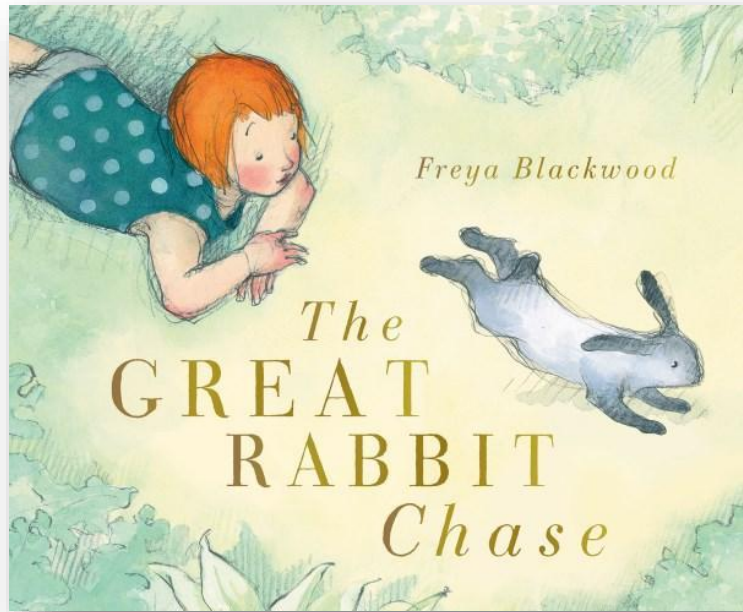


The Great Rabbit Chase

Author/Illustrator
Freya Blackwood



Gumboots is an adorable family pet, but he has a mischievous side. He loves to escape and wreak all kinds of havoc! The whole town bands together to find this cheeky bunny in a story that celebrates what it means to live in a community and a reminder that life is full of surprises.

THEMES: animals, family, community

TEACHER NOTES

- The endpapers at the beginning and end of the book are a board game. Create your own little game pieces using origami and race to get to the end to find Gumboots!
- At the beginning of the book the mum goes out to buy a pair of gumboots and buys a rabbit instead! Have you ever gone shopping for one thing and come home with something completely different?
- Gumboots is the family pet. Does your family have a pet? What's its name? How do you feed and take care of it?

- In the book the main characters family is just her and her mum. Draw your family tree and include as many or as few people as you want to. All families look different, whether it's just you and your mum, or many, many more people.
- Freya Blackwood, the illustrator, uses watercolours to make the illustrations for her books. Using watercolours paint a picture of your family pet, or if you don't have a pet, paint a cute animal like Gumboots!
- People from the community band together to help find Gumboots. Lots of communities do things together. As a class attend a community organised event such as a reading at your local council library or a community garden.
- After you've read the book, go back to the map on the endpapers. See if you can spot the places shown in the book, such as Edith's house, the Kirkpatrick's backyard and the main street.
- At the end of the book Gumboots has baby rabbits and the little girl and her mum take them home. Eventually the animals would go to loving homes. A lot of animals in pounds and rescue shelters are there because of these kinds of situations. Host a fundraiser like a bake sale or something similar and donate the money raised to your local animal rescue shelter.
- Look at the second spread where they show Gumboots' dugout and how he got out of the backyard. Look at the backyard drawn. There's a tree, a potted plant, some tables and chairs, a dog kennel. Illustrate your own drawing of your backyard or balcony and everything that is in it.
- Use the endpapers for inspiration and draw a birds-eye view of your local area. Using cardboard boxes and paddle pop sticks then build a 3D model.
- Make up an imaginary pet, it can be anything you like! Brainstorm adjectives and verbs describing your imaginary pet. Then perform what you've come up with in front of the class or partner. Write a descriptive paragraph about your animal. What would it look like? What does it eat? How would it move? Can it fly?

- Use the imaginary pet created above and use it in a story where you are the main character. In pairs storyboard your adventures and come up with a title for your magnificent tale! Write a story.

WRITING STYLE

This is the first book that Freya Blackwood has both illustrated and written. She was inspired by her own community and how integral they have been in her life and how she raises her children. The book is a celebration of the community that inspired Freya.

ILLUSTRATING STYLE

Freya Blackwood uses pencils and watercolours to create gentle illustrations for her books. In her blog she explains the three phases she goes through when creating her illustrations. The first stage is that of excitement, filled with interpretations and anything in the text that inspires. The images are scrawled and rather messy. The second phase, Freya explains, is when those images are drawn again, but with more detail, to see how they sit next to the text. The third stage, is once again drawing the images, but in tight solid lines, with detail. After that, she colours them in, using water colours.

AUTHOR MOTIVATION

Freya Blackwood is a single mum living in a small country town near Orange in central NSW. The book is based off her experiences with raising children on her own in the country and the wonderful supportive community she has around her.

AUTHOR / ILLUSTRATOR BACKGROUND

Freya Blackwood is an exceptional talent who has attracted attention worldwide. She won the Crichton Award in 2004 for her first book, *Two Summers*, written by John Heffernan, which was also shortlisted for the CBCA Picture Book of the Year. Since then, she has been showered with awards for her iconic and much-loved work, including the prestigious Kate Greenaway Medal in 2010 for her illustrations in Margaret Wild's *Harry & Hopper* (Omnibus Books, 2008).