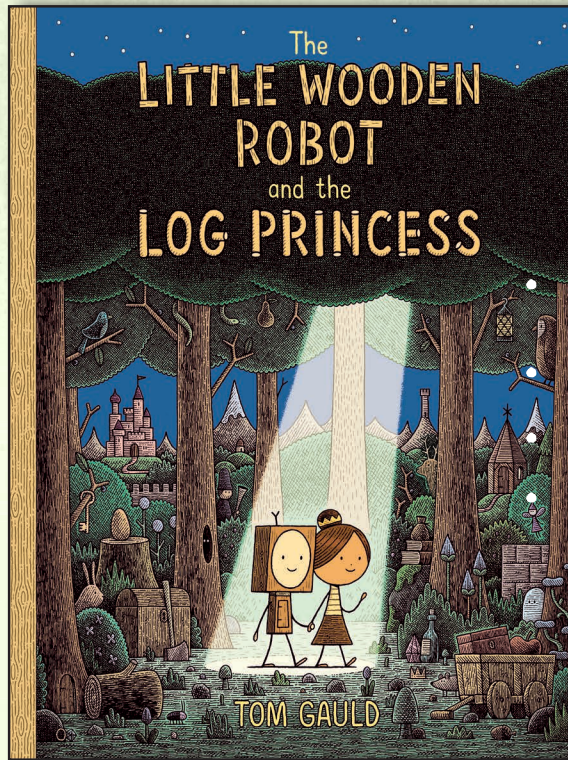


# HOLIDAY HOUSE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



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## *The Little Wooden Robot and the Log Princess* by Tom Gauld

- ★ “A captivating, original fairy tale.”  
—*Booklist*, starred review
- ★ “Enchanting.” —*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review
- ★ “Imaginative.” —*Publishers Weekly*, starred review
- ★ “Striking.” —*The Bulletin*, starred review

### ABOUT THE BOOK

In acclaimed graphic novelist Tom Gauld’s first picture book for children, a little wooden robot goes on a quest to find his missing sister for a memorable contemporary bedtime story.

For years, the king and queen tried desperately to have a baby. Their wish was twice granted when an engineer and a witch gave them a little wooden robot and an enchanted log princess. There’s just one catch: every night when the log princess sleeps, she transforms back into an ordinary log. She can only be woken with the magic words “Awake, little log, awake.”

The two are inseparable until one day when the sleeping log princess is accidentally carted off to parts unknown. Now it’s up to her devoted brother to find her and return her safely to the kingdom. They need to take turns to get each other home, and on the way, they face a host of adventures involving the Queen of Mushrooms, a magic pudding, a baby in a rosebush, and an old lady in a bottle.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How does the cover art suggest that the story is a fairy tale? What time of day is it? The bright light shines on the robot and the princess. What is the source of light? Look closely at the items on the cover. Then identify these items as the book is read. What is their significance to the story?
- Fairy tales begin with a “timeless” phrase like “once upon a time.” Define “timeless.” Explain how the opening sentence of this book is “timeless.” Many fairy tales also involve royalty. Who are the royal characters in the story?
- Conflict is a problem to be solved. Debate whether there is more than one conflict in this story. How is a conflict revealed in the first sentence? Explain how the problem is solved. Identify the main conflict of the story. How does it contribute to the overall plot of the story?





- Describe the inventor's workshop. What tools does she use to create Little Wooden Robot? Look closely at the inside of the witch's cottage. How are the items in her cottage typical of things a witch might use? In many fairy tales, the witch is an evil character. Explain how the witch in this story is a good witch.
- Fairy tales always have an element of magic. Identify the magic in this story. Why do you think the witch made the princess turn into a log at night? What happens when the magic words aren't spoken to the princess? How is Little Wooden Robot responsible for what happens to Log Princess?
- Study the double-page spread of the ship setting sail (pp. 11–12). Point out the castle where the king and queen live. Trace the route of the ship to the frozen North. Why is Little Wooden Robot so determined to stay behind? The ship captain warns that the North is dangerous. Brainstorm things that could happen to the robot. How do the supplies provided by the ship's crew help the little robot survive?
- Discuss Little Wooden Robot's kindness and his love for his sister. The little robot searches for Log Princess in the pile of logs the ship delivers to the frozen North. How does he identify her? Discuss how the brother and sister care for one another on the long trip back home.
- Discuss how the illustrations in the story reflect Tom Gauld's background as a cartoonist. How does he use shapes (squares, circles, rectangles, ovals, etc.) to add visual interest? The adventures of Little Wooden Robot and Log Princess are in boxes or frames. Explain how this enhances the story and advances the plot.
- Describe the homecoming. What is happening in the sky? How is the entire kingdom celebrating?
- Theme is what the story is about. Consider what you know about the two main characters and discuss the theme of the story. Point out specific illustrations that help the reader understand the theme.

Guide created by Pat Scales, retired school librarian and independent consultant, Greenville, South Carolina.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Tom Gauld** is a cartoonist and illustrator. He won an Eisner Award for his book *Baking with Kafka* and has weekly comic strips in *The Guardian* and *New Scientist*. His comics have been published in *The New York Times* and *The Believer*. In addition to his graphic novels *Goliath* and *Mooncop*, he has many distinctive *New Yorker* covers. Tom lives and works in London.

*The Little Wooden Robot and the Log Princess* is acclaimed graphic novelist Tom Gauld's first picture book for children, inspired by a bedtime story he made up for his daughter. In his words, "I was trying to make a book inspired by three different sets of books: The books that I remember enjoying as a child, the books that I watched my daughters enjoying, and the books I enjoy now as an adult. I wanted the book to have its own quirky feeling but also to function like a classic bedtime story."

