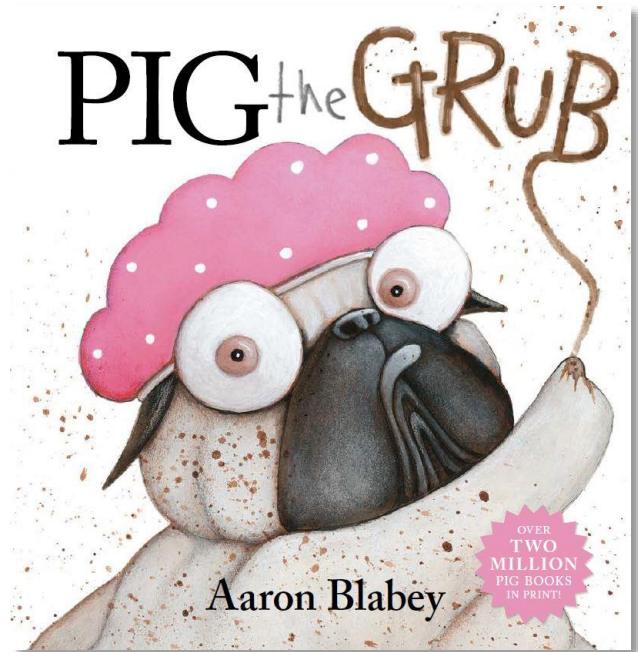


Pig the Grub

Author and Illustrator
Aaron Blabey



Synopsis

Pig the Pug is back in this delightful exploration of yet another facet of his appealingly appalling personality. Pig, it appears, is filthy. Filthy to a level that makes regular amounts of daily grime seem sparkingly hygienic by comparison. His dirt-crusted body unsurprisingly reeks, and the simple solution of a bath is something to which Pig objects. Vehemently. So the chase is on. Pig runs, he hides, and eventually he sabotages the entire process and destroys the bathroom in a most spectacular fashion. His antics are entertainingly horrific, and the vast destruction he brings to the act of bath-avoidance is impressive, and even at the end of his rambunctious yet eventually losing battle with cleanliness, he still happily embraces the stinkier aspects of life.

About the Author/Illustrator

Aaron Blabey was an actor for 14 years before he started creating picture books. In 2008, *Pearl Barley and Charlie Parsley* was awarded CBCA Book of the Year. In 2012, *The Ghost of Miss Annabel Spoon* won the Patricia Wrightson Prize in the 2013 NSW Premier's Literary Awards, and the Children's Peace Literature Award, 2013. *Pig the Pug* and *Piranhas Don't Eat Bananas* were shortlisted by the CBCA in 2015 and 2016 respectively. Aaron lives with his two children and his wife in Sydney.

Themes

Humour; rhyme; dogs; cleanliness and hygiene; smells; coping with unpleasant habits in others.

Writing Style

Written throughout in the third person, Blabey has utilised the same style of consistent rhyming verse as in his previous books about *Pig the Pug*. The story begins and ends with a verse

featuring direct authorial address in a format where the final verse echoes the form of the opening one *I'm sorry to say/I'm happy to say*. Humour within the narrative is both situational and linguistic, and Blabey makes good use of literary devices such as alliteration and onomatopoeia, adding emphasis and enhancing reader enjoyment of a story well suited for being read aloud.

Illustration Style

Blabey's artwork is rendered throughout in the same style as the previous books featuring *Pig the Pug*, and was created using acrylic (pens and pencils) on watercolour paper. The scenes depicted vary in size from third of a page strips to double page spreads. Each scene features a contrasting background colour to the adjacent artwork, creating clear differentiation between actions within the visual narrative. The visual narrative structure faithfully echoes the textual narrative, with the visual narrative adding detail, humour, and emotional expression to the overall story. Other characters (specifically Trevor) are present exclusively within the visual narrative, being almost entirely absent from the text. Blabey's palette consists of predominantly earth-tones, reflecting the subject matter, but also includes some brighter hues within the background. The figures are clearly delineated, and the linework is firm with shading being subtle and well-blended.

TEACHER NOTES

- 1) Before reading the story, as a class discuss the cover and title of the book. Some things to include in your discussion are:
 - What is the picture on the cover showing?
 - Who do you think the picture is of?
 - What is Pig wearing on his head?
 - Why might Pig be wearing this headgear?
 - Has anyone else read any of the books about *Pig the Pug*? What do you know about the character from the previous books?
 - What do you think might happen in the story?
- 2) After reading the story, as a class discuss your predictions about what might happen, and whether or not they were correct, or partially correct.
- 3) Inside the front cover, there is some writing that is almost completely hidden by dirt. What does it say, who do you think it refers to, and why?
- 4) Look carefully at the end pages of the book, and as a class discuss the artwork you see. Think about how the artist created the effect, and what the pages are meant to be showing. Create an artwork of your own featuring dirty foot prints and smears using different brushwork and techniques. Experiment with painting with such things as a toothbrush or twig, flicking your brush to make splatters, and smearing the paint with your fingers. You

might want to include pen or pencil outlines of objects as well, or even create a footprint stamp from a kitchen sponge.

- 5) *Pig the Grub* is written in verse. As a class, reread the story, identifying the different sets of rhyming words. In small groups discuss how the rhyme scheme works - can you find a pattern to how the rhymes have been created? Write a verse of your own about having a bath or shower, using a similar rhyme scheme to the one used in the story.
- 6) Pig fights the idea of having a bath, but soap and bubbles can be lots of fun, even when it's not bathtime. Create a bubble paint artwork of your own to celebrate the joys of bubbles and soap. Add food colouring to bubble mix, and then carefully use different sized bubble wands to blow the coloured bubbles towards a piece of paper. When the bubble lands on the paper it will pop and leave a bubbly pattern behind. The closer you are to the paper when you blow your bubble, the more control you will have over where your bubbles land.

NOTES :

- You can use either a commercial bubble mix, or you can make it yourself by carefully mixing 7 parts water, 3 parts dishwashing liquid, and 1 part glycerine together. The mix will work best if you make it the day before you use it.
 - Bubble wands can be made by twisting a short length of wire into a loop. You might also want to wind yarn or string around the loop to help it hold the bubble mix.
 - **Be careful to keep bubbles away from clothing and furniture as food colouring can often stain - you might want to do this activity outside on a calm day, and be sure to wear a painting smock or old clothing.**
- 7) Go on a word hunt in *Pig the Grub*. Reread the story, and in pairs or small groups collect all the words you can find that have a similar meaning to 'dirty', and all the words you can find that have a similar meaning to 'smelly'. Try to think of at least two words to add to each list that didn't appear in the book. As a class discuss the words on your two lists, and compile a class master list. Are there any words that mean *both* dirty and smelly? Write a short story of your own (possibly one involving a very nasty smelly accident of some sort, perhaps with garbage trucks or mud pits in it) that uses as many of the smelly and dirty words as you can. Your story can be funny, like *Pig the Grub*, or just plain grubbily gross.
- 8) In the story, Pig is filthy and smelly and does not want to get clean. As a class discuss why personal hygiene is important. What is it like for the people who live with Pig when he is so smelly all the time? What are some of the health concerns that he might face if he doesn't start being cleaner?
- 9) Read one or more of the previous books about Pig: *Pig the Pug*; *Pig the Fibber*; *Pig the Winner*; *Pig the Elf*; and *Pig the Star*.
- 10) Do you think that *Pig the Grub* is funny? Why/why not? As a class discuss what makes a book funny. Some things to include in your discussion are:
- Is *Pig the Grub* a funny story?
 - What are some other funny stories that you have read?
 - Do you like funny stories?

- How do you feel when you read a funny story?
 - Why do you think an author might try to make a story funny?
 - What are some of the things that can make a story funny?
 - What do you think is the funniest scene in *Pig the Grub*? What makes it so funny for you?
- 11) The illustrations in *Pig the Grub* tell the same story as the words - but they also add extra information about what is happening and how the characters feel about events. As a class look closely at the illustrations in the story, and discuss what you can see in them that isn't included in the text. Think about who the different characters are who appear in the artwork, and what you learn about them from their acts and facial expressions.
- 12) How do you think Trevor feels about Pig and his antics? Rewrite the story of *Pig the Grub* from the point of view of Trevor, being sure to include what Trevor thinks and feels about having to live with Pig as well as what happens in the story.
- 13) When Pig is trying to avoid getting clean, he manages to cause the bathroom to explode. Using Blabey's artwork for inspiration, paint a picture of your own that shows an exploding bathroom. Think about what sorts of things are commonly found in bathrooms, and what they might end up looking like if they explode.