Read and discuss

Emma’s books are suitable for ages 3-99 and are great for storytelling and shared reading, but also provide opportunities for further discussion and retelling, and curriculum-led activities.

- What makes Big Cat a good friend?
- What qualities does a good friend have?
- Why do you think Grandma’s other cats seem so unhappy with the new visitor?
- Can you think of what things a tiger might get up to in your house?

**Big Cat** Published 4th April 2019 – Pavilion Children’s Books - ISBN 9781843654018 - £6.99 paperback

- How many dogs do Penny and Pat begin with?
- What characteristics does That Dog have that make him stand out?
- That Dog! Celebrates differences, can you think about what makes you different and special?


About Emma Lazell

Emma Lazell is a picture book author and illustrator based in the UK. She graduated with distinction from the Cambridge School of Art MA in Children’s Book Illustration and received recognition by The Bookseller for her illustrations for Big Cat.

Emma’s books cover themes like friendship and celebrating differences, and are packed with humour and silliness. Her illustrations are bright, expressive and sprinkled with irony and playfulness.

Alongside working on books, Emma loves visiting schools and events to share her love of writing and drawing, and her events are full of creativity and inspiration.

Emma’s favourite things are cats, cheese, and the first page of a sketchbook.

Coming Soon...

A plant has appeared in Georgie’s garden. A plant that’s a little bit different. None of her other plants are as grumpy, or as hungry, and none of them tend to breathe flames... A scorchingly funny story about making friends and celebrating our differences.

A heartwarming and surreal romp, packed with jokes and funny details and with an underlying message of acceptance.

Isobel’s grandma has lost her glasses and she can’t see a thing without them. While Isobel and Gran are in the garden searching for the specs, they come across a cat. A very big cat. A very big and friendly cat. The big cat moves in with them, much to the disgust of all gran’s other cats. He might be good fun, but he takes up lots of space and eats every scrap of food. Eventually the new cat’s mum and dad turn up, looking for their missing son. And they just happen to have found gran’s glasses too. The tiger family are delighted to be reunited – and gran now sees that she’s been sharing her house with… a tiger!

Discussion starters and questions for guided reading
• Before reading: What pets do you have at home? How is Big Cat different from your pets?
• What makes Big Cat a good friend?
• What qualities does a good friend have?
• Can you think of some things things a tiger might get up to in your house?

National curriculum links
English / literacy KS1
Pupils should be taught to:

develop pleasure in reading, motivation to read, vocabulary and understanding by:
• discussing the sequence of events in books and how items of information are related
• discussing their favourite words and phrases

consider what they are going to write before beginning by:
• planning or saying out loud what they are going to write about

develop their understanding of grammar concepts by:
• using expanded noun phrases to describe and specify

Task: After reading the book discuss why Grandma was able to mistake Big Cat for a new pet cat. What sequence of events led to this mistake, and how do we know this without the author directly telling us? Reread the first three page-turns encouraging the whole class to join in. Talk about the funny names on the second page-turn and the adjectives used to describe Big Cat on the third page-turn. Children should come up with new adjectives to describe Big Cat, and then develop into expanded noun phrases (eg The large orange cat is stripy and fluffy).

Art and Design KS1
Pupils should be taught:
• to use a range of materials creatively to design and make products
• to use drawing, painting and sculpture to develop and share their ideas, experiences and imagination
• to develop a wide range of art and design techniques in using colour, pattern, texture, line, shape, form and space

Task: Look at some of the artwork in Big Cat. Emma Lazell uses mixed media to finish her illustrations, combining ink, fine line, paints and pencils to add colour. Discuss the different textures and patterns you can see in the illustrations and then talk about ways you can add colour to a drawing. Think about the different ways you can use different art tools, for example holding a pencil on the side, applying paint with a sponge, and flicking ink from the end of a brush. Ask the children to draw their pet or favourite animal in line, (encourage children to fill their page, or photocopy and blow up the drawings to fill page). Divide the page into four sections and encourage the children to choose a different method to add colour and texture to each section. Provide a variety of art tools such as crayon, pastels, paints, inks or collage, and model using the tools.
Teaching resources for EYFS and Key Stage 1 teachers from author-illustrator Emma Lazell

There’s a team of dognappers on the loose. They’ve stolen lots of pooches, but this time they’re up against a very clever dog. The cunning Penelope Dognapper is keen to get her hands on the latest rare breed, the lesser spotted woofer. Her big mistake is sending Patrick, her accomplice, to do the job. He has great difficulty identifying the right dog – that dog! – and in a house that also contains a snake, rabbit and characterful cat, you can imagine the chaos that ensues as he tries to steal the dog. That dog is a very smart one. He’s quick, clever and a bit of a detective in his spare time and he might just have worked out who’s behind the dastardly crimes. Will he avoid getting caught himself and rescue his fellow creatures?

Discussion starters and questions for guided reading

• Before reading: What can you tell me about the dog on the cover? Are there any clues you can spot?
• What characteristics does That Dog have that make him stand out?
• That Dog! Celebrates differences, can you think about what makes you different and special?
• What differences and similarities can you see between That Dog, the cat, the rabbit and the snake?
• How do we know that Penny and Pat are in the wrong? Can you think of any ways we are shown this through the illustrations?

National curriculum links

Maths KS1
Pupils should be taught to:
• identify and represent numbers using objects and pictorial representations including the number line, and use the language of: equal to, more than, less than (fewer), most, least
• read and write numbers from 1 to 20 in numerals and words.
• given a number, identify one more and one less
• read, write and interpret mathematical statements involving addition (+), subtraction (–) and equals (=) signs
• solve one-step problems that involve addition and subtraction, using concrete objects and pictorial representations

Task: Look at the first page of That Dog! Provide children with number lines and ask children to count the dogs on the first page and find and mark that number on the number line using a paw print or dog drawing – model as a class. Tell the children that Penny would like another dog, how many dogs will she have then? Use more than, less than, equal to vocabulary. What happens next? - create a number sentence recognising that Penny did not immediately get another dog but now has the same amount of dogs, and a snake. Children should create pictorial number sentences for the different scenarios in the book.

English / literacy KS1
Pupils should be taught to:
develop pleasure in reading, motivation to read, vocabulary and understanding by:
• recognising simple recurring literary language in stories and poetry

devlop positive attitudes towards and stamina for writing by:
• writing for different purposes

consider what they are going to write before beginning by:
• writing down ideas and/or key words, including new vocabulary

Task: While reading That Dog! ask the children to point out areas of repetition in the language and discuss with the class what those areas of repetition tell us about Penny and Pat. Discuss Penny and Pat’s characters. The children should write a letter to Penny or Pat telling them what they think of their behaviour. Children should write their ideas down first, then teacher should model letter writing.