

Jeremy
Chris Faille / Danny Snell
TEACHER NOTES
By Janet McLean

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Author: **Chris Faille** was born in 1952. From the age of 16 he wanted to be a policeman, but began his career as a Design Draftsman, specialising in large marine installations. In 1978 he joined the Victorian police force, rising to the position of a prosecutor and then investigator with the Sex Offences Unit. In 2012 he was appointed to help establish the first Family Violence Unit in East Gippsland. He lives in a 100 year old solid brick Federation house in Bairsndale which he and his wife Jenni have lovingly restored. They share it with a German Shepherd, two cats, inside birds, outside birds, tropical fish, gold fish, tortoises and green tree frogs. *Jeremy* is his first book for children, and is based on a true story.

Illustrator: **Danny Snell** grew up in Adelaide, and trained at the Central School of Art and the University of South Australia and graduated with a Bachelor of Design (Illustration) in 1992. His first major picture book *Whose Tail Is That?* written by Christine Nicholls, was shortlisted in 2000 for the Children's Book Council of Victoria's Crichton Award for first time children's book illustrators. His second book, the best selling *Bilby Moon* written by Margaret Spurling, was nominated as a Notable Book for 2001 and shortlisted for the 2001 Kids Own Australian Literature Award (KOALA). Since then he has illustrated *The Long Way Home* by Emily Rodda, *Scary Bear* by Tania Cox and *Seadragon Sea*, also by Margaret Spurling. His two most recent books for Working Title Press, *Crocodile River* by Diana Lawrenson and *You are My Special Baby* by Carol Chataway, both received Commendations (children's story category) for the Whitley Awards. In between books, Danny works as a freelance illustrator for a number of newspapers, magazines and design studios around the country. He lives in Adelaide with his partner Louise and his two daughters, Leilani and Daisy.

SYNOPSIS Tiny kookaburra, Jeremy, is only a few days old when he falls out of his nest and is brought home by the family cat. Luckily, Jeremy is a fighter and he loves to eat. Little by little he grows stronger and stronger, until the time comes when he must say goodbye. This delightful story about raising and rearing a baby kookaburra is based on a true account.

WRITING STYLE In *Jeremy*, Chris Faille uses a sequential, descriptive writing style. The story moves through a series of events from '*the night our cat brought a baby bird into the lounge room*' to the day when Jeremy flew away – '*That was the last time we saw Jeremy.*' The story introduces children to the concept of the passing of time, as, over days and weeks Jeremy grows and changes.

Jeremy
Chris Faille / Danny Snell
TEACHER NOTES
By Janet McLean

Chris Faille weaves specific time-related words and phrases throughout the story – *last year... One night... every four hours... By the time he was four weeks old.* The passage of time is also conveyed by descriptions of Jeremy as he changes from ‘*very ugly, with a big beak, big bulgy closed eyes and no feathers*’ to ‘*the time he started to fly around,*’ and finally, ‘*flew away.*’ Other concepts in the story include how living things change as they grow and develop: ‘*by the time he was four weeks old he looked just like a grown-up kookaburra*’; and caring for wildlife, until they can eventually return to their own habitat.

ILLUSTRATIONS Danny Snell used acrylic paints on MDF board for the illustrations in *Jeremy*. He usually paints on white watercolour paper, but enjoyed using the board with its ‘nice sturdy surface’ and its light brown colour. The first and last pages are single-page spreads. All of the other pages are double-page spreads. Using this design layout Danny Snell has kept the composition of each illustration clean and simple. Every drawing represents a single moment or incident in Jeremy’s life, and focuses on depicting ‘the real life’ story of Jeremy. Danny Snell says that “*As a consequence of keeping the compositions simple I seem to have flattened out my paintings also. For example, in the past when painting a sky I would have blended in other colours and tones, and included elements like clouds, this time I’ve kept the backgrounds quite flat.*” The use of the double-page spread has also allowed the illustrator to move back from the close-ups of the indoor scenes to a broader landscape view in the later drawings. Danny Snell says that as the illustrations evolved the willy wagtails started to act as a kind of light hearted subplot. In this way he is adding another layer of meaning to the story. He has used an ant on a couple of the spreads to add another little layer, as well as providing a sense of scale and demonstrating how much Jeremy has grown over a certain period.

DISCUSSION POINTS AND ACTIVITIES

- This is a wonderful book to read with small groups of children.
- Show the children the cover. Tell the children this is a story about an Australian bird. Do they know what kind of bird it is? You can tell them it makes a sound like this (laugh like a kookaburra; or ask if they can laugh like a kookaburra). Ask why the kookaburra would be inside sitting on an armchair.
- Show the children the title page. What is their response? What do they think about Jeremy bird watching a willy wagtail on a laptop?

Jeremy
Chris Faille / Danny Snell
TEACHER NOTES
By Janet McLean

- Read the text on each page, allowing time to talk about what is happening, and how the illustrator depicts the text. e.g talk about the position of each character on the second page, what does each character look like, and what they are doing
- Read expressively, changing the tone of your voice and the pace of your reading
- Encourage the children to join in by pausing at times so that they can anticipate and say the next word
- Find out more about kookaburras -
 - A good starting point will be the endpapers of *Jeremy*
 - What is their distribution across Australia?
 - What is their natural habitat?
 - What do they eat?
 - Do they make a nest?
 - What bird family do they belong to?
 - What other birds belong to their family?
 - Are they noisy? How?
- Make a wall chart or a frieze, and / or a book with pictures of kookaburras
 - Use some of the illustrations from *Jeremy*, and also photographs of kookaburras at various stages of life
- This could lead to finding out about other Australian birds that are local to your area.
 - Ask children to look out for birds in your area, and find out what they are, and more about their habits.
 - Make a wall chart and/or a book with the children's own drawings and paintings, and photos of Australian birds that are seen in your local area
- Use *Jeremy* to deepen the children's knowledge of Australia by "engaging with the world's oldest continuous living cultures of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples" (Australian Curriculum).
 - Search for Aboriginal stories about Kookaburras and other birds that are local to your area. These may be books or stories on the Internet. Share these with the children.
 - Use these to highlight the interconnected aspects of Country/Place, People and Culture that Aboriginal people share through their stories.
 - Compare and contrast stories and illustrations from different Aboriginal groups across Australia

Jeremy
Chris Faille / Danny Snell
TEACHER NOTES
By Janet McLean

- Here is a link to one of these stories <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x60-DA7UQ0E>
- Ask the children to draw the characters from the story on card. Cut out the drawings and make them into puppets. Use these to tell the story of *Jeremy*
- Help the children find out more about rescuing and caring for wildlife. There are organizations in each state that can provide this information.
- Follow this link for more information <http://www.fnpw.org.au/resources/wildlife-carer-arescue-groups-australia>
- Find other books that have been illustrated by Danny Snell. These include: **Seadragon Sea** Margaret Spurling, **The Long Way Home** Emily Rodda, **You Are My Special Baby** Carol Chataway, **Crocodile River** Diana Lawrenson (all published by Working title Press).