

Mate and Me

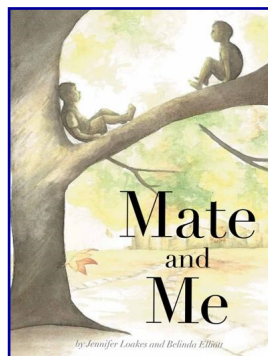
By Jennifer Loakes & Illustrated by Belinda Elliott

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"The boy from upstairs plays in the yard. His name is Matata. I call him Mate for short. When I see him I shout, 'Hello Mate!', but he doesn't join in my games." When Mate moves in upstairs, he has an instant friend. But Mate is shy and learning to adapt to a new home. There's a new family downstairs too. A secret family. Where have the families come from and what happens when the downstairs family goes missing? Where will their silver treasures lead? A celebration of the power of friendship in the face of displacement and loneliness.



Teacher notes have been based on those supplied by the publisher, Windy Hollow Books.

Discussion Points & Activities:

- What are some of the themes in this book?
- Mate comes from South Africa and has a different culture than the narrator. What is your culture? How might it be similar or different from others?
- Why do you think Mate is hesitant to make friends at the beginning of the story?
- In the story, both Mate and the narrator like the birds. Their common interest in the birds brings the two boys together in the end. What are some of the things you have in common with your friends?
- Imagine you are Mate and have just moved to a new country. Write a letter home to your grandparents telling them about your new home and how you feel.
- The dog is a silent character in the story. Write the story from the perspective of the dog. What does the dog see and think?
- Why do you think the birds are living in the garage?
- Why are the natural habitats of some animals being destroyed? What do you think could be done to protect the natural habitats of animals?
- How do you think the narrator feels when the birds go missing in the story? What are some things the narrator does to try to find the birds? Do you think anyone else in the story might be missing the birds too?
- How do you think Mate feels when he is far away from his grandparents? What do you think might make Mate feel better?
- What's your favourite illustration in the book? Why is it your favourite?
- The illustrator has used watercolour. The cover shows the two boys sitting in a tree. To create the leaves of the tree, the illustrator has layered and blended greens, yellows and oranges. Can you experiment with water colour and create a similar effect?
- What clues has the illustrator included to show that the boys are living in a city?