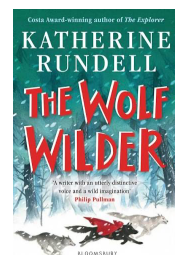


**Title:**

Wolf Wilder

**Author:**

Katherine Rundell

**Blurb:**

Feo and her mother live in the snowy woods of Russia, in a house full of food and fireplaces. Ten minutes away, in a ruined chapel, lives a pack of wolves. Feo's mother is a wolf wilder, and Feo is a wolf wilder in training: a person who teaches tamed animals to be wild again, to fend for themselves, and to fight and to run.

When the corrupt Russian Army threatens her wolves and arrests her mum, Feo is left with no option but to go on the run. With her wolves by her side, she sets off on a daring, exciting and sometimes scary journey through the snow to St Petersburg, pursued by an evil general who's determined to kill Feo's wolves and stop her at all costs.

The Wolf Wilder is full of wonderful and memorable characters, but none so much as Feo herself, who is determined, a little bit wild and fiercely independent. Author Katherine Rundell brilliantly captures the wildness of childhood, and the bravery required to get through it. It's a story of revolution and adventure, about standing up for the things you love and fighting back. And, of course, wolves.

**Author background:**

Katherine Rundell spent her childhood in Africa and Europe. After completing a degree in English and a doctorate on John Donne, she is now a full-time writer and a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, where she studies Renaissance literature and climbs old buildings at night. Katherine is the bestselling author of *The Wolf Wilder* and *Rooftoppers*, which won the Waterstones Children's Book Prize and the Blue Peter Book Award and was shortlisted for many others. In 2017 Katherine won the Costa Children's Book Award for *The Explorer*. She has also been selected as one of the Aarhus39 - 39 of the leading children's writers from across Europe - and one of the Hay30 'writers and thinkers'.

**Cultural background:**

The cultural background in *The Wolf Wilder* by Katherine Rundell lies in its rich portrayal of Russian folklore, history, and wilderness. Set in the snowbound forests of pre-revolutionary Russia, the book immerses readers in a world of resilience, loyalty, and defiance. It introduces traditions like the rewilding of wolves, showcasing the deep connection between humans and nature in Russian culture. Through themes of rebellion, freedom, and communal strength, it reflects historical tensions during the Russian Revolution. The vivid depictions of rural life, winter landscapes, and a strong female protagonist provide cultural insights while inspiring courage and a sense of justice.

## Literary terms:

### Imagery

- The book uses vivid descriptions to bring the Russian wilderness to life.
  - Example: "The snow fell in fat, soft clumps, piling silently against the trees."
  - This creates a strong sense of place and atmosphere.

### Symbolism

- Wolves symbolize freedom, resilience, and loyalty, reflecting both the wildness of nature and the human spirit.
- The snow and winter environment symbolize both hardship and purity, paralleling the challenges and inner strength of the characters.

### Personification

- The natural elements, such as snow, forests, and cold, are often given human-like qualities to emphasize their presence as characters in their own right.
  - Example: "The forest crouched like a beast, waiting to pounce."

### Metaphor

- Rundell uses metaphors to deepen the emotional impact of her writing.
  - Example: "Her anger was a fire, sharp and hot enough to melt the snow around her heart."

## Vocabulary examples:

**Wilder:** Used as a term for rewilding wolves, it reflects the process of helping domesticated wolves return to their natural state in the wild.

**Troika:** A traditional Russian sled drawn by three horses abreast, often associated with snowy landscapes and Russian culture.

**Revolution:** Referring to the Russian Revolution, this term encapsulates the book's historical backdrop of rebellion and resistance

**Tsar:** The term for the emperor of Russia before the revolution, reflecting the historical context and hierarchy.

**Balalaika:** A triangular, stringed musical instrument associated with Russian folk music, adding cultural depth.

**Kasha:** A traditional Russian porridge made from grains like buckwheat, mentioned to ground the story in its cultural setting.

**Taiga:** The vast, snowy forest biome typical of Siberia and northern Russia, central to the story's setting.

### **Benefits for our children:**

Through its cultural richness, universal themes, and compelling characters, *The Wolf Wilder* serves as a window to a wider world, fostering empathy, understanding, and personal growth for children in rural communities. It broadens their understanding of diverse cultures and experiences while fostering empathy, resilience, and a sense of justice.

### **Exposure to a Different Culture and History**

The Russian setting, customs (like rewilding wolves), and historical backdrop of revolution introduce children to a culture and time period they might not encounter in daily life, fostering curiosity about the broader world.

### **Understanding Community and Belonging**

The book emphasizes the strength of community and shared goals, resonating with rural lifestyles while also encouraging inclusivity and solidarity with others who may be different.