

Our House

AUTHOR

TRUDIE TREWIN

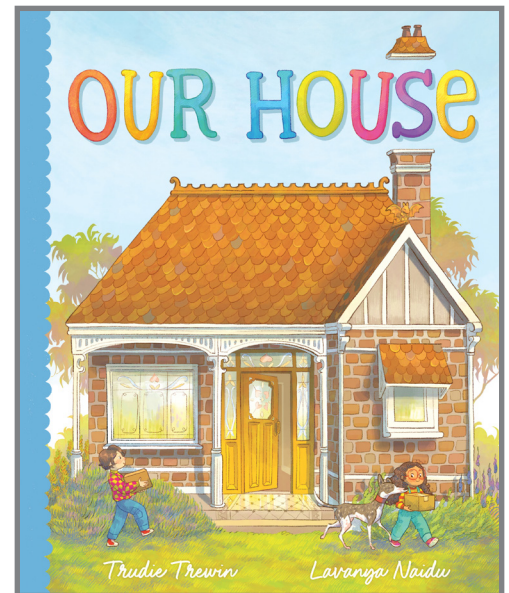
ILLUSTRATOR

LAVANYA NAIDU

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower Primary



SYNOPSIS

We share a hug, with shiny eyes. 'I love you, house,' I cry. We all hold hands and walk through the door . . .

One home can tell many stories in this heartwarming, reversible tale about family, togetherness and moving on to new beginnings.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Trudie Trewin is an Australian writer who lives near Cairns. She is the author of the best-selling picture book *I've Lost My Kisses* and *Wibbly Wobbly Street*, which was a Notable Book in the 2011 CBCA Awards. *Summer Blue*, illustrated by Marjorie Crosby-Fairall, was a CBCA Notable book in 2023. When she's not writing or reading, she enjoys cycling, running, hiking and watching disaster movies.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Lavanya Naidu is a storyteller with a passion for building worlds and developing characters with heart. She is a graduate in animation film design and has worked on games, animation production (television and film) and illustrated several children's books.

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 are the people in the cover artwork doing, and why do you think they might be doing this?
 - What does the phrase *Our House* make you think of?
 - As a class, create a list of words that share your emotional response to the phrase *Our House*.
 - What can you see happening on the back cover of the book?
 - What do you think is likely to happen in this story?
 - Read the back cover of the book. Do you want to change your answer to what you think might happen? If so, why and in what ways?
 - Who do you think might be the main character in this story?
- Look carefully at the front end-pages of the story. What can you see on the keyring? How has the title of the book been written? Create a new title page for this story with a picture of your home on the keyring, and the title written

in a fancy font of your choice. You can do this on a computer or by hand, or you can combine a computer-created and printed font for the title with a hand-drawn picture of your home as a keyring.

- As a class, discuss what has happened in this story. Some of the things to include in your discussion might be:
 - What is happening at the start of the story?
 - What is the little girl with glasses and her family doing today?
 - Why would everything in the house be packed into boxes and taken out?
 - What words can you use to describe the feelings that the people in the first half of the story are having?
 - What happens in the second half of the story?
 - How is the second half of the story different from the first half?
 - What is special about the words that the author has used to write this two-part story?
 - How does the author make the same words seem very different? (Hint: Look at the punctuation.)
 - How does the second half of the story make you feel? What is your emotional reaction to reading about the family with two little kids moving into the house?
- How does the little girl at the start of the story feel about packing up and leaving the house? How do you think the adults feel and why do you think this?
- How does the little kid who moves into the house feel about it? How can you tell what they are thinking and feeling? How did reading the second half of the story make you feel about the events in the book?
- Would you like to live in the house in the story? What about the house do you like? Is there anything about the house that you dislike?
 - Design your ideal house, the one that you would love to live in, in a perfect world. Be as inventive and creative as you wish, remember, this is an ideal house, it doesn't need to be completely possible in reality. Create a labelled floorplan for your Ideal House, in the middle of the page, and then around the edges draw the inside view of several of the rooms. Remember to label all the different parts of your drawing so that people know what they are looking at. On a separate page, sketch an exterior view of your house—show the viewer what it looks like from the outside. You might want to include the surrounding neighbourhood and any yard, or you might prefer to show your house in solitary splendour. As a class, share your designs with each other, and talk about what features everyone liked the most, and what features were only important to one or two class members.
- Have you ever moved house? Or maybe you've moved more than once! As a class, discuss all the different feelings that can come with moving to a new home. Individually, create an artwork that shares your feelings about the idea of moving to a new home.
- Where do you think the little girl at the start of the story might have moved to? Why do you think that her family has decided to move to a new home? Write and illustrate a short story sharing your ideas about where she has moved to and what she will find there. Title your story 'My New Home'.
- Can you write a two-part story where the words are the same in each part, but when you reverse them for the second part, the meaning of what is happening is the opposite or inverse? Decide on a topic as a class to write about, then in pairs or small groups try to create a two-part reversible story like the one in *Our House*. After you have done your best, discuss the task, what was difficult, what was easy, and how you felt while attempting it.
- Some of the pages describing events in this story change their meaning when you reverse the order of the sentences or phrases. In small groups look through the book and try to find at least two clear examples where reversing the order of the phrases or sentences, changes the meaning of the whole page.
- The book starts with the phrases 'In my house. On my bed.', and ends with the phrases 'On my bed. In my house.' Both the first and last pictures show a small child safe, warm, and happy in their bed at home. What kind of feelings do the artwork and words bring with them at both the beginning and end of the story? Is the meaning of these two phrases reversed when you reverse the order, or is it the same? How do you feel when you think about being safe and warm in bed at home? Draw or paint a picture of the cosiest, safest, warmest bed you can think of, that you would love to have for your own.

AUTHOR OF NOTES

RAE CARLYLE