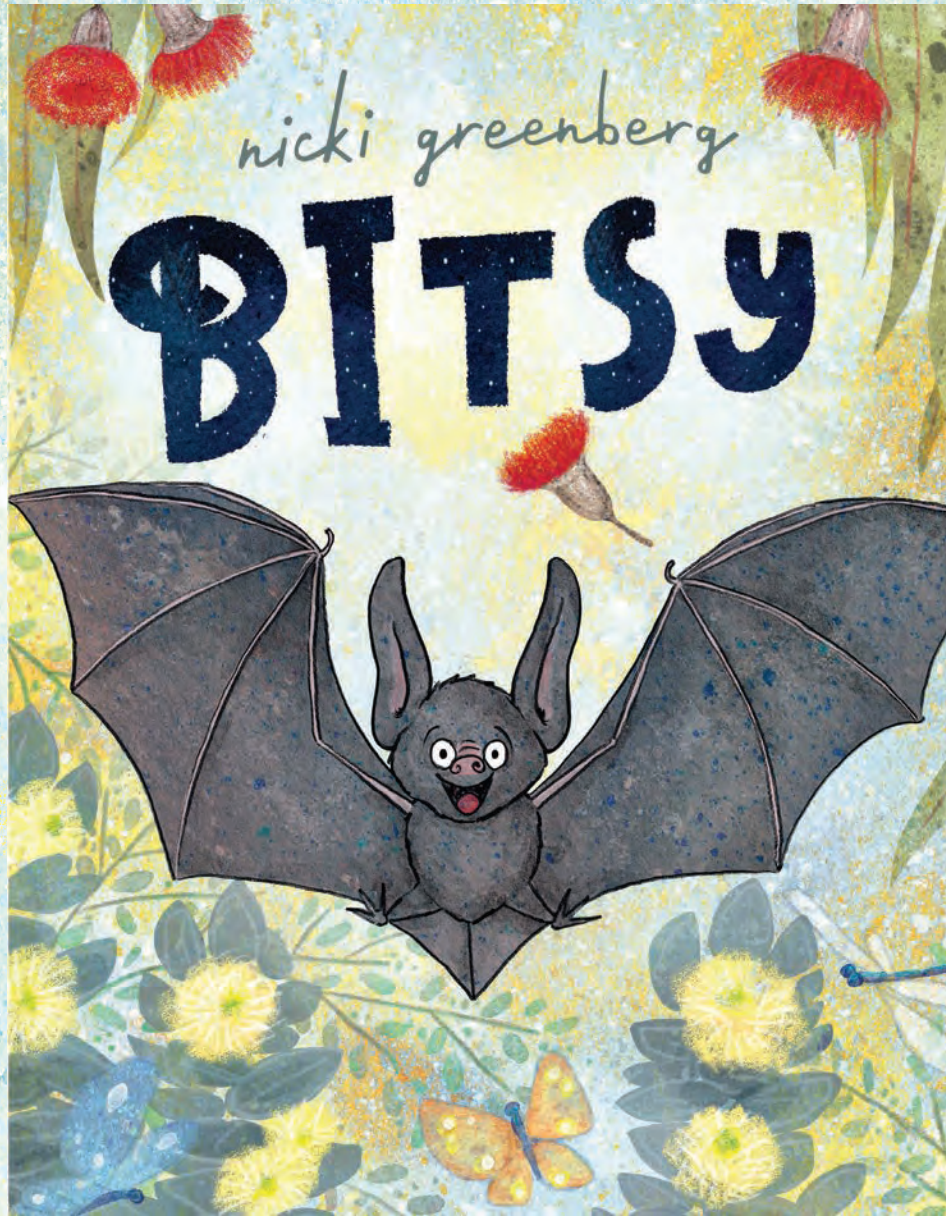


TEACHERS NOTES

# BITSY



WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY NICKI GREENBERG

## THEMES

- Curiosity
- Friendship
- Nature
- Differing perspectives

## SUITABLE FOR

Ages 3-7: Prep to Grade 2

## DESCRIPTION

*Through the velvety night, in whispering flight,  
Bats hurry homeward to hide from the light.  
Eager to huddle away from the sun,  
Cosy and comfortable...  
All except one.*



Meet Bitsy, a cheeky little bat with daring dreams. Nocturnal Bitsy wants to discover what life is like when the sun comes up. But is the daytime ready for Bitsy? A joyous story about spreading your wings, meeting your monsters, and weaving the magic of friendship.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nicki Greenberg is a writer and illustrator based in Melbourne, Australia. Her first books, The Digits series, were published when she was fifteen years old. She later spent ten years disguised as a lawyer, while maintaining a not-so-secret Other Life as a comics artist and children's book author. In 2008, Nicki's innovative graphic adaptation of *The Great Gatsby* was selected as a White Raven at the Bologna Book Fair. She then went on to tackle *Hamlet* in a lavish 425-page 'staging on the page'. *Hamlet* was joint winner of the 2011 Children's Book Council of Australia Picture Book of the Year Award. Inspired by her own young children, Nicki now dedicates most of her ink to books for younger readers. Her favourite activity is making books, but when she does manage to tear herself away from the desk Nicki loves to crochet bizarre sea creatures.

## A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

My experience working on *Bitsy* is a terrific example of the power of collaboration between authors and editors, and of the way a book can be transformed by that collaboration. When I first wrote the text, I imagined Bitsy as a cute little European bat in a typical storybook woodland setting. It was the wonderful editorial team at Affirm Press who suggested that Bitsy should be an Australian bat, in an Australian bush setting. And this opened up a thrilling world of illustrative possibilities. I absolutely loved researching and creating the bush environment for *Bitsy* in all its amazing variety. The supporting cast of bush creatures were a joy to work with. I loved every minute of working on *Bitsy*, and especially the way it pushed me to stretch and develop my illustration style. The result is a far richer, more textural and personal book.



# THEMES

## CURIOSITY

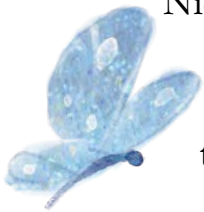


Bitsy longs to see her world in the daytime. Where Bitsy's friends are happy in their moonlit environment, she bucks the trend. Bitsy doesn't resist her routine; she simply wants to catch a glimpse of a different world, despite her family's warnings about the day monsters. When Bitsy finally gets the chance to see her world in the daylight, she capitalises on the opportunity and revels in the new sights and sounds. Bitsy has a child's natural inquisitiveness and young readers will recognise her desire to explore new landscapes and see new things.

## FRIENDSHIP

Bitsy and Mitzi give each other the courage to explore unknown territory. They show each other the best parts of their own worlds and demonstrate to other animals that day and night creatures can be friends. When Bitsy is pelted with gumnuts by fearful frogs and echidnas, Mitzi's gesture of friendship bridges the gap between the animals and shows that Bitsy is not a dangerous monster. 'There's nothing to fear,' Mitzi tells them. 'She's a creature, like you!'

## NATURE



Nicki Greenberg's breathtaking illustrations capture the Australian bush in all its glory. Readers can explore our native flora and fauna and meet some lesser-known native animals. *Bitsy* also demonstrates how the natural world changes from day to night, and the sleeping patterns of nocturnal animals.

## DIFFERING PERSPECTIVES

Bitsy's friends warn her not to go near the 'swooping and snatching and slithery-creeping' day creatures, but when she explores the daytime she finds that the day creatures think *she* is the dangerous monster! Bitsy and Mitzi are a testament to friendship's capacity to mend rifts between different groups and perspectives, and showcase the wonder of finding common ground through play.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Bitsy is the only bat who wants to explore the daytime. Why do her friends tell her to stay in the cave? Why do you think they don't want to go out during the day?

Bats are nocturnal, which means that they sleep during the day and stay awake at night. How many other nocturnal animals can you name?

This book shows the Australian bush at different times of the day. Find a picture of the bush during the night, a picture of the bush during the day and a picture of the bush at sunset. How are these pictures different? How do the colours change?

What do the daytime creatures say to each other when they first see Bitsy? Why do they throw gumnuts at her?

How do you think Bitsy feels when the day creatures pelt her with gumnuts? Take a look at the picture of Bitsy on page 18 – what is it about the picture that tells you how she is feeling?

There are lots of Australian animals in this book. Can you name them all?

Bitsy is scared and upset until Mitzi offers to play with her. Has anybody ever asked you to play with them when you felt lonely? Did that make you feel better?

When the daytime animals first meet Bitsy, they throw gumnuts at her. By sunset, the daytime animals are smiling at Bitsy while she plays with Mitzi. Have the daytime animals changed their minds about Bitsy? Why?

What do you think will happen now that Bitsy and Mitzi are friends? Will the day creatures and the night creatures start to get along? Will Bitsy's bat friends explore the daytime as well?



# ACTIVITIES

## ANIMAL EXPERTS

Choose your favourite Australian animal from this book. Draw a picture of it, then do some research and find two facts about your animal that you didn't know before. Write those facts underneath the picture. For example, did you know that numbats are insectivores? This means that they only eat insects!

## OH MARVELLOUS MORNING, OH GRAND AFTERNOON!

Have a look through *Bitsy* and watch how the colours of the Australian bush change between day, sunset and night. Next, draw three pictures of your backyard or a local park. Colour the first picture as though it were day, colour the second picture as though it were sunset and colour the third picture as though it were night. What colours should you use for each picture? Even if the objects in the picture stay the same, how does the colouring change?

## A TOUR OF THE NIGHT

Once the sun sets, Bitsy shows her new friend what the bush looks like at night. Draw some extra pages for this book where Bitsy shows Mitzi her favourite night sights, then write a description of what is happening in each picture. Can you make the descriptions rhyme, just like the text in the book?

## FROM A TO Z

There are some tricky words in this book, and it's OK if you don't know what they all mean. Put the following words in alphabetical order. Once you've done that, look them up in your dictionary and write the definitions in your workbook. If there are any other words in the book that you don't understand, look those up too!

1. Restless
2. Yammer
3. Radiant
4. Flee
5. Huddle

