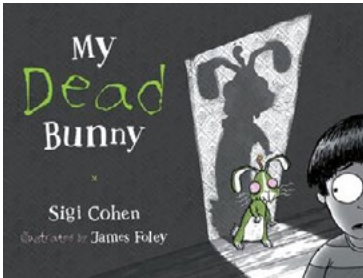




Walker Books Classroom Ideas



My Dead Bunny

by Sigi Cohen
illustrated by James Foley
ISBN: 9781922179593
ARRP: \$19.99
NZRRP: \$24.99
October 2015

*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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Outline:

Family versus zombie bunny!

“My dead bunny’s name is Brad; his odour is extremely bad. He visits me when I’m in bed, but Bradley wasn’t always dead...” A hilarious rhyming tale about a zombie bunny who comes back to visit his owner.

Author/Illustrator Information:

Sigi Hallis Cohen was born and raised in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, and currently lives in Perth, Western Australia. He has a degree in English literature and a compulsion for matching words that rhyme. Sigi started on limericks and moved on to rhyming couplets, then to sonnets, then to writing children’s verse. In the meantime, he embarked on a career in law to alleviate the stresses of writing children’s picture books. *My Dead Bunny* is his first book.

Born in Western Australia, James Foley is the eldest of three children. James started his illustration career in primary school by drawing cartoons for the school newspaper. Unfortunately, the paper only lasted one issue, probably because his class faked a fire in the school hall using smoke machines to get their story on the front page. James started working more officially as a freelance illustrator in 2003 when he drew his first cover for the Western Australia’s weekly *Quokka* newspaper. James enjoys presenting workshops at schools and libraries and is always delighted to see the natural enthusiasm children bring to drawing, especially when they draw just for themselves and don’t care if it’s “good enough” or not. *In the Lion* was his first book with Walker Books Australia. For more information, please visit his website: www.jamesfoley.com.au.

How to Use These Notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

These notes are for:

- Primary years 2-4
- Ages 8+

Key Learning Areas:

- English
- Visual Art

Example of:

- Picture book
- Fiction

Themes/Ideas:

- Pets
- Death
- Rhyme/rhythm

National Curriculum Focus:*

English
Year 2
ACELA1469
ACELT1591
ACELT1592
ACELT1593
ACELT1833

Year 3
ACELA1483
ACELT1594
ACELT1600
ACELT1601
ACELT1791

Year 4
ACELA1496
ACELT1607
ACELT1794

Visual Art
F-2
ACAVAM107
ACAVAM108
ACAVAR109

3-4
ACAVAM111
ACAVAM112
ACAVAR113

*Key content descriptions have been identified from the Australian National Curriculum. However, this is not an exhaustive list of National Curriculum content able to be addressed through studying this text.



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Discussion Questions and Activities:

Colour

Why is the book mainly in black and white? Why is green the only spot colour? And why this particular shade of green? What does this green make you think of? Why are the zombies coloured green? What would happen if the zombies were black and white like everything else?

More info: <https://jamesfoley.com.au/2016/03/29/my-dead-bunny-movie-influences-part-4-colour-scheme/>

James was influenced by the classic black-and-white monster movies such as *Frankenstein* (1931) and *The Invisible Man* (1933), and kid-friendly scary movies like *ParaNorman* (2012), *Monster House* (2006) and *Frankenweenie* (2012). Find movie posters for these movies and compare them to the illustrations in this book. What similarities can you see?

Medium

James used photographic textures for the illustrations – real pictures of peeling wood, old wallpaper, roof tiles and dead grass. Identify some examples of this in the book. Why do you think he used these? What effect does it give?

Check out this blog post to see what the images would have looked like without the textures:
<https://jamesfoley.com.au/2016/06/03/how-i-use-texture-in-illustrations-plus-4-free-texture-sites/>

Texture timelapse:
https://youtu.be/yU04Wt_FMd8

Point of View (“Camera Angles”)

When the family bury Bunny Brad, why is the “camera” in the grave, pointing up? What feeling does this give? What does it allow you to see?

When the men in white take the sister away, why is the “camera” on an angle? What feeling does this give? What does it allow you to see?

When Bunny Brad follows the family to the Grand Hotel, why is the camera behind his head? What does the illustrator want us to see? Why don't we see Bunny Brad's face (and do we need to)?

More info:
<https://jamesfoley.com.au/2016/03/22/my-dead-bunny-movie-influences-part-3-cliches-and-camera-angles/>

Setting

How does the setting contribute to the spooky feel of the book? What spooky details are included in the illustrations? Have you seen a spooky house like this in movies before? Which movies?

More info:
<https://jamesfoley.com.au/2016/03/17/my-dead-bunny-movie-influences-part-2-haunted-houses/>

Character Design

Look at Bunny Brad in the front endpapers, when he's alive. How would you describe the outlines? What shapes is he made of? Why do you think he is drawn this way? Now look at Bunny Brad in the back endpapers, when he's a zombie. How would you describe these outlines? What shapes is he made of? Why do you think he's drawn this way?

More info:

- Body language
<https://jamesfoley.com.au/2015/08/18/drawing-on-body-language/>
- Drawing hands
<https://jamesfoley.com.au/2015/08/11/1-simple-tip-for-drawing-hands/>
- Video tutorial - how to draw Bunny Brad
<https://jamesfoley.com.au/2015/08/13/how-to-draw-bunny-brad-from-my-dead-bunny/>
- Meet the cast
<https://jamesfoley.com.au/2015/07/28/meet-the-cast-of-my-dead-bunny-part-1/>
<https://jamesfoley.com.au/2015/07/30/meet-the-cast-of-my-dead-bunny-part-2/>
<https://jamesfoley.com.au/2015/08/04/meet-the-cast-of-my-dead-bunny-part-3/>
- Early character sketches
<https://jamesfoley.com.au/2016/01/05/early-sketches-for-my-dead-bunny/>
- Other zombie animal designs
<https://jamesfoley.com.au/2015/06/21/attack-of-the-zombie-animals/>

Cover Design

What do you like about the cover? What would you change? Why do you think this image was chosen for the cover? Why these fonts? Why this layout? Have a go at redesigning the cover. Check out the other drafts that James made here:
<https://jamesfoley.com.au/2016/03/15/designing-the-cover-for-my-dead-bunny/>



Walker Books Classroom Ideas

Book Trailer

What do you like about the trailer? What would you change? Why do you think James chose this music?
<https://jamesfoley.com.au/2015/09/03/20150901-book-trailer/>.

Compare it to the original Frankenstein trailer (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bKyjXjVsfw>). What are the similarities between the two trailers?

Rhyme

My Dead Bunny is written in rhyming couplets. That is, the rhyme scheme is AA, BB and so on.

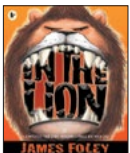
*"My dead bunny's name is **Brad**;
His odour is extremely **bad**.
He visits me when I'm in **bed**,
But Bradley wasn't always **dead**..."*

Experiment with writing your own rhyming couplet. Try to write four or five couplets as a story. Did you find this task easy or difficult?

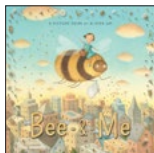
Continuing the Story

At the end of the story the boys think about digging up Billy's dog, Roxanne. Write a sequel to *My Dead Bunny* about what happens next. Illustrate your story in a similar style to James Foley's illustrations.

More picture books from Walker Books:



In The Lion
by James Foley
HB 9781921720321
PB 9781922077134



Bee & Me
by Alison Jay
HB 9781910646052
Classroom ideas
available



Sad, the Dog
by Sandy Fussell
illustrated by Tull
Suwannakit
HB 9781921529641
Classroom ideas available



Footpath Flowers
by JonArno Lawson
HB 9781406362084
PB 9781406365672
Classroom ideas
available