

The Brown Dog

By Gina Inverarity & Illustrated by Greg Holfeld

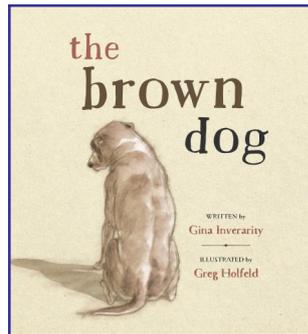
Publisher: Working Title Press

ISBN 9781921504747 SCIS: 1799282

\$24.99

**PICTURE BOOK OF
THE MONTH**

The brown dog often visits Henry on rainy, grey afternoons. Usually he doesn't hang around for long. But this time the brown dog decides to stay and Henry needs to find a way to make him leave.



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

Themes:

- Emotions
- Mood
- Melancholy

Discussion Questions and Activities:

- The Brown Dog is an exploration of emotions, moods and melancholy in children. It provides opportunities for class discussions about empathy and emotional intelligence, and could also be used with children in counselling.
- Become familiar with the book before sharing it with students.
 - ◇ Consider the emotional power of the story, and the use of metaphor in the text and the illustrations.
 - ◇ Consider how you might use this story with students you are working with.
 - ◇ Decide whether to use the book with a whole class, in small groups, or with individuals, knowing that you might need to allow time for sharing stories, discussion and reflection.
- You might introduce the book by looking at the front and back covers:
 - ◇ Discuss how the dog is depicted in both drawings. Do they suggest what the story is about? What emotions are expressed in the drawings?
 - ◇ Is there anything else about the cover that indicates the theme of the story - muted colour tones, sparse layout, other?
- Read the story aloud, and ask the students for their initial responses - this could be through discussion, writing or drawing:
 - ◇ What did you feel while you were listening to or reading the book?
 - ◇ Have you ever experienced the same kind of feeling? If so, describe how you felt.
 - ◇ How did the illustrations affect your response to the story?
 - ◇ How did your emotional response change when Henry was with Grandpa, having some new experiences?
- Do the students' responses indicate that they understand that the dog is a symbol for Henry's sadness and lack of energy?
- Discuss how metaphor is used throughout the book:
 - ◇ With the students, find sentences that show how Gina uses metaphors to show Henry's emotions.
 - ◇ Find examples in the text where the name 'Henry' can be substituted for 'the brown dog'. For example: *On Sunday morning (Henry) didn't want to move at all. Nothing caught (Henry's) attention, no matter what.*
- Gina uses simple language, through dialogue and action, to tell this complex story. In pairs or small groups, find examples like: *'Nah, not today, sorry.' Henry shut the door.*
- This serious subject has been presented in a gentle and positive way - anyone can feel a bit down at times and that is ok:
 - ◇ Discuss how Henry recognised and acknowledged 'the brown dog' when it turned up.
 - ◇ Discuss the reactions of the people who love Henry - Mum, Dad and Grandpa. How did they respond to his mood? How do you think they *felt* about it, and how did they try to help him? Did Grandpa turn up by accident, or did Mum and Dad talk to him about Henry's unusual behaviour? Why did the time with Grandpa help Henry? Why was Henry ready to send the dog away after spending time with Grandpa?
 - ◇ Discuss how Henry, with the help of his parents and Grandpa, came to understand what he had been feeling. What did he learn about how to handle the brown dog if it returned?