Bat vs Poss
By Alexa Moses & Illustrated by Anil Tortop
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Meek the possum and her sisters three are happy living in the sprawling paperbark tree - until the day Squabbles the bat moves in. A story about sharing and making friends. Meek lives with her three sisters, a gaggle of birds, lizards and other creatures next to a tumbledown terrace house. Everyone shares the space, and life is pretty sweet until the day a rude and messy fruit bat named Squabbles moves in - and demands everyone else move OUT. Will Meek be able to get rid of Squabbles, or is there a way for everyone to get along? Alexa Moses’s lively rhyming text is entertaining to read aloud and Anil Tortop’s illustrations are full of terrific detail and great characterisation.

Teacher Notes have been based on those supplied by the publisher. A full version is available on our website.

Themes:
- Natural environment – possums, bats and other Australian creatures
- Friends and friendship
- Sharing

Discussion Questions and Activities:
- These possums are obviously very friendly with their neighbours. What signs of friendliness can students identify in these images and in their actions?
- What aspects of friendship are explored in this text?
- Invite students to write a short piece about why friends are important and to share their thoughts by collecting all their pieces of writing on a notice board.
- Squabbles the bat finally learns the lesson that sharing is more fun than keeping things selfishly to himself. Do the possums and other creatures learn anything from their encounter with Squabbles?
- Discuss sharing with students and how this has made their lives more enjoyable. What things have they shared? For example, what feelings do they have when they share a favourite book or toy with someone else? What feelings do they have when someone refuses to share things with them?
- Examine the use of rhyming language in this text. Have fun writing another verse for this book.
- Write an acrostic poem using the letters in ‘possum’.
- There are many small details in these images which children will enjoy discovering. For example, in the opening page there is a row of cockatoos asleep on a branch; two birds kissing, a frog swinging on a swing; and a lantern, party lights and bunting decorating the tree in which the possums are living. Encourage students to examine each double page spread to discover the details within it.
- Invite students to draw an image of the tree depicted in this book, but then to add some quirky animals and details of their own to it.
- Fruit bats are also known as ‘megabats’ or ‘old world fruit bats’. They belong to the Pteropodidae family. Research these creatures.
- Possums are endearing creatures but students might be surprised to hear that possums are also regarded as pests in some domestic settings, just as this bat is in the book! Research possums and their habitats.
- Apart from possums and fruit bats, many Australian creatures are mentioned in this text: birds such as kookaburras, magpies, miner birds, and reptiles such as blue-tongued lizards. What other creatures did your students find in these pages? Invite them to conduct research on an animal of their choosing.