

Molly & Mae

By Danny Parker & Illustrated by Freya Blackwood

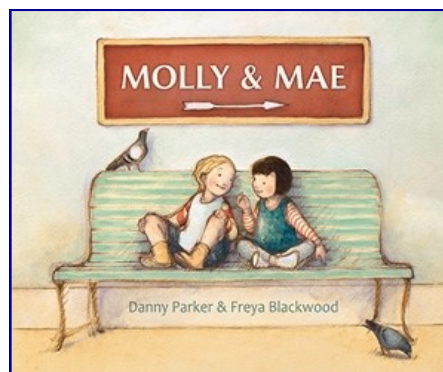
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Friendship is like a train journey. There are happy moments, boring moments and exciting moments.

There is anger and loneliness, and there is forgiveness, and the thread of friendship runs through everything, like rail tracks through the countryside. Brilliantly rendered by Danny Parker and Freya Blackwood, Molly and Mae is a portrait of the most delightful and emotionally rich train journey imaginable.



Teacher notes are an amended version of those supplied by the publisher, Little Hare Books. A full version is available at our website www.lamontbooks.com.au.

Themes:

- Friendship
- Anger
- Loneliness
- Forgiveness

Discussion Questions:

- Danny Parker based his metaphor for friendship on a list of rail-related ideas (such as 'platform', 'timetable', 'journey', 'signal failure', 'bridge'). These ideas have been incorporated into each of the illustrations in the form of railway signs. How effectively do these signs work as clues to the action on the relevant page/s? To what extent are they required to help explain the action, and to what extent do they represent an integral part of the overall story?
- How has Danny used weather and times of day and night to accentuate the changing moods of the story? On the 'From the Window' page, for example, what significance do the words 'smearly' and 'dull' have in terms of the events at that point in the story?
- The emotional expressions Freya draws are complex enough to defy adequate description: she so skilfully conveys both feelings and thoughts that it is as if we can read the characters' minds. Select five sequential representations of Molly and five of Mae and write two sentences for each representation to describe:
 - a. The emotion they appear to be feeling.
 - b. The thoughts they appear to be having.

Activities:

- Molly and Mae go on an adventure together. While the story is describing their train ride, it is also speaking in metaphors about their friendship. As a class discuss the use of metaphors. What does a metaphor mean? Ask your students to research this and present to the class an example of what they believe to be a metaphor.
- This is a beautiful story about friendship and the highs and lows that are experienced throughout. Ask your students to write a story about themselves and their best friend.
- The illustrations throughout the story are just as important as the words themselves, as it provokes feeling in the reader. Once the students have finished writing their story, ask them to do illustrations for each page. Discuss with them the use of colours in an illustration and how each colour can help represent a feeling.