

## **My Brother**

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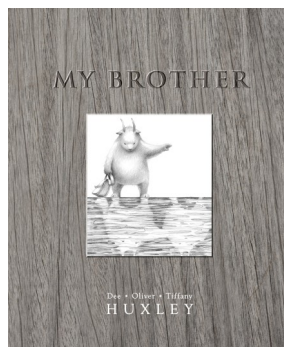
Publisher: Working Title Press

ISBN 9781921504853

\$24.99

**PICTURE BOOK OF  
THE MONTH**

When a gentle creature sets out to search for a lost brother we are taken on an ethereal journey across land and sea to strange, beautiful and faraway places. To fantastic, floating cities, and medieval towns full of dark alleyways and winding staircases – to vast open grasslands and eerie, silent forests – and eventually to a place of timeless beauty and light. *My Brother* is a metaphorical picture storybook for older children that looks at loss and grief from a sibling's perspective.



Teacher notes are based on those by the publisher, Working Title Press. A full version will be available at their website, [www.workingtitlepress.com.au](http://www.workingtitlepress.com.au) and on our website [www.lamontbooks.com.au](http://www.lamontbooks.com.au).

### **Themes:**

- Grief
- Healing & Renewal
- Isolation & Loneliness

### **Discussion Points and activities:**

- Get to know the book thoroughly yourself before using it with students. Take time to consider the emotional power of the understated text, and the illustrations, and how you can use it with the age group of students you are working with.
- Find out more about how to support students through the grieving process. Useful resources for teachers and families can be found on the Kids Matter website at: <https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au>.
- Decide whether to use the book with a whole class, in small groups or with individuals, knowing that you might need to allow time for sharing stories, discussion, and reflection.
- You might share an experience of death and grieving that you have had.
- Some students might have stories of their own to share – the death of a relative or a pet, or even finding a dead bird in the back yard.
- You might introduce the book by looking at the cover.
- Discuss the muted colour and wood texture of the background. What does this tell you about the story?
- Compare the illustrations on the front and back covers. How do the background, and the illustrations together suggest mood or atmosphere?

After reading the story ask the students to write a response. Some questions to think about could be:

- What did you feel while you were reading the book?
- Have you had any experiences like those in the story?
- How did your emotional response change near the end when colour was introduced into the illustrations?
- Compile a list of the words that you think are the most important on each page. Arrange the words to create a poem. Discuss in pairs or small groups the reasons for your responses.
- Play around with some of the layout design techniques that are used in *My Brother*: create spaces between letters, words and lines; place words in different positions on the page (right and left) and within lines (spaces between letters, up and down).