



INTERNATIONAL BOARD ON BOOKS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

iBBY
AUSTRALIA

NOMINATION
IBBY HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN AWARDS
2026
COUNTRY OF NOMINATION: AUSTRALIA
ILLUSTRATOR CANDIDATE: BRUCE WHATLEY

DOSSIER



Acknowledgements

Dossier compiled by Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright on behalf of IBBY Australia,
December 2024

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Information contained in the dossier has been drawn from bibliographical sources listed in the dossier, and some bibliographical details have also been supplied by Bruce Whatley.

Contents of the dossier may be viewed by interested researchers and IBBY members, and is posted on the IBBY website.



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1. Biographical Information on the Candidate

Bruce Whatley was born in Wales in 1954 and overcame a traumatic birth injury to become one of Australia's most prolific and best-known children's picture book illustrators and authors. The tendons in Bruce's right arm were severed at birth, presenting a life-long challenge. Despite the fact that Bruce could not read until he was ten years old, he went on to a career as an illustrator and art director, and later as an artist, a storyteller and a writer.

He migrated to Australia with his parents in 1959, living in both Adelaide and Whyalla before returning to the United Kingdom in 1969 for further study. He later completed a BA (Illustration) at the Manchester Polytechnic. Whatley worked in London as an art director and illustrator from 1975 to 1980 and then re-settled in Australia, basing himself in Sydney with his wife and co-author Rosie Smith. In 1995 Whatley moved again, this time to the USA where he took up work with HarperCollins. He later returned to Australia and settled at Berry on the south coast of New South Wales.

He began to work in the field of picture books after his career in advertising, and since 1992 Bruce has written and/or illustrated over ninety children's picture books. Though based in Australia his work is published internationally and in 2014 was included in the Bologna Children's Book Fair Exhibition.

His award winning titles include *The Ugliest Dog in the World*, *Looking for Crabs*, *Detective Donut and the Wild Goose Chase*, *Diary of a Wombat*, *The Little Refugee*, *Flood, Fire, And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda* and *Cyclone*.

Bruce completed his PhD in 2008, *Left Hand Right Hand: implications of ambidextrous image making*, looking at the image making of the non-dominant hand, discovering that in most people the ability to draw lies in using the 'other' hand. He has since illustrated 3 books with his non-dominant left hand. Bruce is continually looking for new innovative ways to make images to tell his visual narratives.

His main inspiration has been his family, who feature in several of his earlier picture books, his wife, Rosie Smith, being co-author on many of his projects. Bruce has also collaborated with their son, Ben Smith Whatley. Bruce uses a variety of illustration mediums including gouache, pen and ink, pencil, oils, watercolour and more recently CGI software. His aim is to entertain and surprise the reader with illustration styles that vary considerably depending on the text and the age group of his audience.

He also works to inspire creativity in children, regularly visiting schools and remote communities over the past 30 years to nurture creative writing and art. In the process, he's helped build self-esteem and stimulated innovative thinking.

In 2023 he was nominated the NSW Senior Australian of the Year. Dr Bruce Whatley is an outstanding illustrator and writer for children and would be a highly deserving recipient of the Hans Christian Andersen Award 2026.

[See also **5. Awards and Other Distinctions**, p 9.]

2. Portrait Photograph of the Candidate



Photo courtesy: Rosie Smith

[See copy in dossier file.]

3. Statement of Candidate's Contribution

'I have always liked experimenting with illustration styles and think I would get bored if I stuck to one or two. Also I have found the content or target audience determines the style I use. Mediums include pencil, watercolour, acrylics, oils and more recently CGI using animation software such as Cinema 4D and ZBrush.'

<https://brucewhatley.com/illustration-styles>

Bruce Whatley is a consummate artist working across diverse formats and traversing subjects, both serious and humorous in focus, in his multi-faceted art. He employs diverse styles and mediums according to subject or collaborator. *One Tree* (2019) for example, is executed in linocuts produced digitally.

'I have always loved animation and incorporate movement and timing in my work as much as possible. I came across a 3D computer program called Cinema 4D some time ago. It is essentially an animation software used primarily in film and gaming but I started to play around with it as a medium for my illustrations. I collaborated with my son Ben to produce the illustrations for Zoobots and Tin Toys. All these images are created in the virtual 3D world.' <https://brucewhatley.com/cgi>

Bruce's innovative use of digital technology is evident in many of his works, several of which have also been interactive visual texts such as *Whatley's Quest* (1995) written with Rosie Smith, and *Alpha Quest* (2007), also with Rosie Smith.

'Whatley is not so much a traditional illustrator as an animator (he describes books as "low-tech movies").' (Butler, 1994, p 16) 'In a sense he is rendering scene-by-scene film storyboards into picture books.' (Butler, p 17)

In his drawings he has created warm and engaging characters, including the lovable wombat who is the focus of his award-winning Wombat series, written by Jackie French. **Bruce's wit and humour** were demonstrated in *Queen Victoria's Underpants* (2010), and *Queen Victoria's Christmas* (2012), *Pete the Sheep* (2004) and *Too Many Pears* (2005) each written by Jackie French.

'Whatley's greatest assets are a very high level of technical skill, a burnished fresh-from-the-oven edge that beats the page like a big brass drum, and his irrepressible exuberance.' (Butler, p 17)

His books also demonstrate the research he does to create historical subjects such as Queen Victoria. Other historical works tackled include *Mulga Bill's Bicycle and Other Classics* (2005) by A.B. Paterson, *Pig on the Titanic* (2005) by Gary Crew, *The Wreck of the Quetta* (2002) by Gary Crew, *The Little Refugee* (2012) by Anh and Suzanne Do, *And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda* (2015) by Eric Bogle, and the Danny da Vinci series written with Rosie Smith. **Landscapes both rural and urban are evoked in stunning detail,** for example, in his paintings for the Disaster series written by Jackie French. **Bruce's talent in exploring the metaphorical** is also demonstrated in works such as *A Boy Like Me* (2012) by Libby Hathorn, and *Ruben* (2017).

Bruce Whatley brings his animation and storyboarding skills and diverse approach to format to his highly distinctive and acclaimed work.

‘Creating New Work with Bruce Whatley’ *Penguin Books Australia* 29 March 2019
<https://www.penguin.com.au/articles/2209-behind-the-studio-door-with-bruce-whatley>



4. Essays, Interviews or Articles

This dossier **contains copies** of the following **two articles** in **Appendix A**:

- Butler, Mark '(Know the Author/Illustrator Bruce Whatley)' *Magpies* Vol 9, No 5, November 1994, pp 16–17.
- 'Illustrator adds to Playschool's Crew' *The Senior* Updated June 28 2018, first published September 2 2016
<https://www.thesenior.com.au/story/5413584/illustrator-adds-to-play-schools-crew/>

Key Sources:

The following sources have provided in-depth information about Bruce Whatley, some of which has been included in this dossier.

Entries for his works can be found at *NCACL*
<https://www.ncacl.org.au/>

'Bruce Whatley' *AustLit: The Resource for Australian Literature*
<https://www.austlit.edu.au/austlit/page/A47762>>

'Whatley, Bruce, 1954–' *Encyclopedia.com*
<https://www.encyclopedia.com/children/scholarly-magazines/whatley-bruce-1954>

Bruce Whatley
<https://brucewhatley.com/>

Other Biographical and Critical Sources Include:

'Author interview: Bruce Whatley' *My Book Corner*
<https://www.mybookcorner.co.uk/bruce-whatley/>

'Creating New Work with Bruce Whatley' Penguin Books Australia 29 March 2019
<https://www.penguin.com.au/articles/2209-behind-the-studio-door-with-bruce-whatley>

'Dr Bruce Whatley' *Australian of the Year Awards*
<https://australianoftheyear.org.au/recipients/dr-bruce-whatley>

'Illustrator adds to Play School's crew' *The Senior* June 28 2018
<https://www.thesenior.com.au/story/5413584/illustrator-adds-to-play-schools-crew/>

Filmed interviews:

'Drawing Your Characters with Bruce Whatley' *Harper Collins Australia YouTube*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNBXxrMCYio>

[See also list of reviews of 5 books submitted, p 19.]

5. Awards and other Distinctions

International Awards Arranged per Award Category:

INTERNATIONAL AWARDS

Chen Bochum International Children's Literature Award:

- 2021: Winner *Pandemic*

International Youth Library, White Ravens Awards, Germany:

- 2008 *The Shaggy Gully Times: the f(p)unniest newspaper you'll ever read* by Jackie French. Pymble, Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 2007.
- 2009 *The smallest bilby and the Easter games* by Nette Hilton. Kingswood, S. Aust.: Working Title Press, 2008.
- 2012 *Flood* by Jackie French. Lindfield, N.S.W.: Scholastic Australia, 2011.

AUSTRALIA

AWARDS FOR PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT

2023 NSW Senior Australian of the Year Nominee

2007 Whatley, Bruce (2020). Left hand right hand: implications of ambidextrous image making. Monash University. PhD Thesis. <https://doi.org/10.26180/14973477.v1>

AUSTRALIA

CHILDREN'S & YA BOOK AWARDS

Australian Awards Arranged per Award Category:

Books I Love Best Yearly (Bilby) Award – Early Readers:

- 2008 Winner *Diary of a Wombat*

Books I Love Best Yearly (Bilby) Award – Younger Readers:

- 1999 Winner *Detective Donut and the Wild Goose Chase*

Canberra's Own Outstanding List (COOL) – Picture Book Award:

- 2003 Winner *Diary of a Wombat*

Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Picture Book of the Year Award:

- 1993 Shortlisted *Looking for Crabs*
- 1998 Honour Book *Detective Donut and the Wild Goose Chase*
- 2003 Honour Book *The Diary of a Wombat*
- 2012 Winner *Flood*
- 2016 Shortlisted *And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda*

Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Eve Pownall Award for Information Books:

2012 Winner *The Little Refugee*

Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Notable Books:

- 1993 *The Ugliest Dog in the World*
- 2012 *Nog and the Land of Noses*

Environment Award for Children's Literature

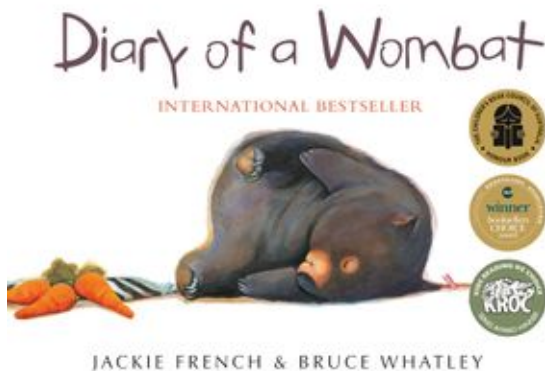
- 2020 Shortlisted *One Tree*

NSW Premier's Literary Awards (Patricia Wrightson Prize for Children's Literature)

- 2020 Shortlisted *One Tree*

Prime Minister's Literary Award Young Adult Fiction

- 2018 Shortlisted *Ruben*



6. Complete Bibliography

PICTURE BOOKS:

- | | | |
|------|---|--------------------|
| 1992 | <i>The Ugliest Dog in the World</i> | Harper Collins |
| 1993 | <i>Looking for Crabs</i> | Harper Collins |
| | <i>I Wanna be Famous</i> | Harper Collins |
| 1994 | <i>That Magnetic Dog</i> | Harper Collins |
| 1995 | <i>Whatley's Quest</i> with Rosie Smith | Harper Collins |
| 1996 | <i>The Magic Dictionary</i> | Harper Collins |
| 1996 | <i>Teddy Bear's Picnic</i> Song arranged by
Jerry Garcia and David Grisman | Harper Collins USA |
| 1997 | <i>Tails from Grandad's Attic</i> | Harper Collins |
| | <i>Detective Donut and the Wild Goose Chase</i>
with Rosie Smith | Harper Collins USA |
| | <i>Mrs Piggie-Wiggle's Won't- Take-A- Bath-Cure</i>
by Betty Macdonald | Harper Collins USA |
| | <i>Mrs Piggie Wiggle's Won't-Pick-Up-Toys-Cure</i>
by Betty Macdonald | Harper Collins USA |
| 1999 | <i>The Night Before Christmas</i>
by Clement Clarke Moore | Harper Collins USA |
| | <i>Elvis Presley's The First Noel</i> | Harper Collins USA |
| | <i>There Ain't No Bugs on Me</i>
Songs by Jerry Garcia and David Grisman | Harper Collins USA |
| | <i>The Boing Boing Races</i> | Koala Books |
| | <i>The Flying Emu</i> | Harper Collins |
| | <i>My First Nursery Rhymes</i> | Harper Festival |
| | <i>Emu & Roo</i> [Combines <i>The Boing Boing Races</i>
and <i>The Flying Emu</i> .] | Koala Books |
| 2000 | <i>What Will You Wear Jenny Jenkins?</i>
Songs by Jerry Garcia and David Grisman | Harper Collins USA |
| 2001 | <i>Captain Pajamas</i> by Rosie Smith | Harper Collins USA |
| | <i>Little White Dogs Can't Jump</i>
with Rosie Smith | Harper Collins |
| | <i>All Things Bright and Beautiful</i>
by Cecil Frances Alexander | Harper Collins USA |
| | <i>Wait No Paint</i> | Harper Collins USA |
| 2002 | <i>Cowboy Pirate</i> | Harper Collins |

	<i>The Wreck of the Quetta</i> by Gary Crew	Lothian
	<i>Diary of a Wombat</i> by Jackie French	Harper Collins
2003	<i>The Perfect Pet</i> by Margie Palatini	Katherine Tegan Books
2004	<i>Dragons of Galapagos</i>	Lothian
	<i>Pete the Sheep</i> by Jackie French	Harper Collins
2005	<i>Too Many Pears!</i> by Jackie French	Koala Books
	<i>I Want a Hippopotamus for Christmas</i> by John Rox	Harper Collins USA
	<i>The Lantern</i> by Gary Crew	Hachette Australia
	<i>Noises at Night</i> by Beth Raisner Glass and Susan Lubner	Harry N Abrams
2005	<i>Mulga Bill's Bicycle and Other Classics</i> by A.B. Paterson	ABC Books
	<i>Pig on the Titanic</i> by Gary Crew	HarperCollins
2006	<i>Josephine Wants to Dance</i> by Jackie French	Harper Collins
2007	<i>The Smallest Bilby and the Midnight Star</i> by Nette Hilton	Working Title Press
	<i>Here Comes Santa Claus</i> by Gene Autry and Oakley Haldeman	Harper Collins USA
	<i>Danny da Vinci: The Giant Horse of Milan</i> with Rosie Smith	ABC Books
	<i>Alpha Quest</i> with Rosie Smith	Harper Collins
	<i>The Watchmaker Who Saved Christmas</i>	Random House
2008	<i>Clinton Gregory's Secret</i>	Scholastic
	<i>The Smallest Bilby and the Easter Tale</i> by Nette Hilton	Working Title Press
2009	<i>Danny da Vinci: Flying Machines of Lombardy</i> with Rosie Smith	ABC Books
	<i>Emily and the Big Bad Bunyip</i>	Harper Collins
	<i>Baby Wombat's Week</i>	Harper Collins
2010	<i>The Smallest Bilby and the Easter Games</i> by Nette Hilton	Working Title Press
	<i>Martha Doesn't Say Sorry!</i> by Samantha Berger	Little, Brown
	<i>The Shaggy Gully Times</i> by Jackie French	Harper Collins

	<i>The Little Drummer Boy</i>	Penguin Random House
	<i>Zoobots</i> with Ben Smith Whatley	Harper Collins
	<i>Queen Victoria's Underpants</i> by Jackie French	Harper Collins
	<i>Martha Doesn't Share!</i> by Samantha Berger	Little, Brown
	<i>The Secret Message</i> by Mina Javaherbin	Disney/Hyperion Books
	<i>Diary of a Baby Wombat</i>	Clarion Books
2011	<i>Monster</i> by Andrew Daddo	ABC Books
	<i>My Mum's the Best</i> with Rosie Smith	Scholastic Australia
	<i>Flood</i> by Jackie French	Scholastic Australia
	<i>Nog and the Land of Noses</i>	Harper Collins
2012	<i>The Little Refugee</i> by Anh and Suzanne Do	Allen & Unwin
	<i>Hunting for Dragons</i>	Scholastic Australia
	<i>Tin Toys</i> with Ben Smith	Harper Collins
	<i>My Dad's the Coolest</i> with Rosie Smith	Scholastic Australia
	<i>Queen Victoria's Christmas</i> by Jackie French	Harper Collins
	<i>A Boy Like Me</i> by Libby Hathorn	ABC Books
	<i>The Queen with the Wobbly Bottom</i> by Phillip Gwynne	Hardie Grant
2013	<i>The Great Texas Hamster Drive</i> by Eric A. Kimmel	Two Lions
	<i>Christmas Wombat</i> by Jackie French	Harper Collins
	<i>Wombat Goes to School</i> by Jackie French	Harper Collins
	<i>My Merry Christmas</i> with Rosie Smith	Scholastic Australia
2014	<i>My Easter Egg Hunt</i> with Rosie Smith	Scholastic Australia
	<i>Fire</i> by Jackie French	Harper Collins
	<i>The Beach They Called Gallipoli</i> by Jackie French	Harper Collins
	<i>Magic Car Wash 1: Adventures of the Magic</i> <i>Car Wash</i> with Rosie Smith and Ben Smith Whatley	Five Mile Press
	<i>Magic Car Wash 2: Red's First Fire</i>	

	with Rosie Smith and Ben Smith Whatley	Five Mile Press
2015	<i>Wombat Wins</i> by Jackie French	Harper Collins
	<i>And The Band Played Waltzing Matilda</i>	
	Lyrics by Eric Bogle	Allen & Unwin
	<i>The Runaway Car</i> with Rosie Smith	Five Mile Press
2016	<i>Magic Car Wash 3: The Giant Mouse</i> with Rosie Smith and Ben Smith Whatley	Five Mile Press
	<i>Grandma Wombat</i> by Jackie French	Harper Collins
	<i>My First Day at School</i> with Rosie Smith	Scholastic Australia
	<i>Cyclone</i> by Jackie French	Scholastic Australia
2017	<i>Ruben</i>	Scholastic Australia
2017	<i>Danny da Vinci: The Secret of the Mona Lisa</i> with Rosie Smith	ABC Books
2018	<i>Drought</i> by Jackie French	Scholastic Australia
2019	<i>Dippy's Big Day Out</i> by Jackie French	Harper Collins
	Concept by Ben Smith Whatley	Harper Collins
	<i>One Tree</i> by Christopher Cheng	Puffin
	<i>Happy Birthday Wombat</i> by Jackie French	Harper Collins
	<i>The Adventures of Danny Da Vinci</i> with Rosie Smith	ABC Books
	<i>Dippy and the Dinosaurs</i> by Jackie French	
	Concept by Ben Smith Whatley	Harper Collins
2020	<i>Pandemic</i> by Jackie French	Scholastic Australia
	<i>Little Lion: a long way home</i> by Saroo Brierley	Penguin
	<i>To My Country</i> by Ben Lawson	Allen & Unwin
	<i>The Tortoise and the Hare</i>	Scholastic Australia
	<i>Earthquake</i> by Jackie French	Scholastic Australia
2021	<i>Christmas Always Comes</i> by Jackie French	Harper Collins
2022	<i>Diary of a Rescued Wombat</i> by Jackie French	Harper Collins
2023	<i>Plague</i> by Jackie French	Scholastic Australia
2024	<i>Tornado</i> by Jackie French	Scholastic Australia

7. Translated Editions

***Baby Wombat's Week* by Jackie French and Bruce Whatley. HarperCollins, 2009.**

- *Dai xiong bao bao de yi zhou* [Chinese] Kunming: Yunnan mei shu chu ban she, 2012.

***Cyclone* by Jackie French and Bruce Whatley. Scholastic, 2016.**

- *Ju feng = Jufeng* [Chinese] Shijiazhuang: Hebei shao nian er tong chu ban she, 2019.

***Diary of a Baby Wombat* by Jackie French and Bruce Whatley. Clarion Books, 2010.**

- *Dai xiong ri ji* [Chinese] Beijing: Lian huan hua chu ban she, 2014.

***Diary of a Wombat* by Jackie French and Bruce Whatley. HarperCollins, 2002.**

- *Ma tu lo sai cos'è un vomrato?* [Italian] Milano: Salani, 2005.
- *Je mange, je dors, je me gratte, je suis un wombat* [French] Paris: Albin Michel Jeunesse 2005
- *Dagboek van een wombat* [Dutch] Houten, The Netherlands: Van Goor, 2010.
- *Wonbatto no Nikki* [Japanese] Tōkyō: Hyōronsha, 2005.

***Drought* by Jackie French and Bruce Whatley. Scholastic, 2018.**

- *Gan han = Ganhan* [Chinese] Shijiazhuang: Hebei shao nian er tong chu ban she, 2019.

***Emu & Roo* by Bruce Whatley. [Combines *The Boing Boing Races* and *The Flying Emu*.] Koala Books, 1999.**

- *Xiang fei de tuo niao* [Chinese] Beijing: Yin shua gong ye chu ban she, 2012.

***Fire* by Jackie French and Bruce Whatley. Scholastic, 2014.**

- *Huo zai = Huozai* [Chinese] Shijiazhuang: Hebei shao nian er tong chu ban she, 2019.

***Flood* by Jackie French and Bruce Whatley. Scholastic, 2011.**

- *Hong shui = Hongshui* [Chinese] Shijiazhuang: Hebei shao nian er tong chu ban she, 2019.

***Hunting for Dragons* by Bruce Whatley. Scholastic Australia, 2012.**

- *Wo kan jian le long* [Chinese] Kunming: Chen guang chu ban she, 2013.

***Josephine Wants to Dance* by Jackie French and Bruce Whatley. HarperCollins, 2006.**

- *Yuesefen xiang yao tiao wu* [Chinese] Kunming: Yunnan mei shu chu ban she, 2012.
- *K'aenggŏruga ch'umŭl ch'undago?* [Korean] Kyŏnggi-do P'aju-si: K'idŭk K'idŭk, 2008.
- *Dansu no sukina Josefinu* [Japanese] Tōkyō: Suzuki Shuppan Kabushiki Kaisha, 2009.

***Secret Message* by Mina Jiawahebin and Bruce Whatley. Disney/Hyperion, Books, 2010.**

- *Ying wu de an hao* [Chinese] Taipei Shi: Xiao lu wen hua shi ye gu fen you xian gong si, 2013.
- *Shōnin to ōmu: Perusha no ohanashi* [Japanese] Tōkyō: Mitsumura Kyōiku Tosho, 2012.

***The Queen with the Wobbly Bottom* by Philip Gwynne and Bruce Whatley. Hardie Grant, 2012.**

- *Da pi gu nu wang* [Chinese] Taipei Shi: Taiwan dong fang chu ban she gu fen you xian gong si, 2013.

***Wombat Wins* by Jackie French and Bruce Whateley. HarperCollins, 2015.**

- *Wombat hat die Nase vorn* [German] Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 2018.

***Pandemic* by Jackie French and Bruce Whatley. Scholastic, 2020.**

- *Da liu xing* [Chinese] Beijing: Beijing lian he chu ban gong si, 2021.

8. Ten Most Important Books by the Candidate

One Tree written by Christopher Cheng. Melbourne Vic., Penguin Random House Australia, 2019.

Ruben written and illustrated by Bruce Whatley. Lindfield NSW, Scholastic Australia, 2017.

And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda Song Lyrics written by Eric Bogle. Crows Nest, NSW, Allen & Unwin, 2015.

Pandemic written by Jackie French. Gosford, NSW, Scholastic Press, 2020.

Queen Victoria's Underpants written by Jackie French. Sydney, NSW, Angus & Robertson/HarperCollins, 2010.

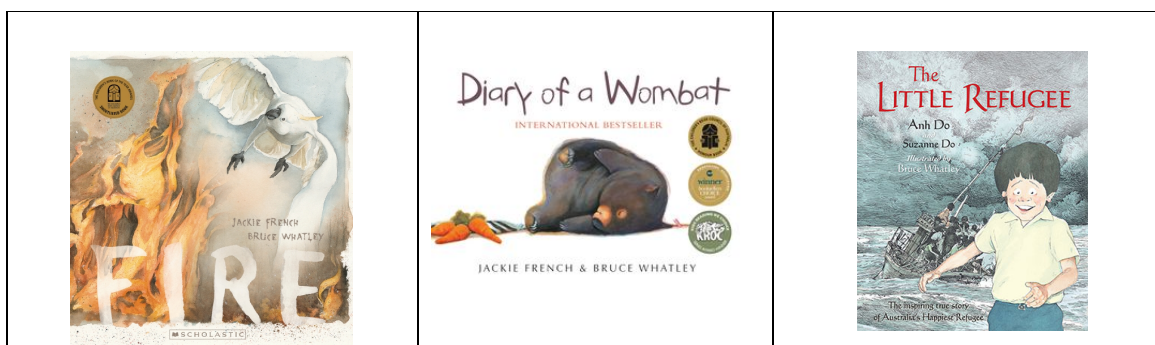
Fire written by Jackie French. Sydney, NSW, HarperCollins, 2014.

Diary of a Wombat written by Jackie French. Sydney, NSW, HarperCollins, 2002.

The Little Refugee written by Anh and Suzanne Doh. Crows Nest, NSW, Allen & Unwin, 2012.

Little Lion: A Long Way Home written by Saroo Brierley. [Docklands, NSW], Puffin Books, 2020.

Whatley's Quest written with Rosie Smith, Sydney, NSW, HarperCollins, 1995.



9. List of Five Books Sent to Jurors

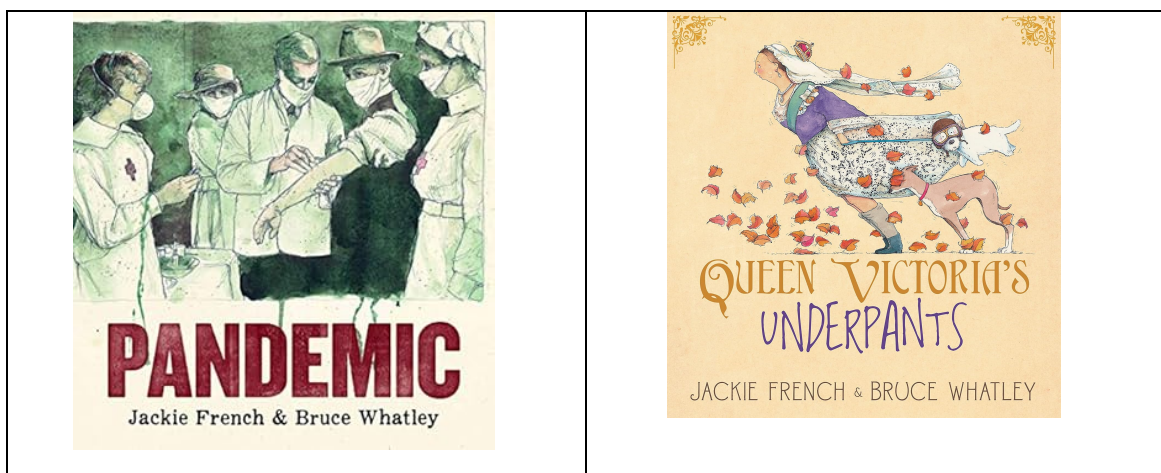
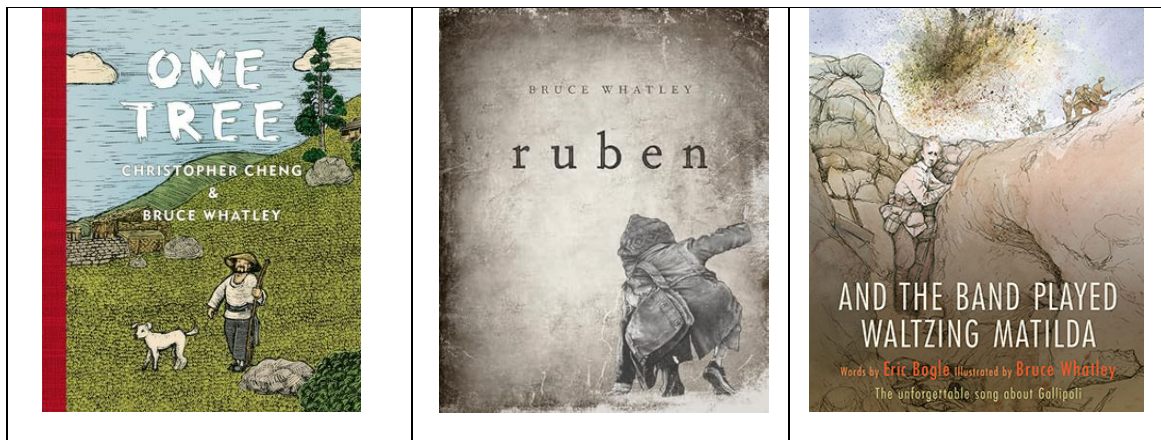
One Tree written by Christopher Cheng. Melbourne Vic., Penguin Random House Australia, 2019.

Ruben written and illustrated by Bruce Whatley. Lindfield NSW, Scholastic Australia, 2017.

And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda Song Lyrics written by Eric Bogle. Crows Nest, NSW, Allen & Unwin, 2015.

Pandemic written by Jackie French. Gosford, NSW, Scholastic Press, 2020.

Queen Victoria's Underpants written by Jackie French. Sydney, NSW, Angus & Robertson/HarperCollins, 2010.



10. Published Reviews of Works

The following is a list of **ten reviews**, two of each of five books, copies of which are contained in this dossier in **Appendix B**:

Crofts, Madeleine 'Review: One Tree' *Reading Time* November 9, 2019
<https://readingtime.com.au/one-tree/>

Osborne, Sue 'Review: Cheng, Christopher, ill. Bruce Whatley (*One Tree*)' *Magpies* Vol 34, No 3, July 2019, p 33.

Derouet, Liz 'Review: Ruben' *Reading Time* October 30, 2017
<https://readingtime.com.au/ruben/>

McCartney, Tania 'Review: Ruben' *Kids Book Review* 15 March 2018
<http://www.kids-bookreview.com/2018/03/review-ruben.html>

Braxton, Barbara 'Review: And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda' *The Bottom Shelf* April 21, 2016
<https://thebottomshelf.edublogs.org/2023/04/21/and-the-band-played-waltzing-matilda-2/>

McCartney, Tania 'Review: And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda' *Kids Book Review* 15 April 2015
<http://www.kids-bookreview.com/2015/04/review-and-band-played-waltzing-matilda.html>

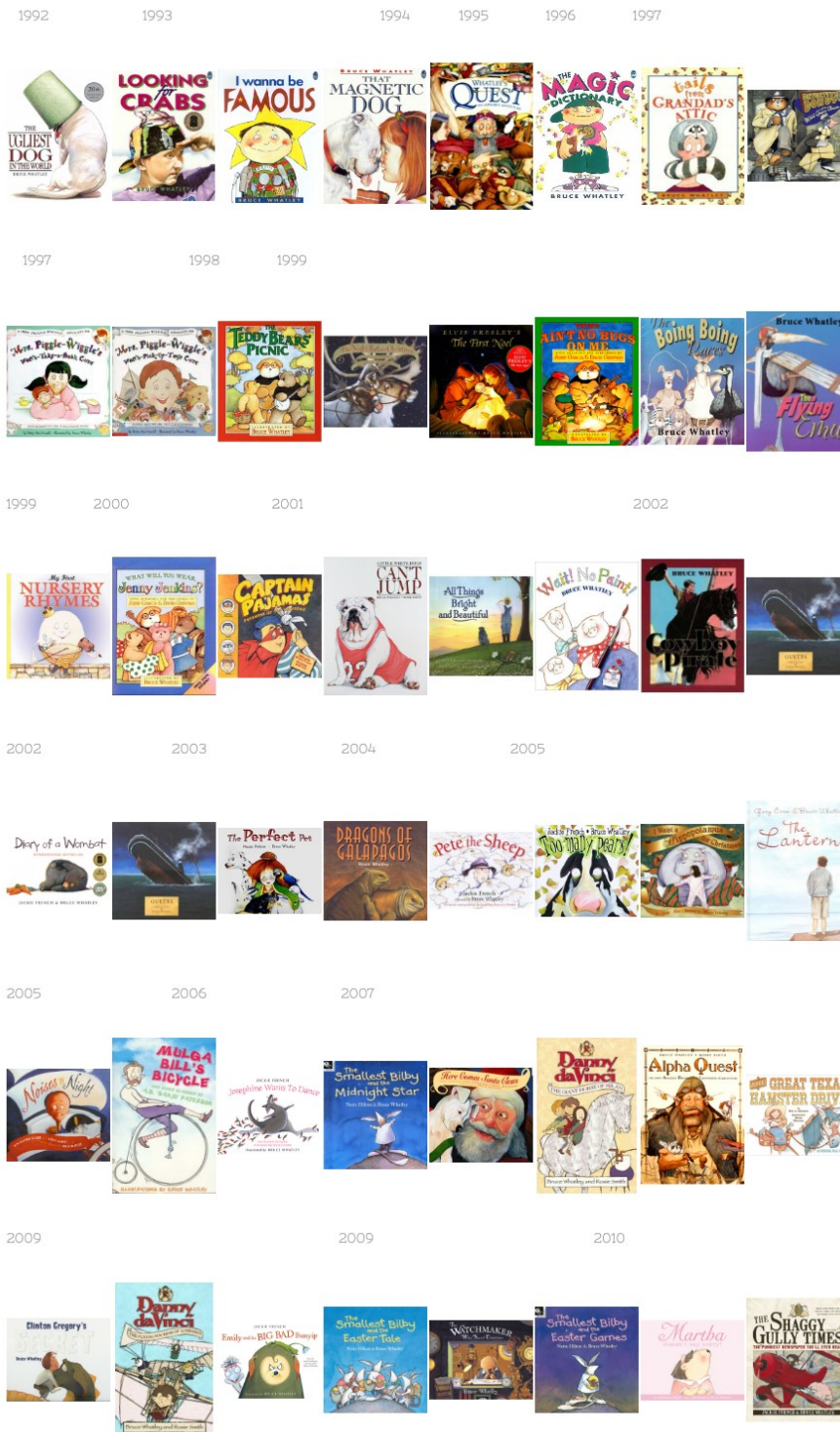
Mayman, Raquel 'Review: Pandemic' *Reading Time* January 30, 2021
<https://readingtime.com.au/pandemic/>

Alfacci, Marie 'Review: French, Jackie, ill. Bruce Whatley (Pandemic)' *Magpies* Vol 36, No 1, March 2021, p 26.

Steenberger, Kevin 'Review: French, Jackie: *Queen Victoria's Underpants* ill. Bruce Whatley' *Magpies* Vol 25, No 3, July 2010, p 29.

McCartney, Tania 'Review: Queen Victoria's Underpants' *Kids Book Review* 8 February 2011
<http://www.kids-bookreview.com/2011/02/review-queen-victorias-underpants.html>

11. Reproductions of Selected Book Covers



2010

2011



2011

2012



2013

2014



2014

2015

2016



2017

2018

2019



2020



2020.

2022

2023

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Appendix A. Articles

Butler, Mark '(Know the Author/Illustrator Bruce Whatley)' *Magpies* Vol 9, No 5, November 1994, pp 16–17.

Know the Author/Illustrator

Bruce Whatley

by Mark Butler

The Whatley phenomenon

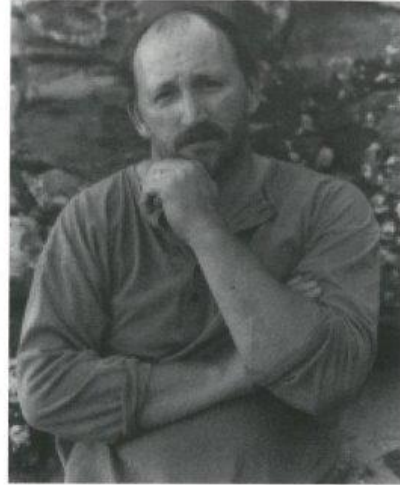
Are you ready for the quest? You'd better be, because if initial sales are any indication, Bruce Whatley's latest picture book, the eponymous **Whatley's Quest** — described recently by Margaret Dunkle as "a sumptuous picture puzzle book" — will soon be in someone's hands near you. Be prepared for the Whatley phenomenon. Be very prepared. For it is a phenomenon that is being fostered by his publishers who say that the promotion of the book "shows the incredible commitment to [it] by this huge international company", as does the forthcoming CD-ROM version of the book to be released next year.

Whatley's Quest started out as a simple alphabet book. But his publishers were less than enthusiastic, pointing out that there was a glut of alphabet books on the market. Bruce still liked the idea, so he did a sample illustration of a fish in a frame with a finger pointing down at it, and showed it to them. They liked it, but suggested that he put more of his trademark humour into it.

He began working on the book, but after he had done four or five spreads and a cover, he still wasn't happy with it. One day, while his wife Rosie Smith was looking over his shoulder as he worked on the K page, she made a suggestion that changed everything. "Rosie supplied the key to **Quest**. Without her it would be a book called *Alphabet* with an astronaut with an apple on his head and a zebra in a yacht playing a xylophone," he says. "She pointed out that perhaps the keys on the K page could open a lock on the L page, which could reveal a map on the M page. . ."

He scrapped everything he'd done up to that point and started again from scratch. The book became, he says, "a quest, a journey through the alphabet".

We started to make lists. A different list for each letter. Once we had our list it was a matter of seeing how we could link words, and deciding which words or characters could dominate. To a certain extent, the narratives were found once we had our word list. It was a matter of finding how they could all link to become one story. The



narratives work backwards, too. Why has the knight got a kink in his lance? Because the lion on the next page is using the lance to lever the locks. Which is why he's now got a lump on his head! The gorilla is grumpy because there are gaps in his map. The fox and the frog have filched the fragments. It was then a matter of finding how all these little narratives could fit into the bigger story".

Referring to his previous books as "little jokes" Whatley describes **Quest** as different, "a much bigger idea". "It's an epic story based around the alphabet. The illustrative style is much tighter than any of the other books. From a technical point of view, it's the hardest thing I've ever done. I did a lot of research. I love low-tech, which is one of the reasons I choose medieval [backgrounds and characters]. Most of the costumes and suits of armour are based on authentic designs I found in books, along with all the naval devices and boats." However, the book is not impersonal. As before, his family take a starring role. "The alchemist is me in the morning! Rosie posed for the damsel, though there isn't much of a likeness. Ben and Ellyn (Bruce and Rosie's children) are featured on the cover. Even Skitty, from **The Ugliest Dog in the World** is in there as a pup".

Been there, Done that

The Bruce Whatley phenomenon is rather like the Ken Done phenomenon, in that just as Done is not so much a painter as a colourist, Whatley is not so much a traditional illustrator as an animator (he describes picture books as "low-tech movies"). Also like Done, Whatley spent many years working in advertising. He only turned to picture books three and a half years ago. Success came immediately, with **The Ugliest Dog in the World**, and he is now in the fortunate — and rare — position of being able to live off his books. Along the way he picked up a short list nomination for **Looking for Crabs**.

Bruce's publisher believes Whatley's advertising experience is the key to his success. "He's successful because he's got discipline. He's prepared to make changes as necessary. Whenever I have said I'm not happy with this or that, he comes back a hundredfold! He always surprises me. So does his speed. All this is probably due to his years in advertising."

In a sense he is rendering scene-by-scene film storyboards into picture books. The pacing and variation of a 32-page picture book are very similar to that of a storyboard for a 30-second television ad. Instead of using a camera, he uses a brush or a pencil. "Perhaps that is why there is so much movement in my illustrations," he says. "Normally, something has just happened — or is about to." This is very evident in *Whatley's Quest*. From the initial arrow let fly at A, all the way through to the Z, the illustrations hurtle forwards, (and sometimes backwards). There is an irresistible sense of movement.

Whatley's greatest assets are a very high level of technical skill, a burnished, fresh-from-the-oven edge that beats the page like a big brass drum, and his irrepressible exuberance. His illustrations — especially in *Whatley's Quest* — seem etched on the page, not drawn or painted. He is at his best depicting iconic, often laconic moments of ordinary life: the beach, the backyard, the dinner table.

Perhaps that's why he's moved into quasi-didactic mode, which started with *Looking for Crabs* and continued with *The Magic Dictionary* (A spin-off from the scouring of dictionaries by Bruce and his co-author, his wife Rosie, for the words illustrated in *Whatley's Quest*). And now, *Whatley's Quest*. It is radically different from his other books, and from most alphabet books.

No *Animalia* comparisons, please!

Yes, *Animalia* does spring to mind. Comparisons with it irritate both Bruce and his publisher. He is adamant that he didn't even see *Animalia* until after he'd finished *Quest*. "Though I was aware of *Animalia*, I purposely didn't look at it until I finished *Quest*. The day I delivered the last illustration I went straight from the publishers to a bookshop to look at a copy," he says. "I think the only thing they have in common is that they are both alphabet books featuring animals. That's it! *Quest* grew from a totally different starting point. It has grown so much, in fact, that you could almost take away the alphabet and it would still work — almost!" That's because each spread is a continuation of the previous spread. That continuation makes possible something that *Animalia* doesn't have — multiple narratives, both implicit and explicit.

As always, though, Bruce's illustrations with their Falstaffian humour and their sharp edges, are entertaining

and warm. It is beautiful and amusing to look at, an alphabet book with multiple layers to drag you back to it again and again. It is a puzzle to solve, and a journey. Once you understand that, the book begins to work.

Is it a book, a game?

"I think we've confused the industry as to what *Quest* is," Bruce says. "I actually refer to it as a book to play with, as opposed to read. It's a book, it's a game. You see, as neither Rosie nor I are 'literary people', in that we don't read much and have limited knowledge as to how a book is 'written' or structured, we haven't really got any preconceived ideas of what a book is or should be. In a way, *Quest* is the opposite to most storybooks. Normally the words dominate the story, and often you have to use your imagination to create characters and the setting. In *Quest*, you are given the characters and the setting, and you can make up the story. It needn't be our story — each reader can find their own."



"I hope pre-readers will enjoy the characters and pick up on the easy words without knowing how to spell them. I hope they will just enjoy the pictures. As the readers get older, the book becomes more challenging. The words on the endpapers are there to be found — but only if you want to. Hopefully, they could read the book many times and find something new each time. ..."

Bruce began work on *Whatley's Quest* in late 1992 and finished it in April this year. But he nearly didn't make his deadline. "I had my doubts he could do it in time," Rosie recalls. "He had all these health problems, and then my father died and I had to go to England for a month, and it meant he had to look after the kids, the house, everything". His publisher says that he was in agony when he did the last four spreads for the book. But this was not a new experience for Bruce. The dedication, to his mother, of what he considers to be his best book, is a testimony to that.

His right shoulder muscles and nerves were severely injured during a forceps delivery at birth, and his parents were told that because the nerves were severed, his right arm would eventually wither. "My mother refused to believe it," Bruce says. "For two and a half years she massaged it rigorously, many times a day. I used to scream with pain when she rubbed my shoulder. Dad told me he came down in the middle of the night to tell Mum to stop. When he got downstairs she was frantically rubbing and massaging, crying her eyes out. He turned around and went straight back to bed without saying anything".

Mark Butler is an author and freelance editor. Until recently, he was Magazine Publisher for Ashton Scholastic and editor of *Classroom* magazine.

‘Illustrator adds to Playschool’s Crew’ *The Senior* Updated June 28 2018, first published September 2 2016
<https://www.thesenior.com.au/story/5413584/illustrator-adds-to-play-schools-crew/>



INSPIRED BY FAMILY – Bruce Whatley is behind the design of Joey, Play School’s new toy kangaroo.

Bruce Whatley’s children’s books have been enjoyed by a generation of youngsters.

Best known for his *Diary of a Wombat* collaboration with Jackie French, the Bundanoon, NSW, illustrator is now reaching a whole new generation.

In July, Bruce’s design for television show PlaySchool’s new toy kangaroo called Joey bounced onto television screens.

Bruce said he was honoured to receive the call to design something for the show’s 50th anniversary.

“The simplicity of the job was the hardest thing about it,” he said.

“It had to have some resemblance to the other toys and had to look homemade.”

Bruce has been writing and illustrating children’s books since he released *The Ugliest Dog in the World* in 1992.

His main inspiration is his family, with many of his stories based on their experiences.

“We’re always laughing in my house,” he said.

Bruce’s children Ben and Ellyn, now 32 and 29, influenced his early work, though he is currently inspired by his three-year-old grandson Bryce.

His artistic pursuits also led him to complete a PhD.

After living in America for four years, Bruce returned home disillusioned with his work.

“Out of frustration I picked up a pencil in my left hand and I loved it,” said the artist, who predominantly uses his right hand.

He found there were certain things he could produce better by drawing with his left hand, such as emotion.

This led him to researching the brain’s left and right sides and their effect on skills such as drawing.

While doing this research, Bruce met another man studying bi-manual drawing – the art of drawing with both hands at the same time.

“He found it helpful with Parkinson’s because it stimulates both hemispheres and parts of the brain not normally stimulated.”

Bruce encourages older people to try drawing with their non-dominant hands.

“Just start by doing marks with your left hand – you might be pleasantly surprised.”

Bruce is 62, but he says he is in denial. “As far as I am concerned, I’m 32.

“I’m at that age when you start to lose friends and family to illness. It makes you aware of your mortality.”

He can’t imagine himself retiring, though.

“As long as I can hold a pencil I’ll keep going,” he said.

Bruce is currently getting ready to release a new book, Ruben, about a 12-year-old boy living in a futuristic, derelict world.

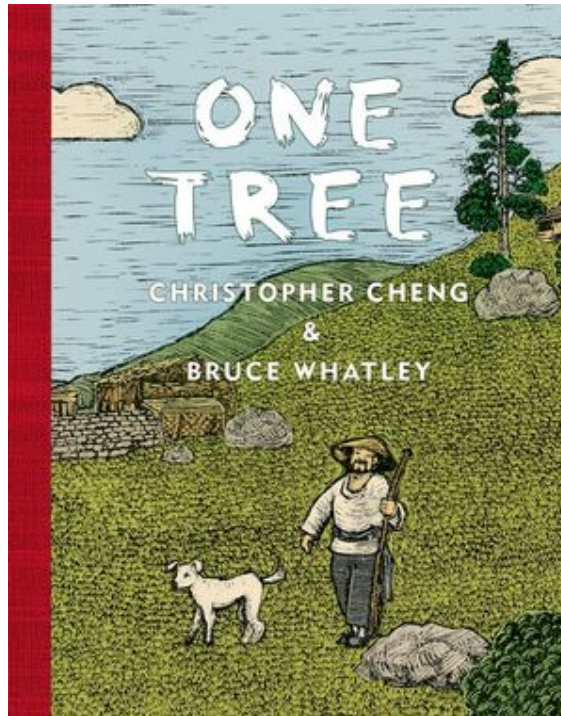
He is also working on a series with his wife Rosie Smith about the adventures of a character named Danny da Vinci, his best friend Mike Angelo, and his sister Lisa.

“Lisa moans a lot,” he laughed.

For more information about Bruce’s books, www.brucewhatley.com

Appendix B. Reviews

Crofts, Madeleine 'Review: One Tree' *Reading Time* November 9, 2019
<https://readingtime.com.au/one-tree/>



One Tree tells the story of a boy and his grandfather living in a big, bustling, busy city. Grandfather is silent and sad, although he hasn't always been this way. Before the city grew up around him, he was a young farmer connected to his land, telling stories of his days spent working in nature. The main character, a young boy, wants to connect with his Grandfather, and when he finds a plant growing in the pavement, he finds a way to reach him. Together they begin a plant revolution in their apartment, one which slowly spreads to the apartments around them.

This book is so simply but beautifully written, and the illustrations so vibrant and effective, that once I read it, I had to turn back and read it again immediately. The story of the grandfather slowly being drawn into helping his grandson with the tree was so touching. I especially appreciated when the grandfather starts talking quietly to the tree.

Bruce Whatley's illustrations are achieved digitally, but give the appearance of linocuts. This technique, in its blend of old and new technology complements the themes of the book: the old and the new can find ways to coexist.

While thematically matching similar books like Anna Walker's *Florette*, and Peter Carnavas' *Last Tree in the City*, Cheng's *One Tree* is elevated by the relationship at the centre. Teachers could draw on the environmental themes to delve into the idea of urbanisation and change, as well as discussing inter-generational relationships.

Osborne, Sue 'Review: Cheng, Christopher, ill. Bruce Whatley (*One Tree*)' *Magpies* Vol 34, No 3, July 2019, p 33.

NEW BOOKS NEW BOOKS NEW BOOKS NEW BOOKS NEW BOOKS NEW BOOKS NEW BOOKS NEW BOOKS

NUMBER THREE - JULY 2019



One Careless Night (2019)
Christina Booth, Walker Books, 48pp.
978 1 92538 185 6 \$24.99 Hb

This is a powerful and beautiful evocation of the last free months of a mother and baby thylacine in the Tasmanian forest before the ultimately heart-breaking extinction of the last thylacine in the Hobart zoo in 1936. Booth's brief and lyrical

text is accompanied by exquisitely beautiful illustrations on cover and end-pages that subtly evoke the shadowy, ferny forest habitat throughout this lovely book. This wild habitat is shatteringly contrasted with the stark conditions of a zoo cage. As a slight comfort, the book poignantly hints of growing rapport between animal and keeper throughout the years of captivity. The truth

of the relentless hunting of the thylacine in its last habitat in Tasmania is authenticated by a copy of the chilling Bounty Regulations Notice at the back of the book.

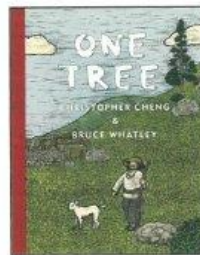
Superb in text and illustrations and highly recommended for readers of any age.

Chloe Mauger

This book will be enjoyed by children, not least for its visual and written humour. Its careful structure and ideas warrant close reading. The well-crafted text employs onomatopoeia, assonance and alliteration and is cumulative in parts. The endpapers are thought-provoking, and the outstanding comic-style illustrations are particularly notable for their use of colour. Most of the book is black and white. It opens with only the man's pink skin and yellow scissors in colour. Throughout the book the buildings and other people remain colourless but primary colours are added to the man's clothes and accessories, reflected by a bird, whose colours grow. The final pages in this fine work are a powerful affirmation of eschewing conformity and expectations of the crowd in order to be yourself.
Joy Lawn

One Tree (2019)
Christopher Cheng, ill. Bruce Whatley, Puffin, 32pp.
978 0 14 378673 3 \$24.99 Hb

Christopher Cheng's *One Tree* is a multi-layered text with a gentle story and an important message for young (and not so young) readers. Told through the eyes of a young boy, the story centres on his grandfather and how his life has changed through the years. Once a farmer in the hills of their country, Grandfather used to go to market and talk with the people of the village, and every night he would share stories with his family. Now, Grandfather is old and lives in the apartment with the boy and his parents. He is sad, silent, and stares at the fading painting of his mountain. The boy often goes to the market to buy fish, and sometimes Grandfather



joins him. When they try to find their apartment from the street below, it looks the same as all the others. One day the young boy finds a tiny tree seedling sticking out of the pavement and takes it home to Grandfather. Slowly, Grandfather begins to help the boy tend the seedling, offering advice and helping to water it. Weeks pass and Grandfather gives the boy a sec-

ond tree for his birthday—and soon their whole balcony is green and thriving. Grandfather comes to life, and his smile and the stories return. You can even see their balcony from the street, because it is so green. As more and more residents follow their example, little green patches spring up across the city as the boy and Grandfather share cuttings from the first tree. There are some great themes at play here: the connectedness of generations; the importance of family; urban green renewal; and the concept that a small change can make a big difference. *From little things, big things grow.* Bruce Whatley's digital lino cut illustrations are wonderful and successfully give the book an organic feel in an urban environment. A great addition to any library, and of interest for the cross-curricular priorities in the Australian Curriculum. A gem.
Sue Osborne

SECRETS OF A SCHOOLYARD MILLIONAIRE
NAT AMOORE

The hilarious story of one bag of cash, two best friends and a whole lot of trouble.

'Amore brings a delightful originality... This freshness includes Tess' tips - life lessons that aren't didactic but are pieces of up-front advice. This is a lively but thoughtful middle-grade fiction that kids aged 8-12 will race through with great pleasure.'
- Books + Publishing

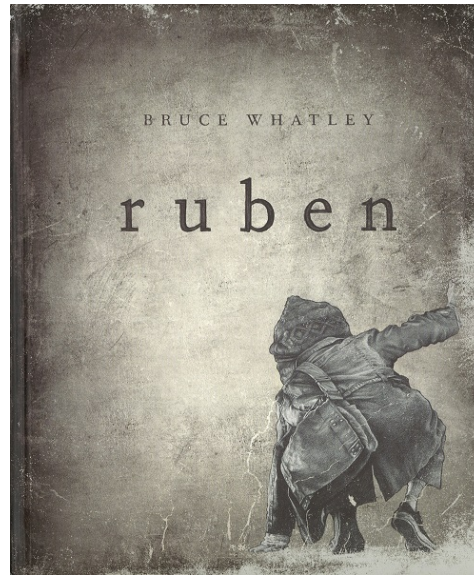
OUT NOW

natamooore.com

Look for the Puffin

Derouet, Liz 'Review: Ruben' *Reading Time* October 30, 2017

<https://readingtime.com.au/ruben/>



Ruben lives alone in his safe place, surrounded by things he has collected. He dresses and heads for Block City, walking through streets of destruction and abandonment, “*full of relics of a forgotten time, shapes without function*”. Trains arrive overloaded in Block City, leave empty. Venturing further into Block City he meets Koji, someone like him. Together, keeping to the shadows, they walk along the platforms, avoiding the inhuman Controllers, Listeners, Monoliths and other things that keep Block City serviced. He scavenges something dropped and missed by the Sweepers. After leaving Koji in her safe place, he returns to his, only to feel different after meeting Koji.

This picture book for older readers, with its futuristic setting and plot, is remarkable in many ways. The illustrations, all in black and white graphite, are detailed and intricate, the various shades working to enhance the feeling of desolation in this futuristic city. Every time I read this book I see something new and different. The verbal and visual texts blend as one. The verbal text is devoid of dialogue. This is a clever device, enabling the silence of the city in which it is set to be more emphasized and profound. The framing, perspectives and viewpoints used throughout are deliberate and very effective. After one particular page turn the reader is placed firmly in Ruben’s position, feeling just how he would feel. Told in three parts and ending with a hopeful epilogue, *Ruben* is a picture book that will not only stand the test of time but will be pored over again and again.

Highly recommended for all libraries and picture book collections for those who, like me, love picture books.

McCartney, Tania 'Review: Ruben' *Kids Book Review* 15 March 2018

<http://www.kids-bookreview.com/2018/03/review-ruben.html>

Ruben is the latest book from the talented [Bruce Whatley](#), and it's beautifully artistic.

An unusual story with stunning, black and white pencil illustrations, *Ruben* seems somewhat otherworldly, and yet not.

It's set in what appears to be the future, a place where a young boy lives and survives alone.

Ruben's life seems bleak. He has surrounded himself with items that mean something to him, and records his life in a journal he constructed from bits and pieces.

Ruben is a maker, an innovator, because he has to be. There's no other way for him to live. He's independent, a loner. In fact, there appear to be few other people in his world.

His daily routine is repetitive and includes exploratory expeditions into Block City, where he keeps to the shadows for safety.

As he traverses derelict buildings, Ruben salvages what he can, but there is little left now. And few people, although one day he meets a young girl named Koji.

They observe and evade the Controllers, Listeners, Bowler Men and Sweepers whose presence and activity is rather menacing (in some ways they made me think of the Cybermen and Daleks in Dr Who).

The end of *Ruben* may just be the beginning, as Ruben -- and Koji -- take a courageous step into the unknown.

There are multiple layers to Ruben's story, which is told over almost 100 pages, and it will tell a different story, mean something different, to each person who reads it.

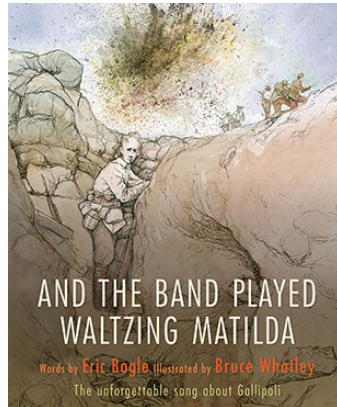
Ruben is a picture book, but is definitely for older readers. The book itself is high quality with a sturdy hard cover and embossed title.

If you'd like to know a bit more about the work that went into it, Bruce Whatley has shared some of [the process used to create *Ruben*](#) on his website. It was a process where he took sketches, photographs, and CGI to make a virtual world which was used when drawing the final illustrations.

Ruben is certainly as it is described in the promotional material, 'a triumph of Bruce Whatley's imaginative and technical skills.' An extraordinary book that should find a place, and generate conversation, in homes and classrooms everywhere.

Braxton, Barbara 'Review: And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda' *The Bottom Shelf*
April 21, 2016

<https://thebottomshelf.edublogs.org/2023/04/21/and-the-band-played-waltzing-matilda-2/>



Is there a more haunting tune about World War I than Eric Bogle's classic [*And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda*](#)?

Beginning with *Now when I was a young man, I carried me pack, and I lived the free life of a rover From the Murray's green basin to the dusty outback, well I waltzed my Matilda all over* it tells the story of a young man, almost any young man of 1915 in Australia, who took up arms to fight in the war at a time when Australia was trying to meet its quota for Britain and to not fight for King and Country branded you a coward.

They gave me a tin hat and they gave me a gun, and they marched me away to the war. Throughout the song and the journey, from the ship departing, the slaughter of Gallipoli, the hospital for the wounded and the arrival of "the crippled, the wounded, the maimed...the legless, the armless, the blind, the insane" at Circular Quay there is the poignant refrain of the band playing *Waltzing Matilda*, the iconic song that many believe should be our national anthem as it connects us in a way like no other. And finally, as an old man, he sits on his porch and watches the parade with his comrades passing before him and he knows that soon, as more old men disappear, "*Someday no one will march there at all*". But how proud and amazed would those who came home -and those who didn't- be to see that this is not a forgotten war, they are not forgotten heroes and rather than no one marching, each year the crowds at the annual commemorations wherever they are get larger.

However, the most provocative stanza is

*And the old men march slowly, old bones stiff and sore
They're tired old heroes from a forgotten war
And the young people ask, "What are they marching for?"
And I ask myself the same question."*

Written in 1972 at the height of the protests against the Vietnam War, many were wondering that aloud and as still engulfs parts of the world and threatens Australia's future, we may well all ask ourselves the same question again.

With superb illustrations by Bruce Whatley that show every emotion of the text –drawn with his left hand because he has discovered he draws "with much more emotion" with that hand –

using the restrained palette that one associates with Gallipoli, this is a book that has to be in your library's collection as it is a song that should be known by everyone before this year is done. However, this is so much more than one of Australia's leading illustrators putting pictures to an iconic tune. There are [teachers' notes](#) that provide many ideas for exploring the content, its imagery and its images and the full lyrics are available via an internet search. A memorable contribution to the collection of books on this topic.

**McCartney, Tania ‘Review: And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda’ Kids Book Review
15 April 2015**

<http://www.kids-bookreview.com/2015/04/review-and-band-played-waltzing-matilda.html>

Eric Bogle’s iconic song *And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda* is brought to a new generation in this wonderful picture book, with Bogle’s confronting and emotive words accompanied by haunting illustrations by popular children’s author and illustrator Bruce Whatley.

Originally written by Bogle in 1972, *And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda* carries a fresh significance for Australians as we approach the centenary of the landing at Gallipoli, with the final verses of the song particularly relevant:

*And the old men march slowly, old bones stiff and sore.
They’re tired old heroes from a forgotten war.
And the young people ask, ‘What are they marching for?’
And I ask myself the same question.*

*And the band played ‘Waltzing Matilda’,
And the old men still answer the call.
But as year follow year, more old men disappear.
Someday no one will march there at all.*

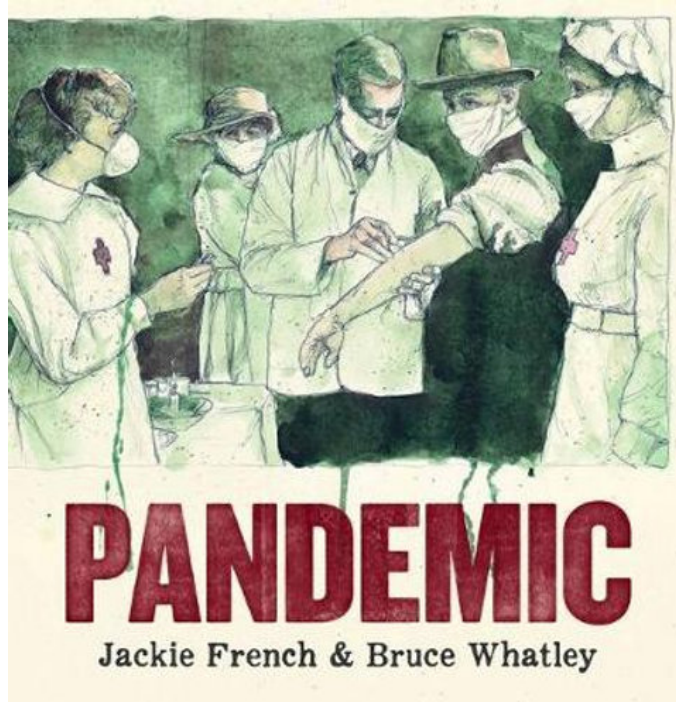
Written in response to the Vietnam War, Bogle chose to set the song historically during World War I at battlefield that connects most deeply with the national identity of Australians. The lyrics of the song and the illustrations clearly share the very significant physical, emotional and mental impact of the wartime experiences on the young men who fought at Gallipoli.

The emotional impact of the illustrations combined with the very challenging lyrics creates a picture book that is sure to spark conversations about war and the ongoing impact for soldiers after the battle is over, a topic that remains relevant for current military campaigns. While perhaps too confronting for young children, *And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda* is an excellent book for primary and high school aged readers and ideal to start conversations at school and home about the battle of Gallipoli and war in general.

You can watch a [trailer for the book](#) while combines a performance of the song with illustrations from the book and there are also [teachers' notes](#) available.

John Schumann’s song [I Was Only Nineteen](#) has also been published as a picture book (in 2014) and deals with similar themes.

Mayman, Raquel 'Review: Pandemic' *Reading Time* January 30, 2021
<https://readingtime.com.au/pandemic/>



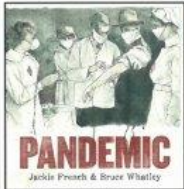
From the award-winning creators of *Flood*, *Fire*, *Cyclone* and *Drought* comes *Pandemic* – a compelling story depicting the time when the war carried the Spanish Flu across the world. At the end of the book, author Jackie French explains that her story was inspired by the stories her Grandmother shared with her about the Spanish Flu pandemic and the effects it had on children and families in her community.

The language used powerfully captures the loneliness, fear and isolation of the time yet also highlights the power of kindness, empathy, and community during times of struggle. The children and the healthy unite to keep the community moving by milking the cows, feeding the animals, tending the vegetable gardens, and baking for the unwell – in the end ‘Quarantine and kindness had won!’

Bruce Whatley has used a limited yet warm colour palette for his illustrations which effectively contrast the dark and serious times with the brightness of kindness and community.

Fitting for the current experiences of the world with the COVID-19 pandemic this book is a simple yet valuable resource for children as it shares a similar moment in history with a hopeful message.

Information Books



Pandemic (2020)

Jackie French, ill. Bruce Whatley, Scholastic, 24pp. 978 1 76097 608 8 \$24.99 Hb

Based on the stories of Jackie French's grandmother, *Pandemic* takes the reader back to the 1910s and the 'Spanish flu'—the last great pandemic—a time when, like now, those who remained well rendered kindness and care to those who were stricken.

The story begins with the spread of the flu across the world and how essential jobs were left undone as people became ill:

The land itself seemed lonely as grow-ups vanished, trying to stop the virus from spreading. Dogs wandered deserted streets. Chickens clucked, unfed. Families nursing a sick person drew their curtains together to say their house was quarantined.

Then the woman who would one day become French's great grandmother hatched a plan. She spoke to the children whose families had escaped infection.

'People can't get better if they're hungry,' she said. 'And cows must be milked, and dogs fed.' Brothers and sisters grabbed their bicycles or ponies, to travel the empty land to help.

The children began milking cows and feeding hens, harvesting produce and collecting eggs.

They wheeled big milk urns from house to house, filling jugs or bottles to be left in the shade by back doors.

The children brought produce to French's great grandmother who made huge pots of soup, banana custard and lemon barley water to soothe sore throats. These were distributed by the children to the saucerpans left on the doorsteps and verandahs of those in need. Each delivery also had newspapers, books or magazines—and a flower on top—because hearts need food too, her great grandma said.

Children will see themselves reflected in this story of kindness and hope their 'Spoonville' families in front

yards, chalk rainbows on footpaths and teddy bears in windows are some of today's methods of helping those in need. Children will also respond to the familiarity of the closed shops, theatres and schools. But the thing that they will take away from this beautiful book, the overriding theme, is that we have survived pandemics in the past, and, with community and kindness, we will do so again.

Whatley's historically accurate illustrations show a loving attention to detail. The liberal flecks and drops of colour are in the same muted tones of the main images with fine line work done in ballpoint pen. The endpapers are rich rust colours with the final pages featuring recipes for lemon barley water and banana custard.

Ironically, the muted pallet and simple washes are the result of Whatley having to complete the illustrations whilst in isolation in an Adelaide hotel during the COVID-19 pandemic. He didn't have his usual paints and materials and had to work quickly. The effect is not only lively but somehow timeless.


Pandemic is a touching book, sure to be read, loved and discussed amongst families for a long time to come. Highly recommended.

Marie Alfacci

A Short History of Nearly Everything (2020)

Bill Bryson, Puffin Books, 170pp. 978 0 241 45194 6 \$32.99 Pb

All that has changed in this special new edition, writes Bill Bryson with typical energy and enthusiasm, is that it is much shorter—though the best bits are still in—and cunningly illustrated. The cunning illustrators are Dawn Cooper who draws attractive pictures in mainly pastel colours, Daniel Long whose pictures are darker, Katie Ponder with her flat stylised figures, and Jesus Sotes who is interested in scenes of fire and disaster.

Books suitable for children up to 6-years-of-age, although many of the books will be enjoyed by older children.
Indicates an Australian book  a New Zealand book 

Only one chapter of the adult edition was deemed too difficult to include in the children's version. This is 'Mister Murk's Quarks' which I didn't fully understand either, being all about quantum laws and particle physics. Bill Bryson has divided his material into six sections with the same names as before—'Lost in the Cosmos', 'The Road to Us', but whereas the size of the earth originally had four chapters, it now has twenty. Much of what he describes is linked to a particular scientist, so meet the Reverend Bob Evans who has discovered forty-two super-novas in his backyard in the Blue Mountains, or Crick and Watson who devised the double helix of DNA in 1953. Bryson's light touch can be clearly seen in the chapter on 'Labeling Life' when he talks about Linnaeus who declared that there never had been a greater botanist or zoologist than himself.

So who is going to read this? Readers over twelve could try *A Short History of Nearly Everything* for the mood of the book is exactly the same. Readers under eight would find some of the ideas probably a bit hard to grasp, which leaves the eight to twelve group.

To quote Bryson again: *We have a universe. It is a wondrous place and beautiful too. And it was all done in about the time it takes to make a sandwich.* Moira Robinson

Australia Remembers: Customs and Traditions of the Australian Defence Force (2021)

Allison Paterson, Big Sky Publishing, 978 1 922265 23 4 \$24.99 Hb 978 1 922265 22 7 \$14.99 Pb

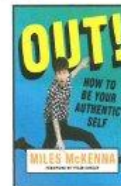
Delving into the customs and traditions of the Australian Defence Force is fascinating. Established in 1976 the 'Force' has evolved over time to defend and protect the wider community including those men and women serving around the world leaving the reader in awe of the breath and depth of their remit and their commitment to their 'job'. Anecdotes abound and superstitions are aired. Interesting facts are scattered throughout. Stories of some of the animals that 'served' on various voyages are included. [A footnote tells us that cats were banned from RAN ships in 1975 for hygiene reasons.] Presented in a question-and-answer

format embedded within the narrative as it moves through the years.

A montage of photographs together with concise descriptions of the many ways in which Remembrance Day is observed in Australia and by Australians in numerous countries around the world is included.

The various aspects of an ANZAC commemorative service are explained—including the significance of each section of the service—as the reader moves through a series of images that, as a group, represent the ANZAC day tradition from its first iteration in 1915 to today's conflicts around the world. Small gems are sprinkled throughout including stories of some of the cats that 'served' on various voyages. A bibliography and glossary makes for easy access to information for the wide readership this book will attract. Highly recommended.

Rayma Turton



Out! How to Be Your Authentic Self (2020)

Miles McKenna, Allen & Unwin, 238pp. 978 1 76087531 2 \$19.99 Pb



Miles McKenna describes himself as a queer, transgender, twenty-something-year-old guy. Having not long emerged from his teens and with a considerable following of his YouTube LGBTQ and youth advocacy, he describes his own experience of gender conflict, realizing his identity and coming-out with self-confidence, comfortable in his own skin, issues of doubt resolved. There is not a lot of specific advice but rather experiential recount and anecdotes from which some enlightenment and counsel may be taken. An appended glossary and list of Australian and NZ websites provide access to practical information. The book opens with the author describing himself growing up as a 'tomboy girl' and viewing videos on gender transition as young as 13yo, not being accepted by any of the girls because she was too boyish in

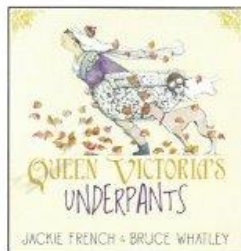
Steinberger, Kevin 'Review: French, Jackie: *Queen Victoria's Underpants* ill. Bruce Whatley' *Magpies* Vol 25, No 3, July 2010, p 29.

NEW BOOKS NEW BOOKS NEW BOOKS NEW BOOKS NEW BOOKS NEW BOOKS NEW BOOKS NEW BOOKS

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Beginner Readers

Books for young children in the process of gaining confidence in reading. This stage is approximately 5 to 8 years of age.  indicates an Australian book  a NZ Book

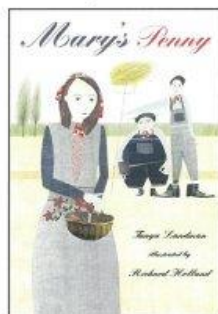


Queen Victoria's Underpants

(2010)
Jackie French, ill. Bruce Whatley,
HarperCollins, 32pp.
978 0 7322 8822 8 \$24.95 Hb

Knickers are pretty handy things for any gal to have. For instance, where would Roald Dahl's femme fatale Miss Riding Hood (*Revoltin' Rhymes*) be if she didn't have knickers in which to conceal her pistol? Well, it seems that HM Queen Victoria also recognized the benefits of underpants. The young monarch decided knickers would just be the ant's pants for a girl who enjoyed outdoor activity such as walking, riding and archery. Indeed, at the beginning of her long reign very few women, according to the author's afterword in this cheeky little piece of social history, wore underpants. Inspired by a pair of royal underpants on display in the Museum of London, Jackie French reveals the story behind the great lady's individually monogrammed and numbered underpants that she claims assisted the birth of women's liberation. The young Victorian-era narrator relates the story of how a royal footman delivered to her seamstress mother an order for underpants. Moving from sepia pictures to colourful caricatures, the children imagine the Queen in such pursuits as roller-skating sans underpants, then they go on to imagine suitable designs and fabrics such as tartan underpants for Balmoral wear, quilted for comfortable horseriding, and so on. The family is very proud of mum's manufacture of underpants by royal appointment. Such a shame that no one would ever be able to see her work, beneath all the fineries worn by Her Majesty who smiles the smile of a woman who knows that no matter what, no one will EVER see ... anything they shouldn't. Except readers of this playfully amusing picture book as

they light upon the last page, HM looking over her shoulder with a subtly wry smile inviting a lift of her skirts for a peek at bloomers VR 1. What a hoot!
Kevin Steinberger

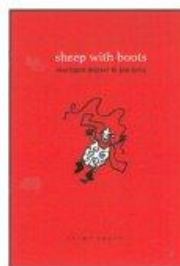


Mary's Penny

(2010)
Taryia Landman, ill. Richard Holland,
Walker Books, 40pp.
978 1 4063 1950 7 \$27.95 Hb

Long, long ago, way back in the golden, olden days... and so begins this retelling of a traditional tale about a farmer and his three children, Franz, Hans and Mary and the competition he devises to determine who should inherit the farm. Setting each of the brothers—brawny Franz and beefy Hans—the task to take a penny and buy something that will fill the whole house the farmer initially excludes the quiet but thoughtful Mary from competing—because this was long, long ago...and everyone thought that girls couldn't run farms. However when each of the brothers fails, Mary convinces her father to give her a penny to prove her worthiness and ability. Mary puts her penny to good use, filling the house with light and music and, as her father recognises, with knowledge, joy and wisdom, and, in doing so, inherits the farm. With gentle humour and without subtlety, this fable with a feminist flavour, champions the mind over muscle, the brain over brawn. While remaining true to its traditional origins, this retelling has an appealing contemporary quality, evident in both the colloquial language and the mixed media illustrative style. The informal tone, repetitive phrases and building anticipation of the story makes for an entertaining read aloud. Elegantly designed, the book's striking collage, pencil and watercolour illustrations

add another dimension to the story and quirky details to engage young readers—from Mary's wise expression to the brothers' absurd attempts, to the cheeky ever-present black cat.
Noia Allen



Sheep with Boots

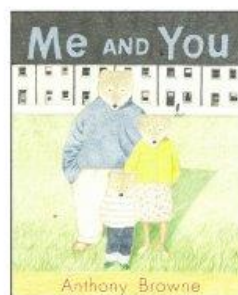
(2010)
Martigan Matter, ill. Jan Jutte,
Gecko Press, 40pp.
978 1 877467 42 4 \$19.99 Hb

Hungry Wolf schemes to lure Sheep away from her barn with the promise of adventure. Naive Sheep is entranced by the worldliness and confidence of the wolf, and gladly follows him to visit the place called Experience. Yet it is the sheep's simple, trusting nature that undermines Wolf's resolve, awakens his sense of compassion and a yearning to be a better 'person'. What a strange and unexpected book. Production values are excellent, from the red cloth-bound cover to the quality paper and strong black and white illustrations detailed in red. Essentially it is about people reaching beyond their nature to become something more than the sum of their parts. Obviously allegorical in nature, *Sheep in Boots* constantly skirts the edge of being didactic or trite, yet I feel it succeeds at maintaining its balance and is ultimately successful.
Michael Janssen-Gibson

Me and You

(2010)
Anthony Browne, Doubleday, 24pp.
978 0 385 61489 4 \$29.95 Hb

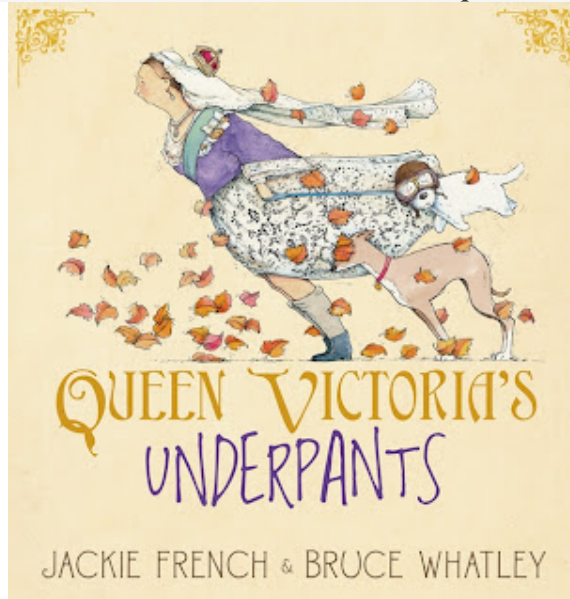
It is more than likely that preschoolers today will not have experienced the traditional 'Once upon a time ...' nursery tale of *The Three Bears* with its repetitive rhythms of the storyteller's voice. Some might have been fortunate enough to have encountered Emma Chichester Clark's retelling reviewed in *Magpies* Vol 25/1, March



2010. That version alongside this of Anthony Browne would provide a splendid stimulus for any group discussion among both children and adults. It is a tribute to the enduring value of these traditional tales that new generations of storytellers rework them in their own voice. Anthony Browne long ago received acclaim for his version in word and illustration of *Hansel and Gretel*, a Kate Greenaway Commended Book for 1981. Now, using his inimitable and highly evocative style, he has given us a tantalizing and fresh reworking of the Goldilocks story, although the name Goldilocks is never used. Only a wisp of hair beneath the small girl's hood at first, along with a dramatic tendency to explore, indicate the relationship of the girl to the old nursery character. The tale is told through the monologue of 'Me': *There's Daddy Bear, Mummy Bear and me. The action takes place after Mummy makes porridge for breakfast and the family go out for a gentle stroll in the park. The middle-class family, dressed in comfortable human attire is drawn in soft pastels as they stroll through what could be a suburban housing estate, their facial expressions indicating self-satisfaction until the inevitable astonished reactions when they return home. One wonderful touch comes when Daddy decides to take a look upstairs whispering, After you Mummy.* The bear's side of the story is told on the right-hand side of each spread while the little girl's adventure is told wordlessly but through a series of sepia frames: actively strolling with her Mummy, then chasing a runaway balloon that leads her to the home of the three bears. There, curiosity gets the better of her and the episodes then follow pretty much the traditional pattern of the ancient storyline.

McCartney, Tania 'Review: Queen Victoria's Underpants' *Kids Book Review* 8 February 2011

<http://www.kids-bookreview.com/2011/02/review-queen-victorias-underpants.html>



Jackie French once again perfectly combines history and fabulously fun storytelling in *Queen Victoria's Underpants* - a tale at the tail end of one of the world's finest monarchs.

Who'd have thought Queen Victoria would have been in need of knickers and in so doing, change the course of history for women's undergarments everywhere?

And where does a reigning monarch gain access to a year's supply of knickers? Well, her people approach the best undergarment seamstress in all of England, of course.

Told through the eyes of a young girl whose mother is tasked with sewing the royal underpants, this gorgeous story lifts the royal skirts and reveals all... how 52 pairs (one for each week of the year... ugh!) of delicately sewn and embroidered, long-legged panties, are created and delivered to a grateful Queen.

On the way, we are treated to the most delicately-drawn and heart-warming pictures by the masterful Bruce Whatley, showing us several (and hilarious) undergarment options for Queen Victoria should her new knickers not quite be up to scratch. My very favourite is the hot air balloon underpants so the monarch can float over her kingdom and survey all. The looks on the faces of Her Majesty's dogs is priceless.

Beautifully designed and laid out with a cheeky ending, this is a truly beautiful book. Masterfully written and illustrated by a dynamic Aussie duo, *Queen Victoria's Underpants* combine my personal love of history, gorgeous illustrations and humour all into one memorable package, making it one of my favourite picture books for 2010.

Also memorable for the fact that the royal court only washed a few times a year!

Wonderful.