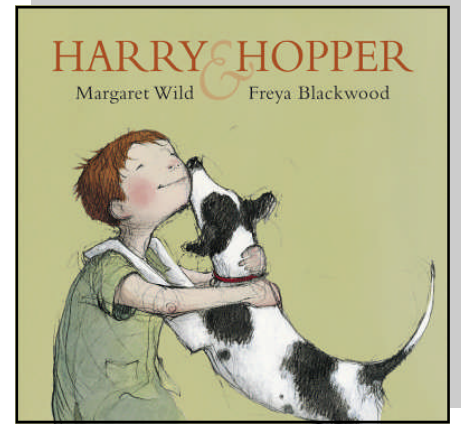


TEACHER NOTES

**Harry & Hopper, by Margaret Wild
Illustrated by Freya Blackwood
Published by Omnibus Books, 2009**



SYNOPSIS

When Harry gets a puppy he names him Hopper, because he is as jumpy as a grasshopper. Hopper soon becomes part of the family. Harry teaches Hopper everything a dog should know, and Hopper shows Harry how special a friendship can be. Their lives together soon become routine, and the day ends when Hopper goes to sleep at the end of Harry's bed.

One day when Harry arrives home, Hopper isn't there to greet him. Harry is devastated when he learns that Hopper was killed in an accident. Harry refuses to say goodbye, because it hurts too much.

Harry doesn't want to sleep in his room anymore for he knows that Hopper won't ever curl up on his bed again. Harry's dad lets him sleep on the sofa instead, where there aren't any memories to haunt him.

Harry doesn't tell his friends at school about Hopper; he wants to pretend everything is normal.

But the next night, Hopper visits Harry in his dreams. He comes the night after and the one following that. Harry waits in anticipation for night to fall so he can spend time with his friend. But Hopper is fading with each visit and eventually, Harry knows it's time to say goodbye for real.

Margaret Wild has written an emotional tale about love and loss. The short text explores the pain of losing someone important and the grieving process that follows. Her simple and lyrical prose is poignant and will have a lasting effect on the readers. This is an important subject for young children who may have experienced a similar loss and are struggling to say goodbye. People have strong connections with their pets, which they personify and treat as family, and many find it difficult to cope with their pet's death.

Children will enjoy Harry's relationship with Hopper, and the artwork that depicts the joy and happiness in the time they spend together. Freya Blackwood's whimsical style is affecting, and Harry's sorrow is keenly portrayed; the muted colours match Wild's tone perfectly.

AUTHOR

Margaret Wild is one of Australia's leading authors of children's books. Her many award-winning titles include *Toby*, *Our Granny*, *Miss Lily's Fabulous Pink Feather Boa*, and *Woolvs in the Sitee*.

ILLUSTRATOR

Freya Blackwood completed a Bachelor of Design (Visual Communications) at the University of Technology, Sydney, focusing on film and animation. After making two short films, she worked in the film industry in Sydney and then in New Zealand on the film adaptation of Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Her first book illustration project was John Heffernan's *Two Summers*. Since then she has illustrated many other award-winning picture books.

DISCUSSION POINTS AND ACTIVITIES

1. *Harry and Hopper* can be used as a launch pad to discuss the loss of someone special.
2. Children can talk about their relationships with their pets at home.
3. Hopper is a funny name for a dog. Children can talk about what they would name a pet if they were given the chance.
4. The illustrator has drawn Hopper in all kinds of poses. This could be an opportunity for children to draw animals in motion.
5. Children could look at how the illustrator has used colour to express different emotions. They could talk about what emotions they associate with various colours and why.
6. Harry trains Hopper to respond to commands. Teachers could talk with children about the importance of training pets and the different kind of tricks their pets know.