

Sometimes wishes aren't enough...

Wish You Weren't



"This story is pure magic."

Valerie Hobbs, bestselling author of Sheep, Wolf and Minnie McClary Speaks Her Mind

a novel by
Sherrie Petersen

Wish **You Weren't**

a novel by
Sherrie Petersen

Copyright © 2014 Sherrie Petersen

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without written permission from the author.

Publisher's Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Petersen, Sherrie

Wish You Weren't / Sherrie Petersen.—1st ed.

p. cm.

Summary: Marten is whisked away to review his life with a star spirit after he wishes his little brother away, but the review gets hijacked by Marten's impulsive meddling, putting the lives of his friends and family at stake.

LCCN 2014902688

ISBN 978-1494766825

[1. Fantasy. 2. Wishes—Juvenile Fiction 3. Magic—Juvenile Fiction | 1. Wishes—Fiction 2. Magic—Fiction 3. Time Travel—Fiction]

AN INTREPID PUBLICATION

First Edition, March 2014 / Designed by Sherrie Petersen / Edited by Sher A. Hart

WISH ★ YOU ★ WEREN'T

1	Wish Upon a Star	1
2	Disappearing Act	10
3	A Stalled Conversation	23
4	Beside Myself	33
5	We Do the Limbo	44
6	Supernova	58
7	Like a Hole in the Wall	71
8	Now You See Him, Now You Don't	84
9	Star Search	95
10	Hitchhikers to the Galaxy	103
11	Driven to Distraction	111
12	Wish it Out	124
13	Do Over	131
	Learn More	139
	About the Author	140
	Acknowledgements	141

Praise for *Wish You Weren't*

"If you're looking for the same old formula middle grade fantasy, this isn't it. *Wish You Weren't* is magically real. You wouldn't be surprised if you met Marten in "real" life, but what he encounters in this story is pure magic."

VALERIE HOBBS

award-winning author of *Wolf, Sheep* and *Minnie McClary Speaks Her Mind*

"*Wish You Weren't* is a sweet story about the blessings of family contained within the rip-roaring roller coaster of time travel. It is a page turner that kids are going to love!"

KATIE D. ANDERSON

bestselling author of *Kiss & Makeup*

"I love all the science details mixed with fantasy in *Wish You Weren't* — just the kinds of flights-of-science-fancy I wish I had as child!"

SUSAN KAYE QUINN

bestselling author of the *Mindjack* Trilogy, *Faery Swap*
and *Third Daughter*

"Fun and accessible, rich with realism and heart, this magical adventure reminds us of the things truly worth wishing for."

CASEY McCORMICK

literary agent intern and blogger at *Literary Rambles*

for Drew and Jasmine
my first readers, my always believers

Stars,
I have seen them fall,
But when they
drop and die
No star is lost at all
From all
the star-sown sky

from "Stars"
by A. E. Housman



IT'S MIDNIGHT AND I'M FLAT ON MY BACK on a patch of grass in front of our hotel room, hoping that no one looks outside and wonders what the weirdos from California are doing.

Tonight is the peak of the Perseids meteor shower. Every year my mom drags us out of bed just to see the shooting stars. My brother's on one side of me, squirming around, trying to stay awake. My friend Paul's on the other side, snoring. At least he already knew our family was crazy before he came on this vacation with us.

When I was younger, I thought it was cool to get up at midnight and watch the stars. Tonight I'd rather be in bed. Like Dad. I swear it's still over a hundred degrees out here. And don't get me started with the mosquitoes.

“Did you see that one, Marten?” Mom points up at the sky, but all I see are a few regular stars winking back at me. That’s the thing with a shooting star. By the time someone asks if you saw it, it’s already gone.

Mom lies back down, eyes fixed on the sky. I shake my head, even though I know she’s not looking at me.

“I did! I saw it!” Aldrin is between us, practically shouting in my ear. He might convince Mom that he saw it, but I’m willing to bet his eyes weren’t even open thirty seconds ago.

Mom squeezes his hand. “Okay, let’s not wake Paul up, little man. Now close your eyes and make a wish.”

“I wish we were going to Disneyland!”

Paul bolts up, eyes wide. “Someone say Disneyland?”

Mom laughs. “You’re going to have to find another shooting star, Aldrin. And next time, don’t tell anyone what you wished for.”

“Like that makes a difference,” I grumble. “It’s not as if it’s going to come true.”

Mom goes up on an elbow, her eyes drilling into the side of my head. “Why would you say that, Marten?”

“Because I’ve been doing this all my life and none of my wishes has ever come true.”

Mom pins me with her gaze, leaning over Aldrin until we’re almost nose to nose. “Then you aren’t wishing hard enough.”

“Do your wishes come true, Mommy?” asks Aldrin.

Mom rubs his cheek gently and smiles. “Almost every time.”

Paul leans over and whispers in my ear. “Maybe you should have your mom make your wishes for you.”

I roll my eyes. Mom always has her head up in the clouds, dreaming impossible dreams. I’m not really sure how she ever became a respected scientist. The guys in her lab would die laughing if they heard her talking about wishing on stars.

My dreams are much more down to earth. Get through middle school without ever experiencing swirlies. Install an alarm system on my bedroom to keep my brother out. Change my parents’ minds about moving to Texas.

I stifle a yawn and wonder how much longer we’re going to stay out of bed. When the sun comes up, it’ll be our last day of vacation here in Corpus Christi. If you can call visiting cousins and looking at model homes a vacation.

My parents started talking about moving to Texas a few months ago. At first it was just my dad saying stupid stuff like, “If you had to choose between Austin and Corpus Christi, what would you choose?”

Dad is the king of pointless questions like this. One time when Paul was at our house for a sleepover, Dad asked us, “If you were stuck on a deserted island and you could only choose one girl from your class to join you, which one would you pick?”

Okay, first of all, I wouldn’t want to be stuck anywhere with any of the girls in our class. They’d spend their whole time on the island looking for a mall or complaining about the smell of fish. And second of all, a deserted island? Really? It’s okay for my dad

to be a dork around us, but it's pretty embarrassing when he acts that way around my friends.

Of course, if we move, I won't have any friends.

Paul reaches across me to show Aldrin a complicated handshake. Sometimes having him around is like having another brother. I can't imagine not having him for a friend. But if we move? I don't even want to think about it.

Mom grew up in Corpus Christi, so I'm pretty sure it's her fault we're looking at houses here. The city is a lot bigger than when she lived here as a kid though, so all the lights are making it hard to see the moon, let alone a bunch of shooting stars.

Aldrin pokes me in the ribs and sticks out his tongue. "I'm a good wisher." He bunches up his ratty old train blanket and sticks it under his head, a goofy grin on his face. "I'm good at lots of things."

I ignore his comment, but apparently my brother isn't in the mood to be ignored. He reaches for a handful of crushed ice from the bucket between us and flings it at my face. He's lucky it's so hot out here. The cold water on my sweaty skin actually feels good.

"Thanks, Kid. That was refreshing." I smile and pat his head, knowing it's the opposite of how he wants me to react.

Aldrin licks the ice chips from his fingers and looks at me expectantly. "You shoulda brought Han Solo out to see the stars."

"Like that would ever happen." Paul shakes his head and laughs. "I think Marten's science project next quarter is to build

a force field that keeps humans, especially you, away from those toys.”

“Collectibles,” I correct.

“Whatever.”

My brother has been trying to get at my vintage Star Wars action figures since the day he could point. They used to be my dad’s from when he was my age. He gave them to me when I was in first grade after we watched the original trilogy together.

“Those *collectibles* aren’t for playing with. They’re old and they’re worth a lot of money.” I’ve explained this before, but every time Aldrin goes in my room he stares at the shelf where they sit and begs me to take them down. He’s the same age I was when I got them, but he just doesn’t *get* it. I mean, he’s still carrying around that stupid blanket. Maybe if my parents didn’t baby him so much, he wouldn’t act like one.

Aldrin gazes at me with a mixture of fear and admiration. “Someday can’t I get a turn with ‘em? You’re not just keeping ‘em on a shelf forever, are you?”

“When you’re older, like twelve, I *might* let you touch them. Until then, it would not be responsible of me to let you play with them.” Mom can’t argue with that logic. After all, even Dad wouldn’t want those grubby little six-year-old hands messing with his old Kenner collectibles.

“You’re not even twelve yet.”

“Almost.” I shrug. “Besides, it’s not like I brought any action figures on vacation.”

My brother's face lights up. That look makes me nervous. His innocent face always fools people, but not me. I know he's a devil in cute kid clothing.

"What does spons-uhbull mean, Marten?"

"It means you take care of your stuff. You always know where it is and you don't run it over with your bike or stick it in the oven."

Mom groans, probably remembering the melted Legos she had to scrape up when she turned on the oven for cookies last week without looking inside first. The whole house smelled like burnt plastic for days.

Aldrin picks up his blanket. "Then I'm spons-uhbull, see."

He pulls out Han Solo, my twelve-inch action figure, proudly wearing the Rebel Alliance Medal of Honor that Princess Leia gives him at the end of *A New Hope*. That action figure is supposed to be on my shelf at home, not in Aldrin's sweaty little fist.

Paul lets out a low whistle. "Didn't see that one coming."

"I took care of him all week!" Aldrin digs a booger out of his nose and wipes it on his shirt, dangerously close to Han. He smiles at me as if I should be proud of him for stealing my toy.

I jump to my feet. "You...little...how did you even get him down?"

Out of the corner of my eye, I can see Paul shaking his shaggy red head and signaling for Aldrin to let go of Han, but my brother isn't paying any attention.

Big surprise there.

Mom sits up and frowns. “Aldrin, give your brother back his doll.”

“Action figure!” I try to act calm even though I’m not. I’ve taken such good care of those toys ever since Dad gave them to me. Nobody gets to touch them, not even Paul.

“Give it back, twerp.”

I grab for Han, but Aldrin stands and takes a step back, grinning wickedly. He waves my action figure in the air just out of my reach. I lunge at him and grasp Han around the neck. Aldrin yanks his arm away and I hear a snap. I stare at the 1978 Han Solo head lying in my hand. The Rebel Alliance Medal of Honor slips to the ground.

Mom gasps.

Paul cringes. “Dude, that’s just wrong.”

I leap to my feet, not sure what to do first: try to fix my collectible or strangle my brother. Mom snags Han Solo’s head. I dive for Aldrin.

He takes off across the lawn, screaming at the top of his lungs. Then he runs to where Mom is standing and grabs her around the leg as she struggles to fix Han’s head. That toy lasted more than thirty years only to die in the hands of my brother.

I start to pry him from Mom’s leg, but she gives me a warning look.

“Don’t do something you’ll regret.” She squeezes the plastic neck, trying to make it fit in the hole between Han’s shoulders. “I think I can reattach this.”

The plastic head squishes in her hand, but it doesn't go back on.

"You always defend him!"

"I didn't mean to break it." Aldrin's voice is muffled against my mom's leg. He gazes up at me with those big puppy eyes, but it's not going to work, not this time.

"I'm not defending him," Mom says. "He has no business taking your things. But I do think we can fix this." She pushes down on Han's head. It falls from his body and drops into the bucket of ice water. "Eventually."

"You let him get away with *everything*," I say. "I don't even want to be out here with him. He's such a..."

I stop talking because right at that moment the biggest shooting star I've ever seen blazes through the sky.

"You saw that, didn't you, Marten?" Mom sounds happy, as if a meteor is supposed to make me feel better.

I don't reply.

Aldrin lets go of Mom's leg and looks around. "Where's the star? I didn't see it!"

When Aldrin was born, I kind of liked the *idea* of a little brother. But having him around hasn't turned out the way I expected. Sometimes I think the reason my parents waited so long to have another kid is so that they would have a built-in babysitter. I'm tired of being *spons-uhbull* for Aldrin, tired of watching him ruin everything in my life and get away with it because he's cute.

Even though the whole wishing on a star thing has never

worked before, I'm willing to give it one more try. I take a deep breath, squeeze my eyes tight and make my wish. Sweat drips into my ear as a mosquito buzzes around my head, then...

Silence.

I relax my tensed muscles and listen for any telltale sounds.

I open one eye and look around.

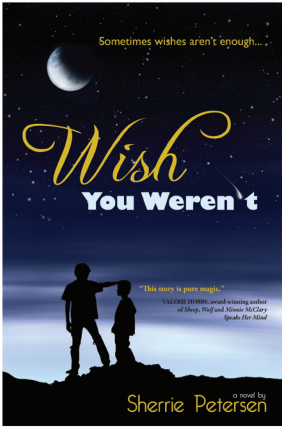
Aldrin is staring up at me, his brown curls bouncing around his face. "What'cha doing, Marten?"

I sigh. So much for that.

Aldrin jabs me in the ribs, reminding me that I've failed. Again.

I jog back toward the room, biting my tongue to keep the words inside.

I'm wishing you weren't here.



Enjoy reading this sample?

Wish You Weren't is available in print and ebook from these retailers:

IndieBound
iTunes
AMAZON
B&N
KOBO
SMASHWORDS
BOOK LOFT

Or request it from your favorite book seller!

Want to learn more? Start with these sites:

NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab

<http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/>

Tour JPL for Yourself

<http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/events/tours/views/>

The Spitzer Telescope

<http://www.spitzer.caltech.edu/>

The Hubble Telescope

<http://hubblesite.org/>

The Solar System

<http://www.kidsastronomy.com/>

<http://solarsystem.nasa.gov/kids/>

<http://kids.discovery.com/tell-me/space>

Alpha Orionis (Betelgeuse)

<http://apod.nasa.gov/apod/ap090805.html>

<http://apod.nasa.gov/apod/ap100106.html>

<http://stars.astro.illinois.edu/sow/betelgeuse.html>

Perseids Meteor Shower and the Swift-Tuttle Comet

<http://meteorshowersonline.com/perseids.html>

Annual Meteor Showers

<http://www.amsmeteors.org/meteor-showers/meteor-shower-calendar>

<http://earthsky.org/astronomy-essentials/earthskys-meteor-shower-guide>

<http://stardate.org/nightsky/meteors>

Watch meteor showers online at space.com

<http://www.space.com/19195-night-sky-planets-asteroids-webcasts.html>



SHERRIE PETERSEN still believes in magic and she loves making up stories that allow her to go on wild adventures. In addition to writing middle grade novels, she moonlights as a graphic designer, substitute teacher, freelance writer, school newspaper advisor, yearbook advisor and mother of two children.

Visit her online at www.sherriepetersenbooks.com

You'll also find her on:

Facebook: Author Sherrie Petersen

Goodreads: Goodreads Author Sherrie_Petersen

Twitter: @SherriePetersen

You'll always get a personal response when you email Sherrie at sherriepetersenbooks@gmail.com. And please, consider leaving a review to let others know what you thought of this book.

SO MANY PEOPLE HAVE HELPED ME on this writing journey!

First, I have to thank my critique group – Gwen, Kim, Lori and Val – for reading everything and encouraging me to keep writing, even when I sucked. I love you guys and I wouldn't be the writer I am today without you in my corner.

To Michelle, thanks for falling in love with Marten, for continuing to love his story even after editors said no, for encouraging me to make it better. To Liesa, thank you for the best rejection ever. Your comments helped make this story so much stronger.

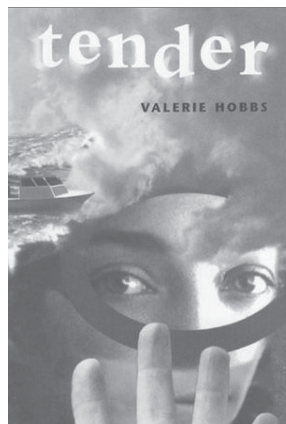
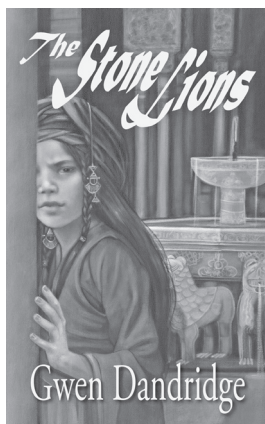
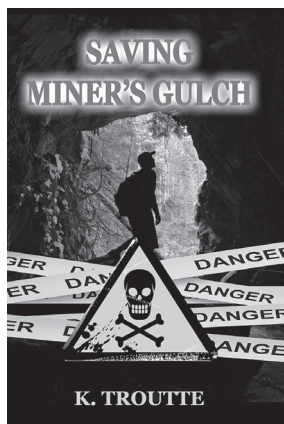
To Jamie, thank you for pointing out the boring parts and telling me to get rid of them. To Cynthea, winning Red Light, Green Light gave me a huge shot of confidence and your critique was invaluable. To Casey, thanks for the advice, the Publishers' Lunch and the lattes at Quackenbush. To Susan, thanks for reading, critiquing and helping me to be brave.

To Amy, thanks for the final read through and my new author photo.

To my family – Craig, Drew and Jasmine – thank you for believing in me and this story, and for putting up with frozen food and takeout when I was too busy writing to cook a decent meal! I love you all.

And a huge thank you to everyone who picks up this story and reads it. Your support means the world to me.

Looking for more great middle grade fiction? Check out these books from other Intrepid Authors.



SAVING MINER'S GULCH by K. Troutte In 1849, Jack Boyd was a fifteen-year old miner seeking his fortune in California. But after he blasted a hillside and struck it rich, the Harrington brothers tried to steal his claim. Jack plunged into his gold mine and disappeared. Now he haunts the hill, keeping anyone who trespasses from finding his treasures...

When Michael and Johnny Boyd visit Miner's Gulch, they fear that summer vacation will be one giant bore-fest. That is until they hear the legend of a lost gold mine. What they could do with all that gold! But other people want to strike it rich, too. People like the present-day Harringtons, who are willing to destroy the town and everyone in it to get what they want. If Michael and Johnny can find a way to work with Jack's ghost, they might be able to find the gold, save the town, and somehow live to tell the tale.

THE STONE LIONS by Gwen Dandridge Ara, the twelve-year-old daughter of the Sultan finds herself at the center of a political intrigue when her tutor crosses paths with the evil Wazir. Can Ara save her friend with the help of a Sufi mathemagician? Entwined in a maze of math, art and magic, Ara races to find seven broken symmetries and awaken the mysterious stone lions. Because if she fails, the Alhambra will fall and with it, all that she loves. "This original and culturally rich novel will appeal to readers with curious minds just like the strong female protagonist Ara. Recommended."

--The Children's Book Review

TENDER by Valerie Hobbs Fifteen-year-old Liv's mother died giving birth to her, but she's been lovingly raised by her eccentric, self-confident grandmother. When her grandmother dies, Liv must leave New York City and live with a father she has never met--a gruff, solitary abalone diver--in a tiny California coastal town. The culture shock and shattering loss of her grandmother are lessened somewhat by her father's girlfriend, Sam, who sees past Liv's prickly exterior and wins her confidence. Liv starts to build a relationship with her father, as he teaches her to dive. Then Sam is diagnosed with cancer, and Liv's world starts to fall apart again.

--From Booklist



"I love all the science details mixed with fantasy."

SUSAN KAYE QUINN, bestselling author of
the *Mindjack* trilogy, *Faery Swap*
and *Third Daughter*

Marten doesn't believe in the power of wishes. None of his have ever come true. His parents ignore him, his little brother is a pain and his family is talking about moving to Texas. Not cool. So when he makes an impulsive wish during a meteor shower, he doesn't expect it to make any difference.

Until his annoying brother disappears.

With the present uncertain and his brother's future in limbo, Marten finds himself stuck in his past. And if he runs out of time, even wishes might not be enough to save the ones he loves.

\$7.99 US / \$10.99 CAN

AN INTREPID PUBLICATION

www.sherriepetersenbooks.com

Age 8 up

ISBN 978-1494766825



9 781494 766825

50799 >

