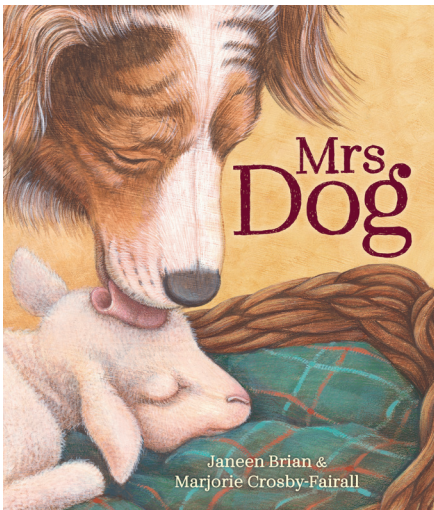


Teacher Notes

Mrs Dog

Written by Janeen Brian

Illustrated by Marjorie Crosby-Fairall



Themes

- Aging
- Change
- Courage
- Friendship
- Hope
- Love
- Trust

Synopsis

Mrs Dog has been a working sheep dog, but age has caught up with her and instead of rounding up sheep, she spends her days following Tall-One, and nights snoozing in her basket.

When Mrs Dog and Tall-One discover an abandoned lamb, Mrs Dog ignores orders to leave it, and carries the lamb home to her basket. Baa-rah the lamb flourishes under Mrs Dog's attention and guidance, until he is strong enough to gambol around the farm.

When Mrs Dog goes missing, it's Baa-rah's turn to find the determination and courage to save Mrs Dog.

This beautifully written and illustrated story will delight young readers and provoke much discussion.

The Format

Hardback, 32pp, portrait.

About the Author

Award-winning author Janeen Brian grew up in seaside Brighton, South Australia. After graduating from teacher's college, Janeen worked as junior primary, primary and drama teacher. She was also an actor and writer for a children's theatre company before becoming a full-time writer. As well as picture books, Janeen writes short stories, poetry, non-fiction and novels for young people. She still lives in Glenelg, with her husband Jon and has two adult daughters.

About the Illustrator

American born Marjorie Crosby-Fairall studied Fine Arts in Illustration at Northern Illinois University. Marjorie now lives in Sydney, where she works as a freelance illustrator for book and magazine publishers. She loves to experiment with new techniques, but always returns to her beloved and well-used colour pencils. Marjorie has been shortlisted for many awards, and in 1997 won the CBCA Eve Pownall Award for Information Books.

Before Reading

Examine the book cover.

Is the story likely to be a fiction or non-fiction?

What type of dog is Mrs Dog?

Examine the illustrations. What hints are there about Mrs Dog?

Identify the author and illustrators' names and parts of the book, including the spine, imprint page and the type of book - hardcover or paperback.



The Five Mile Press

*These reading notes are provided
by The Five Mile Press.*

*For further information contact
Susie Kennewell on (03) 8756 5528*

Discussion

Page 1

What do you think are woolly-heads?
Why do you think she only chases shadows now?
What hints are given in the illustration?

Page 2 & 3

Sheep dogs are used to obeying orders. Why does Mrs Dog ignore Tall-one's order to leave the lamb?
What may have happened to the lamb if Mrs Dog hadn't taken him to the big kennel?

Pages 8 & 9

What is Mrs Dog trying to teach Baa-rah?
What do you think a mother sheep would teach a lamb?

Pages 12 & 13

Why do you think Beaky-Wings swooped Mrs Dog?

Pages 10 & 11

What does Mrs Dog mean when she says 'only Beaky Wings come back out of that place'?
Why would Mrs Dog show Baa-rah the Dangerous Place?

Pages 16 & 17

Baa-rah looks for Mrs Dog in 'all their favourite places'.
Where do you think those places might be?
Do you think Tall-One and Tall-Two have noticed Mrs Dog is missing?
Why or why not?

Pages 24 & 25

If Baa-rah hadn't been able to bark, do you think the farmer and his wife would have realised Mrs Dog was missing?
What else could Baa-rah have done to show the farmer and his wife that Mrs Dog was missing?

Pages 26 & 27

Remember Mrs Dog said 'only Beaky Wings come back out of that place'? How do you think the dog was rescued?
What other ways could the farmer and Baa rah have rescued Mrs Dog?

Pages 28 & 29

How would the friendship between Mrs Dog and Baa-rah change over time? Why?



The Five Mile Press

*These reading notes are provided
by The Five Mile Press.*

*For further information contact
Susie Kennewell on (03) 8756 5528*

Illustrations

Pick a double page spread.

Ask children what they first notice about the picture? Where are their eyes drawn to?

What colours are used? What mood do they create?

Pages 6 & 7

What is the focus of the spread?

Who is leading the way?

Do you think Baa-rah is eager or nervous?

Why do you think the empty basket is at the front of the illustration?

Pages 10 & 11

How do you think Mrs Dog is feeling? (notice body language - tail down, serious expression)

What is Baa-rah thinking and feeling? (note body language - seems to be stepping back.)

Compare this illustration of Baa-rah to those on the previous page.

Compare the illustrations of the Dangerous Place

(**pages 10 & 11 and 18 & 19**).

Which one do you find scariest? Why?

Why do you think each was illustrated in that way?

Activities

* Modify to suit readers' age.

Inquiry:

Brainstorm: List all the jobs you can think of that dogs do.

- guide dogs
- companion animals - Marema's with alpacas and penguins, for disabled people, etc.
- bomb squad
- search and rescue dogs
- police dogs
- airport sniffer dogs

Discuss:

- Why do dogs perform so many roles?
- Be inventive - create new jobs dogs would be good at.
- Are there other animals that work with people?

Report:

- In pairs, children choose an animal/human relationship and report back to class their findings.

Useful resource: links to animals' roles during wars:

<https://www.awm.gov.au/shop/item/9781877007392/>

<https://www.awm.gov.au/exhibitions/animals/>



The Five Mile Press

*These reading notes are provided
by The Five Mile Press.*

*For further information contact
Susie Kennewell on (03) 8756 5528*

Writing

Class or Individual, depending on age

- Brainstorm headlines for a newspaper article about a lamb rescuing a dog.
- Imagine you are a reporter. Write a short article for a newspaper about Mrs Dog and Baa-rah
- Rewrite Mrs Dog from a different point of view. Try Baa-rah or Beaky-wing. Discuss how the story might change.

Figurative Language

As a class -

- Author Janeen Brian uses words like woolly-heads, tall-one, big kennel and Beaky-wing to describe sheep, the farmer, house and magpie.
- Discuss why she may have done this.
- List the examples and add correct names.
- Add children's suggestions for different names the author could have.

Individually -

- As a group, choose and list common objects. Ask for suggestions for alternative names for two or three. Children then, on their own, choose several of the common objects and write and illustrate alternative names.
- Using the children's favourite examples, use <http://www.wordclouds.com/> or similar to create word clouds.

Health

- What words would describe Baa-rah when Mrs Dog found her?
- (Encourage children to think beyond sick, alone etc to empathise with the lamb.)
- How would you describe Baa-rah at the end of the book?
- (resourceful, persistent, courageous, resilient, etc)
- What qualities do you share with Baa rah? Encourage strengths and weaknesses. Children write the strengths and weaknesses on a lamb template.



The Five Mile Press

*These reading notes are provided
by The Five Mile Press.*

*For further information contact
Susie Kennewell on (03) 8756 5528*