



Wren

Katrina Lehman
Sophie Beer

Title: Wren

Author: Katrina Lehman

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THEMES

- * Family
- * New baby
- * Play
- * Adventure
- * Birthdays

PLOT

Sometimes we find what we're looking for in the most unexpected places.

Wren just wants a bit of peace and quiet. What he gets is the noisiest baby sister you could ever imagine! But when Wren runs away to the country, he discovers that maybe peace and quiet isn't all he needs...

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Before you read the book, what do you think the story will be about? Compare the illustrations on the front cover and the back cover. What is different about them?

After reading the book, were you surprised by the story? Why or why not?

How has the illustrator shown that this family is very noisy?

How many people are in your family?

Do you prefer to be loud or quiet? Why?

ACTIVITIES

Loud and Quiet

Do a music activity comparing loud to silent. Make lots of noise banging on pots, playing musical instruments or playing music from an iPod, or knocking down a block tower.

Then stop, and try to be very quiet. You could be completely silent, or make peaceful quiet sounds, such as humming, rustling autumn leaves, or whispering.

Make a list of things that are loud and a list of things that are quiet, taking inspiration from the illustrations in *Wren*.

Teaching Notes



AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Katrina Lehman lives in Melbourne and works with award-winning authors and illustrators as an editor, while juggling three small children.



ILLUSTRATOR BIOGRAPHY

Sophie Beer is an illustrator from Brisbane, Queensland. She completed dual bachelors in Law and Creative Industries at Queensland University of Technology before turning freelance. Revelling in colour, shape and texture, she lives by one simple rule: art should never be boring.

Word Sound Art

Look at how the illustrator has drawn the baby's crying as a big WAAAAAHHHHHH travelling across the pages.

Can you make a series of drawings joined by a word sound?

It could be a siren from a fire engine or ambulance.

It could be a shout from someone trapped down a hole, or stuck up in a tree. Brainstorm other sounds you could draw.

Collage family portrait

The illustrations in this book have a lot of pattern in them, as well as block colours. Make a family portrait using pencils or textas, but also bit of paper, tissue, or scraps from magazines to add pattern.

INTERVIEW WITH THE CREATORS

What was your inspiration for writing Wren?

I come from a large family of six and I think this is why I have always been fascinated by people and how they react so differently in extreme situations. Family dynamics have always particularly interested me and my stories always centre around these themes. When I was pregnant with my third child, I wondered how our two very different girls were going to react to a new baby in the family. I had always wondered how my brother felt being surrounded by three older sisters (he started drinking tea when he was just six so that he had an excuse to sit at the kitchen table and listen to the afternoon tea girly gossip) and so I started writing about this little boy who just wanted to find his own place in a big family... and it all flowed really quickly from there.

—Katrina

How did you create the illustrations?

I started out with paper rough drawings, then scanned them in to my computer and drew the finals in Photoshop. I also incorporated hand-drawn textures and paintings as well. Combining both digital and traditional means creates something new and unexpected. —Sophie

Can you tell us about how you became a writer and illustrator?

I had a dream childhood growing up with three siblings on a farm in country NSW. Our whole world was about adventure and freedom – camping, yabbing, box sliding, mouse hunting, creek wading, bike



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Teaching Notes

riding, horse riding. These were wonderful sources of creativity and have always given me so much material for writing. I always had my head stuck in a book when I wasn't out on the farm – Hardy Brothers, The Famous Five, Nancy Drew, John Marsden. Colin Thiele (Storm Boy) came to visit our primary school and I still remember how I wanted to be just like him. My best friend and I wrote our own Famous Five series and illustrated it. We were so proud of our first book. My teacher encouraged me to enter a story competition in Year Six, and I had my story published in a small anthology. This was my first taste of being a published author and I was hooked! I have been writing ever since. —Katrina

Originally, I studied law but was always doodling in the margins of my textbooks and daydreaming about doing something more creative. I started an Etsy selling my art and it took off! The rest is proverbial history. —Sophie

Who are some of your favourite picture book creators?

Davina Bell and Allison Collpoys, Margaret Wild, Jane Godwin and Anna Walker, Shaun Tan, Gus Gordon, Alison Lester. —Katrina

I love Alison Lester, Anna Walker, and Christian Robinson. They each understand that pictures mean as much as words. —Sophie



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