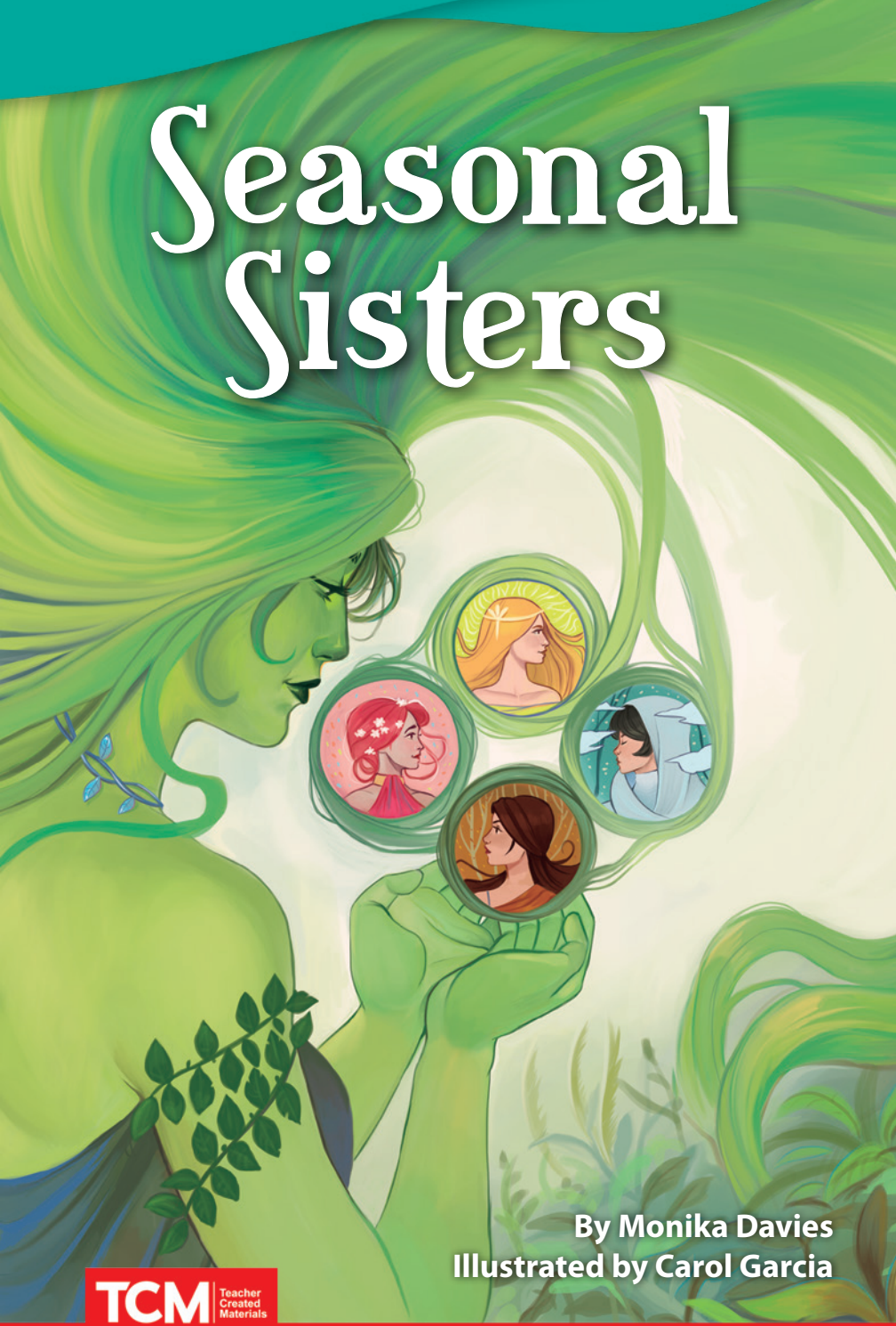
Seasonal Sisters



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TCM Teacher Created Materials

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Mother Nature's Daughters

I am
Mother Nature.
I have daughters,
four of them,
Autumn,
Summer,
Winter,
Spring.

Long, long ago I
nicknamed them my
young seasonal sisters,
who season the
world
in their given time.

But now, now,
I shall ask them to find
themselves in a new season
so they may write anew
and understand new stories.

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Autumn's Winter

My Autumn,
she is glowing
merriment
and a warm fire.

And yet,
sometimes I sense
she struggles.

She does not understand
the peace
of a clean slate,
the necessity
of rest.

So I move the Earth,
shift the seasons,
settling my dear daughter
in a
        new
                winter.

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I am Autumn, and, when it is my turn to season the world, I let my imagination run wild. I walk around with a color palette in hand. I choose only the warmest hues—yellow, orange, red. I pick these colors to remind people of heat before the winter comes. Some years, I dust the world in a cacophony of orange and red leaves. I let the leaves fall, tucked into piles on the ground. Other years, I flood the world with yellow-leaved trees, painting in some last-minute greenery to slip through the shades.

But, today, on what should be my opening day of an autumn, I open the door to find my autumn is—*gone*.

All around me, the world is still and cold and gray.

And I realize—I am in Winter's land.

Of all my sisters, I understand Winter the least, for Winter is cold and likes to glaze the world in a layer of white ice. I

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like to douse the world in flames, and she—she ensures the world is kept tidy and tame.

Winter doesn't use a color palette to season the world; instead, she calls upon the clouds. Her clouds find me, circling around and around.

"Will you shower the world in snow?" the clouds ask me. "Are we throwing the world into a deep winter, a deep sleep?"

I am not sure what to do—caught in this season I know nothing of. But then, I think of how Winter has spoken to me in the past. She has whispered to me quietly, so quietly, how she likes the silence of a deep snowfall. How the world is so much gentler when snow has blanketed the world in silence.

"Go gently, gently, then plunge us into a full snowfall," I reply.

The clouds swirl, curling and curling

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in and out of the sky, as snow falls, flake after flake, crystal after crystal. I turn my face to the sky. Snowflakes press into my skin. I stick my tongue out, capturing a few flakes.

I breathe deep, and crisp air fills and stretches my lungs.

I let my breath out, a cloud of cold whispering from my lips.

This season is cold, so cold. It is only one color. But I feel a silence in my soul, one that soothes.

As I stand in the snowfall, I wonder if perhaps, perhaps, taking a breath and letting this world stand in silence can help me find peace that's perhaps tougher to find in my autumn.

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Remember, my dear Autumn, this is the season of rest, I hear, my Mother Nature's voice a hymn in my ear.

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Book Club Questions

1. Which seasonal sister is your favorite? Why?
2. How does the author capture each sister's voice as well as Mother Nature's?
3. Which sisters are the most different or similar? How do you know?
4. "They are writing the fresh seasons that are the backdrop to your stories in your world." The author ends the book with this line. What does it mean to you?
5. Why do you think Mother Nature moves each of the seasonal sisters to create a new season?
6. What lesson does each seasonal sister learn in her story?

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