

Miss Understood

AUTHOR

KATHRYN APEL

ILLUSTRATOR

BEAU WYLIE

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower Primary



SYNOPSIS

*I'm the wolf, Miss Understood.
You think I'm bad, but I am good.
Those Little Pigs told you a porker—
made it sound like I'm a stalker!*

Is the wolf really as BIG and BAD as she seems? Or is she just . . . misunderstood? An irresistible story about being accepted for who you really are.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kathryn Apel is a born-and-bred farm girl who's scared of cows. She lives among the gum trees, cattle and kangaroos on a Queensland grazing property. Her previous books include the rollicking rural rhymers, *This is the Mud!* and the verse novel, *Bully on the Bus*, which won the 2014 Australian Family Therapists' Award for Children's Literature: Younger Readers. Kat loves pumping poetry because she can flex her muscles across other genres, to bend (and break) writing rules. A trained teacher, Kathryn shares her passion for words at schools and festivals around the globe.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Growing up in a bushy house in Sydney, Beau Wylie began drawing ridiculous creatures and colourful worlds from the moment he could grasp a pencil. After graduating from the University of NSW with honours in Fine Art, Beau installed shows in art galleries, serviced boats on Sydney Harbour, and 'worked' in a delightful Surry Hills bookshop where he plotted a fanciful future as a children's book author while foraging through the kids section. He now lives and works as an artist in Newcastle with his wonderful partner Bianca and preposterously cute Jack Russell Rowan.

STUDY NOTES

- Before reading the story, as a class discuss the book cover and title. Some things to include in your discussion could be:
 - What can you see happening on the cover of this book?
 - What does it mean when someone says that they are being misunderstood?
 - What does the name, Miss Understood, imply about them?
 - Who do you think this book is about?

- What do you predict could happen in this story?
- Why did the house made of straw blow down? Do you think this is believable? Why/why not?
- What, in your opinion, was the biggest mistake that the wolf made in the story?
- Do you think that the whole situation could have been easily avoided? If so, how; and if not, why not?
- What does it mean when we say someone has told 'a porker'. Where does this saying come from, and why is it extra-funny when the wolf uses it when talking about the pigs?
- Look carefully at the pictures of the straw house both before and after it has been blown down. Using the pictures for reference, experiment with designing and building a model house of your own using straw or grass for the walls, and twigs for the frame. Once your house is built, write an illustrated reflection piece sharing your design process, and commenting on what went well, what you had to change because it didn't work, and how you feel about your finished product.
- Have a big bad wolf house-blowing-down competition. Carefully build houses from folded paper or playing cards, and then compete to see who is the best at blowing them down. Possible competition categories could be: fastest at blowing down houses; strongest blow from the furthest away; most accurate blowing-down; and most destructive blowing-down. You can also include any other categories that your class can think of!
- If you told an unwelcome visitor to go away, how would you feel if they then broke into your home by a back door, a window, or down the chimney?
- Choose one of the scenes from the story, and create a two-panel artwork for the same scene, one panel showing events as they occurred according to the wolf, and the second panel showing the events according to the pigs' point of view.
- Having read the entire story, do you feel sorry for the wolf, or do you think that the little pigs' story is still more believable? Why do you think this? Write a one or two paragraph piece arguing in favour of either the pigs' version, or the wolf's.
- What does the saying 'A wolf in sheep's clothing' mean? Is it being used to mean the same thing in this story? Why/why not and in what way?
- How do you think the wolf got hold of all the sheep's wool for their disguise? Write the story of the sheep giving their wool to the wolf from the point of view of the sheep. Illustrate your story, and share it with the class.
- Look carefully at the end papers of the story. What can you see happening in all the little pictures? What information do they give us about the main character in the story and their daily life and behaviour?