

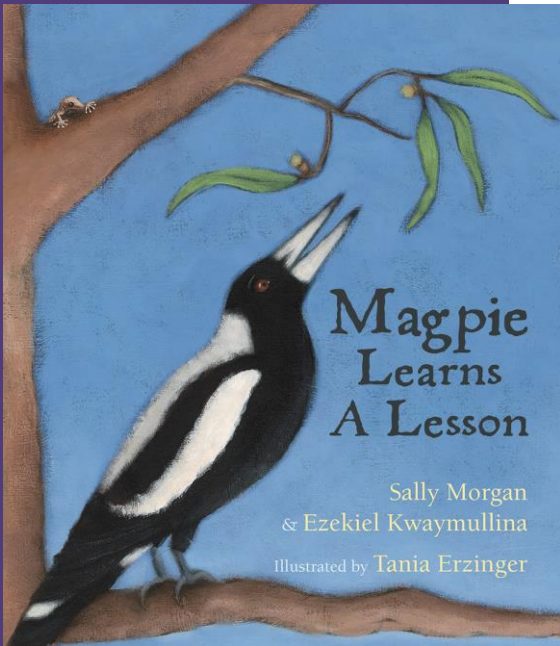
Teachers' Notes

Magpie Learns a Lesson

Written by Sally Morgan & Ezekiel Kwaymullina

Illustrated by Tania Erzinger

Teachers' Notes by Rae Carlyle



OMNIBUS BOOKS

Category	Picture Book
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Illustrator	Tania Erzinger
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Previous publications

Sally Morgan

A Feast for Wombat
(Omnibus Books, 2014)

Sally Morgan & Ezekiel Kwaymullina

Flying High (Omnibus Books, 2015)
The Memory Shed (Omnibus Books, 2015)
One Rule for Jack (Omnibus Books, 2014)
Going Bush with Grandpa
(Omnibus Books, 2014)

Tania Erzinger

A Feast for Wombat
(Omnibus Books, 2014)

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Introduction

Magpie loves to fly, and so does Brown Falcon. But Magpie does not like the fact that Brown Falcon can fly higher than she can. So Magpie sets out to play tricks on her friend. Brown Falcon doesn't like it when Magpie plays tricks, but he puts up with it for a while, because she is his friend, and he loves to listen to her beautiful warbling call. But even the most tolerant of friends will lose patience with someone who keeps being mean to them, and eventually Brown Falcon decides to leave ... just when Magpie really needs his help. Will it be too late for the friendship, or will Magpie finally learn her lesson about how it is important to treat other people well?

About the Authors

Sally Morgan is an Australian Aboriginal author, dramatist and artist, widely known for her first book, a family history called *My Place*. Her artwork is represented in many collections both in Australia and overseas. Ezekiel Kwaymullina has written fantasy for young readers and collaborated with Sally, his mother, on this and other stories.

About the Illustrator

Tania Erzinger has completed a Graduate Diploma in Illustration and Bachelor of Design (Visual Communication) from UniSA. She loves to draw, paint and do collage. This is her second picture book.

Activities

English

Magpie learns in the story that it is important to be kind to your friends and help them, not to be mean to people, and that you never know when you might need someone else's help. *Magpie Learns a Lesson* is a special type of story, with a main character who learns a lesson that is an important one for everyone to know. Stories like this that teach important lessons

have been told for thousands of years. In Aboriginal culture, important information has been passed down through stories, songs, dances and paintings. Some Dreaming stories offer an explanation about a particular aspect of creation, or teach an important lesson.

Aboriginal people continue in this tradition by writing and telling modern-day teaching stories. *Crow and the Waterhole* by Ambelin Kwaymullina teaches a lesson about the importance of valuing your own special self. *Loongie the Greedy Crocodile* by Keifer Dan and Lucy Dan tells the story of a greedy crocodile who soon learns why he has no friends.

- 1.) *Magpie Learns a Lesson* is also a modern-day teaching story focusing on the friendship between Magpie and Brown Falcon. It contains an important message about the value of true friendship.
- Go to the library and find other Aboriginal stories. *Bawoo Stories* by May O'Brien are a collection of traditional teaching stories of the Wongutha people from the Eastern Goldfields of Western Australia. One of the stories in this collection explains why emus can't fly, while another explains why a crow's feathers are black. *Eagles Nest* by June Walkutjukurr Richards teaches a lesson about jealousy and its consequences, while *Jirrbal: Rainforest Dreamtime Stories* by Maisie (Yarrcali) Barlow, is a collection of stories with a lesson for the reader to learn at the end of each story.

There are lots of resources online, where students can see and hear stories:

abc.net.au Sharing Our Stories

www.abc.net.au/dustechoes/

There's a lot on You tube. One example below:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=itszep0duwI>

Do these have a moral or a teaching purpose as in *Magpie Learns a Lesson*?

- As a class make a list of other morals/messages that could be taught in a story. Make up a story of your own that has an important message in it about how we should behave and treat other people.

2) There are only two characters in the story, and they are very different from each other, not just in how they look, but also how they behave. As a class discuss the characters in this story.

- Who are the characters in the story?
- How might we describe the two characters?
- Think of a list of words that describe Magpie, and another list of words that describe Brown Falcon.
- Divide your lists into smaller lists, one group for words that describe the way the characters look, one for words that describe the way they feel, and another for words that describe the way they act.
- Compare the words in Magpie's lists to the words in Brown Falcon's. Are there any similarities between the lists?
 - Write a short story of your own, using as many of the descriptive words in your lists as you can.
 - Would the story have worked if Magpie and Brown Falcon were very similar to each other? Why do you think this?
 - Why do you think the authors chose to use two different types of bird for their main characters?
 - Which bird do you like the most? Why do you think this is?

3) Magpie learns her lesson in the end, because she becomes trapped in a net and Brown Falcon saves her. Do you think that she would have learnt not to be cruel if she hadn't been trapped?

- Write a different ending to the story, where she doesn't get caught in the net. Think about what might happen to her in the future, and write about what her life without Brown Falcon around might be like. See if you can still make sure she learns her lesson in the end!

Creative Activities

- Write a story that teaches a lesson and draw pictures to go with it.

- Research Australian magpies or brown falcons. Which parts of Australia do they live in? How big are they? What do they eat? Make a poster that shows everything you found out about them.
- If you can, go for a walk around the local area, and see how many magpies or other birds you can see. Take a pencil and paper and record:
 - Where the birds are (flying, on the ground, perched in a tree)
 - Which types of trees and vegetation are near them.
 - If they are eating or looking for food, and what food you think they might find there.
 - Whether you see individuals, pairs, or groups.
 - What noises they are making.
 - As a class use this information to make a large map or poster, showing the birds around your school, and what they were doing when you observed them. Decorate your poster with pictures of what you observed.
- If you can, go for a walk in a local bushland area. See if you can locate anything that might be suitable food for a native bird. Collect interesting leaves, twigs and other natural objects on your walk. Use these natural materials to make a forest collage for a class wall display about the book. Paint or draw pictures of Magpie and Brown Falcon and put them in your forest.
- Use plasticine or play dough to make a big pile of tasty grubs like the ones Magpie kicked into the river.
- Learn a song (or two!) featuring an Australian native bird. Perform the song at a school assembly or for another class.
- Make a mobile with magpies and other Australian birds. You can draw or paint the birds on cardboard, or cut out pictures photographed from a book. Add some small bells to your mobile to make it a wind chime as well.

Science

Many countries have birds called magpies, but they are not the same as the Australian magpie even though they might look similar. Europe, Britain, America, and New Zealand all have their own magpies.

Research, in the library or online, the magpies that can be found in other parts of the world.

Choose one type of magpie to focus on, and prepare a presentation about them. You can use powerpoint, make a leaflet, a poster, or even write a poem or short play. Make sure that you include information about:

- What they look like.
- Which parts of the world they can be found in.
- What some of their specific habits and practices are (for example, some collect shiny objects.)
- What they like to eat.
- Where they build their nests.
- What they sound like – what are their songs and calls?
- Any ways they are different from our own Australian magpies.