

# LITTLE HARE

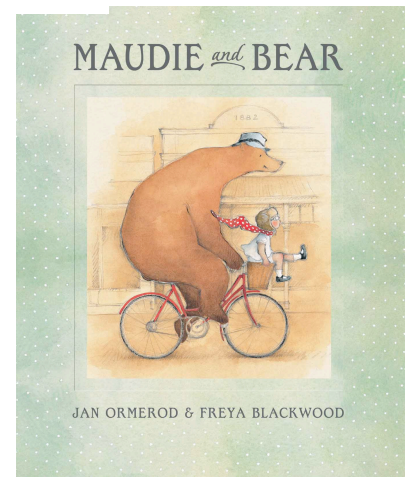
## MAUDIE AND BEAR TEACHER NOTES

Written by Jan Ormerod &

Illustrated by Freya Blackwood

Published by Little Hare Books

Teacher Notes by Dr Robin Morrow



**TITLE:** Maudie and Bear

**ISBN:** 9781921541407

**RRP:** A \$29.95/ NZ\$32.99

**PUBLISHED:** October 2010

**READING GUIDE:** 3-8 years\*

\*Please note that the recommended age range is a guide only and this book may be suitable for use outside of this recommendation.

### SYNOPSIS

Maudie, a little girl, and Bear, her large furry companion, share a life of domestic routines and pleasures. Bear seems to have inexhaustible patience as Maudie makes demands on his time and energy. This book is in picture book format but is also a 'chapter' book, containing five separate incidents of drama and humour. Much of the text consists of dialogue, the conversations between Maudie and Bear as they go about their daily activities. The generous-sized illustrations add layers of meaning and help readers to immerse themselves in the world of Maudie and Bear.

### THEMES

Friendship

Play

Fairy Tales

Relationships

Unconditional love

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jan Ormerod grew up in Western Australia and as a child she drew constantly and compulsively. Her first picture book, *Sunshine*, won the CBCA Picture Book award. Early in her career Jan Ormerod left Australia and, based in the UK, she produced many books—more than 80 in all—for the international market. Her books have become known and loved by countless readers in several continents, and won many awards in the UK and the USA as well as in Australia. Titles include *The Story of Chicken Licken*, *When an Elephant Comes to School* and the favourite for babies, *Peek-a-Boo!* Jan's

first book with Little Hare, *Lizzie Nonsense*, marked a kind of homecoming with its Australian theme and setting, and was shortlisted for the CBCA 2005 Picture Book of the Year Award and was an IBBY Honour Book. This was followed by *The Water Witcher* which was also shortlisted for 2007 Picture Book of the Year. Jan now lives in Uppingham, England, but she frequently visits New York and Australia. She places herself as 'working in Britain, with strong links in the States, and roots in Australia'. An interesting development in Jan's career is her writing of texts for others to illustrate such as *Molly and Her Dad*, illustrated by Carol Thompson; and *Maudie and Bear*.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Freya Blackwood has achieved success as an illustrator of picture books both in Australia and internationally. She was born in Edinburgh and grew up in Orange in NSW, Australia. Her illustrations for *Two Summers* by John Heffernan won the Crichton Award in 2004 and the book was shortlisted for the CBCA Picture Book of the Year Award. *Emily Rapunzel's Hair* with text by Cecily Matthews was shortlisted in the CBCA Early Childhood section. Freya has also illustrated editions of *Waltzing Matilda* and *The Man from Snowy River* by A B Paterson. *Amy & Louis*, written by Libby Gleeson, won the 2007 CBCA Picture Book of the Year for Younger Readers and has been published in Australia, the US, Germany, France and Korea. *Clancy & Millie and the Very Fine House*, another collaboration with Libby Gleeson (Little Hare 2009) was shortlisted for the CBCA Early Childhood award. Freya wrote and illustrated *Ivy Loves to Give* (Little Hare 2009). *Harry & Hopper* with text by Margaret Wild was shortlisted for the Patricia Wrightson Award and achieved international acclaim by being awarded the Kate Greenaway Medal (UK) in 2010. Freya now lives in the Central West of NSW with her daughter Ivy.

## WRITING MAUDIE AND BEAR—JAN ORMEROD

*What are the origins of Maudie and Bear? Did you start with the characters, or with one particular incident?*

The character of Maudie was inspired by a boyfriend of my older daughter, who was the most self centred and self absorbed individual I ever met. My daughter was so sweet and patient with him and the relationship amused me, so I started to write about it, transforming him into a little girl constantly testing the love and patience of Bear. ( Luckily he is no longer her boyfriend!)

*Do you have a particular age-group in mind for this book?*

No, I don't think artificial age recommendations are a good thing. This issue of the constancy of love is one all ages can respond to. I'm finding adults are deeply moved by it, and even very young children are fascinated by Maudie's bad behaviour.

*What would you like readers/listeners to take from these stories?*

I hope they will elicit discussions about the nature of loving relationships of all kinds—how Maudie feels so secure in Bear's rock-like love that she is free to behave badly etc.

*You are best known as an illustrator. Is it a very different process to write the text of a book for another illustrator to work on?*

I illustrate and write my own books, illustrate other author's texts, and write texts for

others to illustrate. They are three very different processes. An author must hand her text over to another professional, the illustrator, who brings equal input to the book. It is a great experience when an illustrator as good as Freya brings her skill, sensitivity, humour and professionalism to it. I'm very fortunate in that.

*How do you feel about Freya B's illustrations? Had you pictured the characters in your mind as they appear in the illustrations?*

Freya's illos exceed my expectations. I love them. I try not to visualise the characters, and am always astonished, and in this case delighted to see them brought to life.

*Any comments on the format of the book?*

I love the classy feel of the book, the red endpapers picking up those little spots of red in Freya's art, the ribbon, the spot varnish. It is beautifully produced, like all Little Hare books.

*Do you think M and B will have further adventures?*

Definitely! The contracts are being drawn up right now, I have written the stories and Freya is keen to get going. Isn't that great?

## **ILLUSTRATING MAUDIE AND BEAR —FREYA BLACKWOOD**

*What materials did you use for this book?*

I wanted the illustrations to look fairly traditional, so I used pencil and watercolour on nice thick watercolour paper.

*When you first read the text did ideas for the characters and spreads come quickly to mind?*

When I first read the stories, Bear was an elephant and Maudie wasn't necessarily a human child. Once they were definitely going to be Maudie and Bear, I quickly knew what they'd look like. Maudie was pretty close to my daughter's age at the time and had to have blonde hair with a little fringe and very particular clothes, being the particular child that she is. And I wanted Bear to be big!

But the spreads were hard. It took me a long time to develop those. Quite a bit of the story is told through the illustrations and I muddled through many different ways of showing this information before coming to a satisfactory outcome.

*Did you have a particular age-group in mind when illustrating this book?*

I think with most books I sort of work by intuition and a bit of inspiration from my daughter who was turning three at the time (and very similar to Maudie). But Maudie is a typical four or five year old, so I think the book works for that age group, as well as for older readers who will understand the subtle humour well and perhaps see in Maudie themselves as they were when younger, or see their younger siblings, and have a good laugh.

*This text was written by someone who is herself an established illustrator. Does this bring something different into the relationship of writer/illustrator?*

At first I couldn't work out why Jan Ormerod would want someone else to illustrate one of her books. I'd read *Sunshine* with my daughter and there was no way I could do anything that good. But also, the Maudie and Bear stories have so much scope for an illustrator, I thought she was mad giving them to someone else! But I'm very glad she did. As Jan is an illustrator herself, she has a very good understanding of how illustrations can be used in a picture book and the fun that can take place between the text and pictures. I definitely enjoyed exploring the relationship between the text and pictures in this book because so much had been left for the illustrations to tell.

*Is there a difference between illustrating a typically 32-page picture book, and this sustained narrative with a number of chapters?*

Well, it takes quite a bit more time for starters. But once the characters had been designed, their world created and the aesthetic of the book all worked out, I very much enjoyed exploring all of this in a collection of different stories. I think the book is very refreshing – five separate stories, incorporating interesting layouts and an unusual form of storytelling, that plays on the fun relationship between text and illustrations. And both characters became quite a large part of my life, even more so than other books before. I worked on the book for about ten months and I was completely in love with Bear for quite some time.

*Do you have a favourite chapter or scene? Were there any scenes that were especially challenging?*

I love 'The Bike Ride'. This was the first story I tackled because it was so funny and clever and had me falling over laughing every time I read it. While planning this story I developed the overall layout of the book, the two characters and the world they lived in. This in itself was quite difficult. The story that didn't come so easily was probably 'Home, Sweet Home,' because it went out of their secure little world into something new and didn't have quite the same pattern as the other stories.

*Do you hope M and B will have further adventures?*

Oh yes please!

## QUESTIONS/COMPREHENSION

1. Make a list of things you would take on a bike ride. Is it different from Maudie's list?
2. Explain some ways in which 'Home, Sweet Home' is different from the fairy tale on which it is based.
3. What are your favourite snack foods? Are they the same as Maudie's, or different?
4. Sometimes we laugh because things have not turned out as we expected. For example, if you expected Maudie to get exercise, the ending of 'The Bike Ride' will make you laugh. Does the ending of 'The Snack' make you laugh? Can you explain why?
5. Explain the title of 'Making Up.' In this chapter, when Bear reappears and asks 'Would you do me the honour . . .?' he looks a little different. What is he wearing, and why?

6. In 'Telling Stories' there is a story told (without words) in the nine small pictures across the top of the pages. Tell this story or write it down.

7. (Group work) Here is a list of adjectives. Put them into two columns, headed 'Maudie' and 'Bear'. Add some more adjectives to your lists.

Patient  
Demanding  
Hard-working  
Generous  
Loving

Tell the class why your group chose the added adjectives, using examples from the book.

8. After you have discussed the adjectives, as a class discuss selfish and unselfish behaviour.

For older children:

1. Research the meaning of 'sepia'. There are some sequences of pictures throughout the book where the illustrator has used sepia instead of full colour. What do these sequences show?

2. Find clues in the illustrations that show this book has an Australian setting (hints: birds in the first chapter; shapes of roofs of the houses)

## ACTIVITIES

1. Some famous pairs of animal friends in stories are listed below:

Frog and Toad  
Ernest and Celestine  
Bear and Chook  
Honey and Bear

Find books about them. Discuss how they are like or unlike Maudie and Bear.

2. Readers' Theatre

This is a very simple form of classroom drama that requires little preparation.

Prepare two scripts, one for the traditional fairy tale of 'The Three Bears,' and then one for the chapter 'Home, Sweet Home' in Maudie and Bear. Older students can work on the scripts themselves. Present them to the class.

Note the principles of readers' theatre: scripts are read, not memorised; readers address the audience, not each other; minimal props are used. See *Drama: Learning connections in primary schools* by Barbara Poston-Anderson (OUP 2008) for more about readers' theatre.

Script 1

Cast: Goldilocks, Father Bear, Mother Bear, Baby Bear, narrator (can be split into two or three parts)

Script 2

Cast: Maudie, Bear, narrator, Father Bear, Mother Bear, Baby Bear (last three may be non-speaking parts)

After your readers' theatre presentations, discuss the differences between the two stories.

3. Use 'The Snack' to inspire some food preparation. Pancakes; banana and yoghurt; fruit faces can all be made (but beware of peanut butter sandwiches if someone in your school has an allergy). Fold napkins in fancy shapes: the scarf fold or the rolling fold are fairly simple, or the standing fan shape can be tried with older children [see <http://interiordec.about.com/cs/napkinfolding/l/blnapkfold008.htm>]

4. Find out about tango, foxtrot, rumba, jive and salsa and try to demonstrate these dances.

5. Make stick puppets of Maudie and Bear. The shapes on the first illustration for 'The Snack' can be copied for these. To make a stick puppet, cut out the shape of the character on firm paper or light card, and stick it with sticky tape to a paddle-pop stick or a thin piece of dowel. Use the stick puppets to retell your favourite chapter of the book.

A diorama background can be made in a cardboard grocery box. The last spread of 'The Bike Ride' can be used to inspire a background scene.

6. Make up another adventure, a 'chapter 6' about Maudie and Bear. Tell this adventure with your stick puppets and/or write it down .