

Wild and Free

AUTHOR

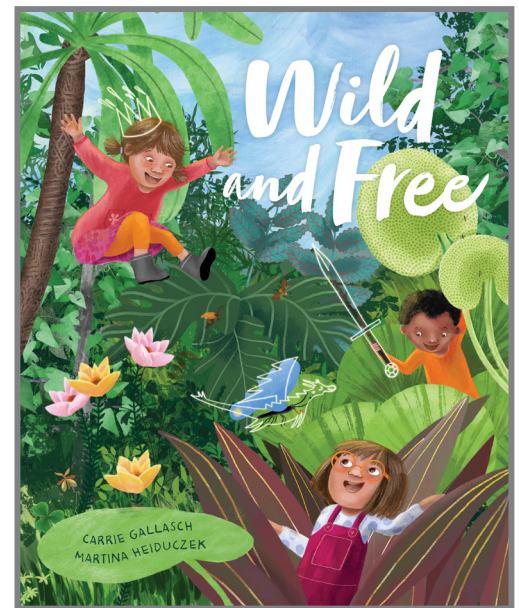
CARRIE GALLASCH

ILLUSTRATOR

MARTINA HEIDUCZEK

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SYNOPSIS

Get up! Come on! Join the Crew! We're off to play like wild ones do!

It's time to go on an adventure in the great outdoors, where children can be wild and free. These young adventurers trek through the forest; they build forts and climb trees; they go over hills and creeks; they see clouds of butterflies; and they make a lot of noise! At the end of the day, everyone comes home, dirty and exhausted, for a bath and to go to bed, so they can do it all again tomorrow!

Wild and Free is a poetic, colourful celebration of the imaginative possibilities in spending time with nature, and a reminder that all children should get some wild time!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Carrie Gallasch is an early childhood teacher in rural South Australia. Her passion for children's literacy began twelve years ago, when she first experienced reading aloud to her students. Now with children of her own, Carrie has an excuse to follow them barefoot in the garden and be inspired by the mischief they get up to. She loves nothing more than a great story and a great coffee, but not necessarily in that order.

Carrie's picture book *Market Day* (illustrated by Hannah Sommerville) was shortlisted for the 2023 CBCA Awards, while her debut picture book, *Stitches and Stuffing* (illustrated by Sara Acton), was a notable book in the 2018 CBCA Awards.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Martina Heiduczek grew up in a small fishing village on the Baltic Sea in Germany, where she spent most of her time drawing, reading or galloping on her Shetland pony through the forests with flying piggy tails. These days she is an illustrator and lives in Australia. With a passion for colour and textures, Martina creates images that evoke emotion and thought in young minds. Her works are inspired by nature, people, places and the moving as well as the silly things she sees around . . . magic is everywhere!

THEMES

- Nature
- Play
- Creativity

- Friendship
- Siblings
- Environment
- Community

STUDY NOTES

THEMES

- The children in the story dream of being wild and free—why do you think this is so important?
- *Wild and Free* encourages nature play and imagination. Neither the text nor the illustrations are too prescriptive, so readers are able to bring their own imaginations to the story. Equally importantly, the story shows that outdoor play is about freedom, and doesn't require any planning or equipment—just friends, imagination and a willingness to explore. Invite kids to share their experiences of being outside. Perhaps some of them feel afraid of adventures like this. Discuss why we can feel nervous about going on outdoor adventures, and ways that we can be in nature and still feel comfortable. This is also a good opportunity to start discussions about caring for nature—it's fun to play in, but also home to all of the creatures that you see in the book. Students might like to talk about some of the creatures they find in their wild spaces, and how we can care for the environment to ensure that our play doesn't disrupt their homes.

WRITING STYLE

- A perfect rhyme (also called a true rhyme) is when two words make exactly the same sound—for example, 'mud' and 'thud'. Onomatopoeia is when a word makes the sound of the thing it's describing—it's used a lot in superhero comics! 'Roar' is one example. In *Wild and Free*, the author uses both of these poetic techniques—what other examples of each can you find in the story?
 - Now make up one of your own for each.
- The story uses a lot of verbs to capture the excitement of adventure. A verb is a doing word—'march', 'romp' and 'breathe' are some. What others can you find?
- Think about your favourite place to be wild and free. Describe it. Now make a list of five adjectives to capture some of the things you do there.

COMPREHENSION

- What are the kids in the book going to do?
- Where do they find adventure?
- What sounds do the kids make when they land in the mud? What sounds do you think you might make?
- What are some of the activities that the kids do on their adventure?
- Why do you think some of the pictures are drawn as white outlines? What does this tell you?
- What might you find in the creek?
- How is the home different from the outside world?
- What makes you feel wild and free?

EXPLORING THE STORY THROUGH PICTURES

- Notice how the wild outdoors creeps into the pictures even from the first page of the book. What are some of the details on the first page that symbolise growth (and not just wild growth!)?
- As the children set off on their adventure, observe how the illustrations start to become wilder too, taking over more of the page. The vines curl across the page, the mud is splattered. Discuss why the illustrator might have done this.
 - How do you think they're trying to make you feel?
- You might also look at the way light is used in the book to symbolise the time of day, and the difference between the freedom of adventures, and the comforts of home. Or the way that the illustrator has captured the imaginative elements of the story using white outlines.

ACTIVITIES

- The young adventurers build a fort and fly their flag. Design a flag for their fort and an outfit for their adventures—use your imagination! You can craft your idea or draw it.
- Young adventurers might need an adventuring kit—make up a kit with 3–5 items that you might take with you on an outdoor adventure.
- Photocopy one of the pages in the book and use a white crayon or pencil to draw your own imaginative elements over the top of the pictures, just like the illustrator has!
- Who would you take with you on your favourite adventure? What would you do? Come up with an activity that you and your friends could do outside that teaches you something new about nature. Make an invitation to ask your friends to come with you.

AUTHOR OF NOTES
BEC KAVANAGH