

It's Time All Possums Went To Bed

AUTHOR

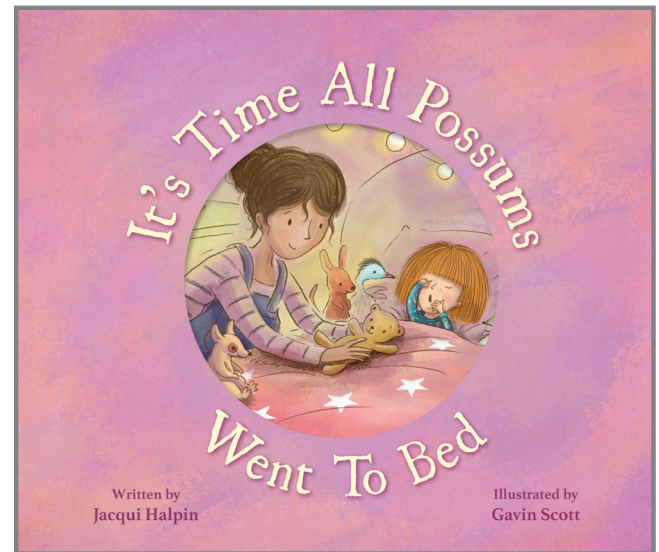
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ILLUSTRATOR

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SYNOPSIS

Mummy says it's time for bed, but Milly has other ideas! She's a possum nibbling juicy grapes and pears. She's a bilby digging outdoors, an echidna wiggling on the ground, an emu pecking at seeds and a kangaroo bouncing around. But even animals have to go to bed sometimes...

It's Time All Possums Went to Bed is a playful and loving ode to bedtime routines, featuring upbeat rhyme from Jacqui Halpin and gorgeous art from Gavin Scott.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jacqui is a former registered nurse, tuckshop convenor and now author. Her passion for children's books came when reading bedtime stories to her now adult children. She completed a Diploma of Professional Children's Writing in 2000 and has been attending writing workshops, conferences and festivals regularly ever since. Jacqui has two picture books published, *Parmesan the Reluctant Racehorse* (2017) and *Where's Lucky?* which was shortlisted for the Speech Pathology Book of the Year Awards in 2019. Her short stories appear in *The School Magazine*, and in anthologies by Creative Kids Tales and Stringybark publishing.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Gavin was born in Wiltshire and raised in rural Dorset, UK. He was fascinated by the natural world from an early age and spent much of his childhood drawing and painting animals and birds. He later studied BA Natural History Illustration at Bournemouth Arts University. Working as an illustrator in-house for a number of years, honing his skills in character design, his style gradually evolved from scientific into children's picture books. He now lives in Somerset with his wife, who is also an illustrator, and their growing family.

KEY THEMES

BEDROOM ROUTINES

When Milly's mum tells her it's time for bed, Milly tries to delay as long as possible. While pretending to be different animals, she plays games all over the house and in the garden. This might have stopped her from going to bed straight away, but it also tires Milly out to the point that she is so tired that she falls asleep. Mummy goes along with Milly's

playfulness, but she's also subtly reinforcing Milly's usual bedtime routines, including having a light snack, teeth-brushing, having a bath, and then being tucked up in bed. This book is a great tool for discussing the routines that we have before bed, and for recognising all the ways that we might try to distract or delay our parents at bedtime!

FAMILY BONDING

Milly and Mummy have a very special relationship, which is shown throughout the book. When Milly plays and pretends to be different animals, her mum joins in and plays along with her. Mummy still wants Milly to go to bed, but she is also happy to have fun and enjoy quality time with Milly in the lead-up to this. We only ever see Milly and Mummy and so we can assume that there are no other family members. This book can be used to discuss the different types of families that we have, and the ways that we play and interact with our families (especially at bedtime).

AUSTRALIAN ANIMALS

We begin with Milly having a tea party with her stuffed toys, which are all Australian animals. Then, Milly pretends to be each of these animals. While this book is not about real animals, it celebrates these animals all the same. We subtly learn a few things about each of the animals that Milly pretends to be, such as how they look, how they move and how they behave. This book is an excellent starting point for discussing native animals and opening conversation about other Australian animals and their habitats and behaviours.

BEFORE READING

- Have a look at the front cover. What do you think this book will be about?
- Milly is surrounded by animal toys. Can you name the animals? Which one is the possum?
- Did you know that 'possum' can be a nickname? Do you ever get called 'possum'? What nicknames do you have?
- How do you feel when you look at this book?
- When you look at the front cover, you will see the cover has a window that shows a picture behind it. What do you think of this window?
- What time do you go to bed? What routines do you have before you go to bed?
- Who tucks you into bed at night? Do they read you a story before you go to sleep?

DISCUSSION IN KEY CURRICULUM AREAS COMPREHENSION

- Milly is having a tea party at the start of this book! Who attends her tea party? Which toy at the tea party is not an animal that Milly pretends to be?
- Have a look at the sky when you're flipping through the book. What colour is the sky? Does it change from the beginning to the end of the book? What might that mean?
- What animal does Milly first pretend to be?
- Where do Mummy and Milly run when Milly is pretending to be a possum?
- Mummy and Milly have a pet! What type of animal is the pet? What colour is it? Does the pet join in with any of their games?
- Where do Mummy and Milly go when Milly is pretending to be a bilby?
- What are Mummy and Milly doing in the garden?
- What is in the wheelbarrow when Mummy and Milly are in the garden?
- What other animals are likely to be in the garden, even if they're not shown in the picture?
- When Milly is done with being a bilby, she says she has 'sharp and spiky spines'. Did you guess which animal she was pretending to be? Why/why not?
- Do Mummy and Milly eat a healthy evening snack before bed? What do they eat? Which animal is Milly pretending to be when they eat the snack?
- What kinds of objects can you see in Mummy and Milly's house? Which ones belong to Mummy or to Milly? Are

there similar things in your house?

- What room is Milly in when she's pretending to be an emu?
- We don't see Milly take a bath, but she looks like she's had one! What clues can you find that suggest she has had her evening bath?
- Does Milly brush her teeth before bed?
- Milly is very energetic as a kangaroo! What does Milly do when she pretends to be a roo?
- Why does Mummy say that Milly 'MUST' go to bed after Milly has been a kangaroo? How is Mummy feeling in this moment? What clue shows you this?
- Why does Milly pretend to be a wombat at the end? Do you know where wombats like to sleep?

LITERACY

- Which words rhyme in this book? Are rhyming words in the middle of the lines or at the end of each line? There is also steady repetition of some of the rhyme. For example, 'bed' and 'said'. Can you find other repeated rhymes in this book?
- There are lots of verbs in this book, like 'nibbled' and 'chased'. Can you find other verbs?
- Find the page that says 'wiggled' and 'giggled'. This is one use of assonance. Can you find another example on this page?
- Milly describes each animal she is pretending to be. For example, when she's a bilby she is 'small and grey'. Can you find other adjectives that Milly uses to describe the other animals she pretends to be?

NUMERACY

- How many animals does Milly pretend to be? Which one was your favourite?
- How many cups can you count when Milly is having a tea party with her toys?
- Milly's pyjama top has a rainbow on it. How many stripes are in a real rainbow? Does Milly's pyjama top show a real rainbow?
- How many times do we see Milly's teddy in this book?
- Milly has lots of toys! Can you count and list the toys that we see in this book, excluding the animal toys like the possum and echidna?
- In Milly's bedroom, how many books are on her bookshelves? Can you guess what any of them are about?
- Are there any other animal toys in Milly's bedroom? How many? What are they?
- How many times do we see Milly and Mummy's pet cat?

ACTIVITIES

- Do you LOVE having a bath in the evening? Are you allowed a DELICIOUS snack or a drink before you go to bed? Do you feel HAPPY when someone reads you a story? Do you like to be tucked up and warm and SNUG in your bed? Think about your favourite part of the evening and draw a picture of it!
- An acrostic poem is a poem in which the first letters of each line spell out a word. Our poem could spell 'BEDTIME' or just 'BED' for short! Have a go at writing a poem all about bedtime. You can make it rhyme or decide not to use rhyme. You could make it funny or serious. Be as creative as you like! If you prefer, you could choose your own word to spell out instead.
- We learn about many Australian animals in this book! Milly pretends to be a possum, a bilby, an echidna, an emu, a kangaroo and a wombat. Choose your favourite Australian animal and then pretend to have been it for the day. Can you write a diary entry describing all the fun things you did during the day before you go to bed? Write it using the below prompts. Perhaps you'd like to team up with a friend and write your diary entry together. You might need to ask your teacher for some hints about what your animal likes to eat and do during the day!
 - Today was a day!
 - In the morning, after I woke up, I ...
 - For lunch I ate ...

- After lunch I went ...
- For dinner I ate ...
- My favourite thing to do before going to sleep is ...
- I am looking forward to tomorrow because ...

FINAL REFLECTIONS

- Which was your favourite part of this story and why?
- Do you ever try to stay up later than your bedtime?
- Which animal would you pretend to be if you were Milly?
- Would you recommend this book to a friend?