

**PETER BROWN:
HIS BOOKS MAKE WONDERFUL PETS**

Grades 1 and 2

**Hills Bank / ICCSD Foundation
Visiting Author/Illustrator
2014**

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The following materials were created to prepare ICCSD first and second grade students for an author/illustrator visit during Community Reading Month. Teacher librarians and classroom teachers are encouraged to use these materials to assist in building background knowledge about the author before his visit in October 2014.

This unit includes the following:

1. Biographical information about the author/illustrator with a bibliography
2. A matrix of seven books written and/or illustrated by Peter Brown with annotations, curricular ties, and themes
3. A lesson for each of the seven titles with suggestions for background building, discussion questions, and activities

PETER BROWN: HIS BOOKS MAKE WONDERFUL PETS
HILLS BANK/ICCSF FOUNDATION VISITING AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR
2014

Peter Brown is a children's book author and illustrator, known for creating characters ranging from a web-surfing bulldog to a tutu-wearing bear to a tiger who decides to embrace his wild roots. He was recognized nationally with a 2013 Caldecott Honor Award for *Creepy Carrots*, and his books have become familiar to local children due to two recent Iowa Goldfinch Award nominees: *The Curious Garden* (2011-2012) and *Creepy Carrots* (2014-2015). His latest book, *My Teacher is a Monster! (No I Am Not.)* was released in July of 2014. Peter takes pleasure in "finding the perfect balance of storytelling with words and storytelling with art," and this is evident in his books.

Peter was born in 1979 in Hopewell, New Jersey, the same community in which he was raised. His mother was a K-3 special education teacher, and his father, an astrophysicist, worked for NASA. Peter discovered early in his life that he enjoyed drawing and writing stories. He especially loved drawing animals, including local animals from the "farms and fields" near his New Jersey home and wild animals he saw at the zoo. He remembers bringing frogs and turtles home after playing outside, only to hear his mother's discouraging opinion that "wild animals make terrible pets." (Little did she know that her words would one day become the basis for Peter's book called *Children Make Terrible Pets!*)

His grandfather, an amateur painter, had an influence on Peter's eventual career choice, modeling the idea that making art isn't just for kids. Peter's mother also helped nurture his talents; when six-year-old Peter's dog disappeared overnight (and then returned home safely), his mother helped him put together his first book – *The Adventure of Me and My Dog, Buffy* – a fictionalized and embellished account of what his dog encountered while away from home.

By the time Peter was in second grade he had been placed in his school's advanced art program, in which he continued to participate until graduation. He enjoyed math, science, and literature, but took art "more seriously than anything else." He attended summer art programming, took art lessons, and enrolled in animation classes at a community college to get a head start on his dream of becoming a Disney animator.

Peter's art teacher at Hopewell Valley High School recognized his talent and encouraged him apply to the best art schools, including Art Center College of

Design in Pasadena, California. He graduated from high school in 1997, and in the fall of that year Peter went to Pasadena to study illustration. However, his plan to become an animator changed after two years, due in part to his “impatience” with the prospect of working up through the ranks at a large animation studio. Once he realized that he was more interested in telling his own stories and illustrating them, he switched his studies to children’s books, graduating from art school with a BFA in 2001.

After college, Peter spent a year traveling and working odd jobs, eventually settling in New York City where he could be close to the publishing industry. He worked as a background painter for animated television shows until he received a contract to write and illustrate his first book, *The Flight of the Dodo*, which was published in 2005.

Today Peter lives in Brooklyn, New York, where he spends most days working in his at-home studio. He listens to music while writing and NPR while illustrating. Peter spends an hour or two each day reading, which he says is “a huge part” of his job. He also enjoys experimenting with different styles of illustration because he feels that each story has its own unique qualities (and it keeps him from getting bored). You can learn more about Peter Brown and his books by visiting his website, <http://www.peterbrownstudio.com> .

Books Written and Illustrated by Peter Brown:

FLIGHT OF THE DODO. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2005.

CHOWDER. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2006.

THE FABULOUS BOUNCING CHOWDER. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2007.

THE CURIOUS GARDEN. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2009.

CHILDREN MAKE TERRIBLE PETS. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2010.

YOU WILL BE MY FRIEND! New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2011.

MR. TIGER GOES WILD. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2013.

MY TEACHER IS A MONSTER! (NO, I AM NOT.) New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2014.

Books Illustrated by Peter Brown:

Weatherill, Cat. **BARKBELLY.** New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006.

Weatherill, Cat. **SNOWBONE.** New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007.

Kimmel, Haven. **KALINE KLATTERMASTER'S TREEHOUSE**. New York: Atheneum, 2008.

Black, Michael Ian. **PURPLE KANGAROO**. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009.

Reynolds, Aaron. **CREEPY CARROTS**. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012.

Sources of Biographical Information:

- "2013 Caldecott Children's Book Illustrator Peter Brown Inspired by N.J. Childhood." Web. 19 June 2014. <http://www.nj.com/hunterdon-county-democrat/index.ssf/2013/02/2013_caldecott_childrens_book.html >
- "About." *Peter Brown Studio*. Web. 19 June 2014. <<http://www.peterbrownstudio.com/about/#.U6zCFvldWSo>>
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- "Brown, Peter." *Something About the Author*. Volume 178. Detroit: Gale Research, 2007. Print.
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- "Interview with Peter Brown, September 2006." *Embracing the Child*. Web. 23 June 2014. <<http://www.embracingthechild.org/abrown.html>>
- "Peter Brown." *Amazon*. Web. 19 June 2014. <<http://www.amazon.com/Peter-Brown/e/B001HCWRDI>>
- "Peter Brown Interview." *YouTube*. Web. 19 June 2014. <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5w2vC-9An0k>>
- "Peter Brown Makes One Really Good Book About How Children Make Terrible Pets*." *Seven Impossible Things Before Breakfast*. Web. 19 June 2014. <<http://blaine.org/sevenimpossiblethings/?p=2025>>
- "Picture Books 'More Like Film and Poetry Than Novels.'" *Newsworks*. Web. 19 June 2014. <<http://www.newsworks.org/index.php/local/item/39219>>
- "PW KidsCast: A Conversation with Peter Brown." *Publishers Weekly*. Web. 24 June 2014. <<http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/podcasts/index.html?channel=5&podcast=229>>
- "Seven Questions Over Breakfast with Peter Brown." *Seven Impossible Things Before Breakfast*. Web. 19 June 2014. <<http://blaine.org/sevenimpossiblethings/?p=1920>>

Peter Brown: His Books Make Wonderful Pets

TITLE	TOPICS/ CURRICULAR TIES	TYPE OF LITERATURE	ANNOTATION	THEME
<i>Children Make Terrible Pets</i>	Pets Family	Fantasy	When Lucy, a young bear, discovers a boy in the woods, she asks her mother if she can have him as a pet, only to find him impossible to train.	Children really do make terrible pets.
<i>Chowder</i>	Dogs Individuality Friendship Family	Fantasy	A bulldog named Chowder has never fit in with the other neighborhood dogs, but he makes friends with the animals at the local petting zoo.	Determination can help you reach your goals.
<i>Creepy Carrots</i>	Imagination Rabbits Scary stories	Fantasy	Jasper Rabbit can't resist eating the carrots that grow in Crackenhopper Field until he begins hearing and seeing creepy carrots wherever he goes.	Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between imagination and reality.
<i>The Curious Garden</i>	Gardening City life Nature	Realistic Fiction	Liam discovers a hidden garden and with careful tending spreads color throughout the gray city.	One person can make a big difference.
<i>Mr. Tiger Goes Wild</i>	Animals Behavior Habitats	Fantasy	Bored with city life and the proper behavior it requires, Mr. Tiger has a wild idea that leads him to discover his true nature.	Happiness comes from being true to oneself.
<i>My Teacher is a Monster! (No, I Am Not.)</i>	Teachers Students Perspective	Realistic Fiction	Bobby has a teacher who is loud and yells. She is a monster! But one day he finds his teacher at his favorite spot in the park and learns that monsters are not always what they seem.	People (and monsters) are not always what they seem.
<i>You Will Be My Friend!</i>	Friendship Animals	Fantasy	A young bear named Lucy starts her day determined to make a new friend, but her enthusiasm leads to all sorts of problems. Just as she is about to give up, an unexpected friend finds her.	Be yourself; you'll find friends who like you just the way you are.

Children Make Terrible Pets

by Peter Brown

Type of literature: Fantasy

Characters:

Lucy—a girl bear who is anxious to have a pet

Squeaker—a human boy who becomes Lucy’s pet

Setting: Present day; in the forest where Lucy and Squeaker live

Plot: When Lucy, a young bear, discovers a boy in the woods, she asks her mother if she can have him as a pet. Lucy names her new pet “Squeaker,” and they have great fun playing together until Lucy tries to train him. Just as Lucy decides that he might be untrainable, Squeaker runs back home to his family. Lucy decides that he belongs with his family, not with her.

Point of view: Third person limited (from Lucy’s point of view)

Theme: Children really do make terrible pets.

Pre-Reading and Background:

- Read the quote from the author on the back inside jacket flap; ask students to think about how they would answer the question, “Would you like it if a wild animal made YOU its pet?” (In the “Seven Impossible Things Before Breakfast” print interview [link on his web site www.peterbrownstudio.com in the “Store and Freebies” section], Peter explains this event from his childhood in more detail.)
- Read the poem “Choices” by Brod Bagert (found in his book *Giant Children*) and ask students to think about all of the different options available when choosing a pet.

Discussion: [RL.1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.6, 1.7; RL.2.1, 2.3, 2.7]

- Why does Lucy want to keep the boy as a pet? What are her mom’s conditions for agreeing to let her keep him?
- Why does the boy say “Squeak,” and why does Lucy call him “Squeaker?” (According to the author, the boy doesn’t speak “Bear,” so when Lucy hears him talk, it just sounds like squeaks to her.)
- Why doesn’t Squeaker seem like a pet anymore when Lucy finds him eating with his family?
- The last illustration shows Lucy and an elephant. What does this ending mean?

- According to the story why do children make terrible pets? In real life would children make good pets? Why or why not?
- What else could Lucy have for a pet? Can any animal or creature be a pet? Why or why not?
- In the “Seven Impossible Things Before Breakfast” print interview (link on his web site www.peterbrownstudio.com in the “Store and Freebies” section), Peter explains how he worked to make the book “warm and friendly.” Read that excerpt to students, asking them to give examples of how the book is warm and friendly and also suggest changes that would make the book scarier.

Activities: [RL1.9; RL2.6; W1.1, 1.3, 1.8; W2.1, 2.3, 2.8]

- Ask students to imagine that they brought home a wild animal for a pet; then ask them to write a story, describing the wild animal they found and what happens when they take it home.
- Read students another story about a human as a pet or told from the pet’s point of view. (Two possibilities are *Lulu and the Brontosaurus* by Judith Viorst and *That New Animal* by Emily Jenkins.) Ask students to compare one of those books to *Children Make Terrible Pets*.
- Ask students to make a list of animals that make good pets and a list of animals that make bad pets. Then ask them to pick one animal from each list and explain in words or pictures why that animal is in that list.
- As a class project, use books and web sites about pets to research pet ownership, focusing on the responsibilities of caring for a pet. Make a list of pros and cons for having a pet. Then ask each student to write a paragraph explaining why he/she would or would not want to have a pet.
- Ask students to write a continuation of the story, describing what happens with Lucy and her new pet elephant.
- *TeachingBooks.net* (available through *Iowa AEA Online*) has additional activity ideas for *Children Make Terrible Pets*.

Visit Peter Brown’s website, www.peterbrownstudio.com, for more information about Peter and his books.

Chowder

by Peter Brown

Type of literature: Fantasy

Characters:

Chowder - an unusual pet bulldog

Madge Wubbington - Chowder's owner/mom

Bernie Wubbington - Chowder's owner/dad

Petting zoo animals: cow, horses, pigs, sheep, goat, duck, chicken

Setting: Present day; large city

Plot: Chowder, an English bulldog who acts like a human, doesn't fit in with other dogs in his neighborhood. When he learns of a new petting zoo in the area, he sees an opportunity to make new friends and develops a plan to meet the animals who live there. But Chowder still has to overcome obstacles, such as retrieving the ball he accidentally kicks into a tree, before he has a chance of being accepted.

Point of view: Third Person limited (from Chowder's point of view)

Theme: Determination can help you reach your goals.

Pre-Reading and Background:

- Chowder is an unusual dog who doesn't act like most pets. Make a list of how dogs typically behave: where they sleep, what they eat, what they do for entertainment, etc.
- Define new vocabulary: quirky (peculiar).
- How important is it for humans to act like others when trying to fit in with a group? Do you think this is important for animals too?
- Have you ever been to a petting zoo? How is it different from a regular zoo?
- Chowder is a type of food. Why do you think someone would name their dog Chowder? (Fun fact: Peter Brown has a friend who grew up in Boston and enjoys making "chowda." Notice the Wubbington's license plate!)

Discussion: [RL.1.1, 1.2, 1.7; RL.2.1, 2.2, 2.7]

- Do you think the Wubbingtons are quirky? Give some examples.
- Why do you think the Wubbingtons treat Chowder like a human child?

- What are some of the unusual things that Chowder does that are not typical of dogs? Which of his actions are highly unlikely dog behaviors? Are there any things he does that are physically impossible?
- Did the petting zoo animals do anything that was not normal?
- How would this story be different if Chowder was a cat? A turtle? A guinea pig?

Activities: [RL.1.7, 1.9; RL.2.7, 2.8; W.1.7, 1.8; W.2.7, 2.8]

- Study the illustrations to find examples of Chowder doing things that are not dog-like. Make a list.
- Find out where the nearest petting zoos in our area are located. Calculate how much it would cost for your family to visit one of them.
- Rewrite this story from another character's point of view, such as one of the petting zoo animals, one of the Wubbingtons, or a customer at Food Ranch.
- Read nonfiction books, ask an expert, and/or use the Web to research what supplies are necessary for owning and taking care of a dog. Dog training information and tips can be found on many websites, including the following:
 - <http://www.cesarsway.com/> (Cesar Milan, "The Dog Whisperer")
 - <http://www.aspca.org/> (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals)
 - <http://www.humanesociety.org/> (The Humane Society of the United States)
- Peter Brown's father worked at NASA, "designing and building cameras that go on satellites and up into space." Because of his father's work, Peter was introduced to astronomy and telescopes at a young age, and he thought it would be fun for the animals in *Chowder* to use telescopes to see each other. Learn more about the different kinds of telescopes and how they are used; a good starting point is <http://www.kidsastronomy.com/telescopesB.htm>.
- Look through a telescope if one is available.

Visit Peter Brown's website, www.peterbrownstudio.com, for more information about Peter and his books.

Creepy Carrots

written by Aaron Reynolds; illustrated by Peter Brown

Type of literature: Fantasy

Characters:

Jasper Rabbit—a young rabbit who LOVES carrots

Setting: Present day; in Crackenhopper Field and at Jasper’s home

Plot: Jasper Rabbit can’t resist eating the carrots that grow in Crackenhopper Field. Soon he starts to hear and see creepy carrots wherever he goes—or does he? Are there really carrots following him, or is it his imagination? Jasper’s parents tell him that there are no such things as creepy carrots, but they don’t convince Jasper. When Jasper builds a wall around Crackenhopper Field to keep the carrots inside, the reader learns that this was all part of the carrots’ plan to stop Jasper from eating them.

Point of view: Third Person

Theme: Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between imagination and reality.

Pre-Reading and Background:

- Discuss the book’s title. What does creepy mean? What makes a book creepy? Would you usually consider carrots creepy? Why or why not?
- Before reading the book, show students the first 2-3 min. of Peter Brown’s video “The Creepy Carrots Zone” (link on his web site www.peterbrownstudio.com in the “Books” section). It has a beginning that will catch students’ attention and creates the mood of the book. (Save the rest of the video for later.)

Discussion: [RL.1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.7; RL.2.1, 2.3, 2.7]

- While reading the story (before the end), stop and ask students if the carrots are real or imaginary. Ask them to support their viewpoints with reasons and details from the story.
- Describe how Jasper feels about carrots. How do your feelings about carrots compare/contrast with Jasper’s feelings?
- Describe the carrots that Jasper thinks he sees. What sounds do they make? Are they “creepy?”
- Describe several situations where Jasper thinks he sees carrots. In each situation identify what makes it seem real and what makes it seem imaginary.

- Why does Jasper decide to build a fence around Crackenhopper Field? Does Jasper’s plan work?
- What do you discover about the carrots at the end of the book? Were you surprised?
- Peter Brown illustrated the book to make it creepy—to make the illustrations agree with the title and plot. Do you think the book is creepy? Why or why not?

Activities: [W1.3; W2.3]

- Watch the remainder of “The Creepy Carrots Zone” video to learn more about Peter Brown’s illustrations.
- A video is available on youtube.com of Peter Brown speaking at the National Book Festival about *Creepy Carrots* winning the Caldecott Honor Medal (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbOI0bDPHuI>). Watch the section of the video starting at 10:30 where he demonstrates how he drew the carrots and the rabbit Jasper.
- “The Twilight Zone” TV show influenced Peter Brown’s illustrations for this book. Show students an excerpt from an episode of this show. Several are available on youtube.com; be sure to preview to confirm appropriateness for 1st and 2nd graders.
- Ask students to use orange construction paper or other orange objects to create their own creepy carrots, or they can use Kid Pix or another drawing program to draw their own creepy carrots.
- Ask students to write another ending for the story, answering the question “What would have happened if Jasper hadn’t built a fence around Crackenhopper Field?”
- *TeachingBooks.net* (available through *Iowa AEA Online*) has additional activity ideas for *Creepy Carrots*.

Visit Peter Brown’s website, www.peterbrownstudio.com, for more information about Peter and his books.

The Curious Garden

by Peter Brown

Type of literature: Realistic Fiction

Characters:

Liam – a curious boy who enjoys spending time outside

Setting: Present day; large city (based on New York City)

Plot: Liam lives in a big, dreary city with lots of concrete and very little vegetation. While exploring some abandoned railway tracks, Liam is surprised to discover wildflowers growing - but not thriving. He decides to learn how to take care of the plants, and with his care, the greenery expands throughout the city.

Point of view: Third Person limited (from Liam's point of view)

Theme: One person can make a big difference.

Pre-Reading and Background:

- Why don't big cities have a lot of places where plants grow? Explain that many big cities have deliberately created parks and other green spaces for their residents to enjoy.
- Would it bother you to live in a place with no vegetation? Why or why not?
- Discuss the process of planting and tending to a garden. Compare this process to the random ways in which wild plants pop up and often thrive.
- What does the word curious mean? How do you think a garden could be curious?
- Show this video that excerpts a section from the middle of the book:
<http://www.soup2nuts.tv/books.html>. Ask students to make predictions about what happens in the other parts of the story.

Discussion: [RL.1.2, 1.5, 1.7; RL.2.2, 2.3, 2.7; SL.1.2; SL.2.2]

- What does Peter Brown mean when he says that the garden is curious? Talk about how personification can be used in stories, and how the use of this literary device is not the same as writing fantasy.
- It looks like Liam is singing to his garden. Have you ever heard of people who talk or sing to their plants? Many believe it helps plants grow better. What do you think?
- Do you think you would like to take on a project like Liam's garden? In what ways are you like Liam? How are you different?

- How did Liam’s garden affect other people? Why would it be nice for a big city to have places like this for gardens to grow?
- Notice the young blond woman who appears with Liam on the pink picnic blanket. Now notice the family working in the garden on the next-to-last page. Who do you think these people are?

Activities: [RL.1.5, 1.7, 1.9; RL.2.7; W.1.7, 1.8; W.2.7, 2.8]

- Compare the pictures of the city on the first and last pages of this book. Make a list of as many differences as you can find.
- Challenge yourself to spot Liam in the illustrations. He’s on almost every page; look for his red hair.
- Read *On Meadowview Street* by Henry Cole. What similarities does this book have to *The Curious Garden*? What differences do you notice?
- On the front cover and elsewhere in the illustrations, Peter Brown has drawn topiaries – trees that have been shaped to look like something else. Read *Grandpa Green* by Lane Smith, another book that shows lots of topiaries.
- Find out how plants improve air quality for humans. Consider adding a live plant or two to your classroom.
- Learn more about keeping a garden by checking out some books from the library and/or searching online together. List some of a gardener’s responsibilities.
- Peter Brown got the idea for this book from a real place on Manhattan’s West Side called The High Line, a 1930s-era elevated railway that has not been used since 1980. In 1999, a conservation group was organized to transform the High Line into a public park. Learn more about the history and progress of this project at the following website: <http://www.thehighline.org/about/high-line-history>.
- Download the Curious Garden Educator Guide. A link can be found in the “Store & Freebies” section of Peter Brown’s website; from there, search for the book title and then click on the resulting link to download the guide. The guide contains ideas and activities for integrating the topics and themes of this book across the curriculum.

Visit Peter Brown’s website, www.peterbrownstudio.com, for more information about Peter and his books.

Mr. Tiger Goes Wild by Peter Brown

Type of literature: Fantasy

Characters:

Mr. Tiger – a very proper but dissatisfied tiger

Setting: Any time; a city inhabited by animals and the wilderness nearby

Plot: Well-dressed and well-mannered Mr. Tiger grows tired of always being proper and makes some dramatic changes in his lifestyle. When his wild behavior becomes unacceptable to the other animals, he leaves the city to live in the wilderness. Although he enjoys the freedom, he becomes lonely and decides to return to the city. Upon his return, he finds that in his absence the other animals have also adopted a more casual style and that they have begun to accept each other regardless of how they look and act.

Point of view: Third Person limited (from Mr. Tiger’s point of view)

Theme: Happiness comes from being true to oneself.

Pre-Reading and Background:

- In this book, Mr. Tiger and the other animals live in houses in a city. Is this going to be a realistic story? Discuss where tigers really live.
- Brainstorm some stories (books and/or movies) in which animals are anthropomorphic (they walk and talk and live very much like humans). Don’t forget to include Peter Brown’s other books in your list!
- Why do you think authors create anthropomorphic characters?
- Discuss why it is important for each person to be able to show his or her “true self” and for the rest of us to accept that person for who s/he is.

Discussion: [RL.1.2, 1.3; RL.2.2, 2.3; SL.1.2; SL.2.2]

- Compare the differences in Mr. Tiger’s behavior in the beginning, middle, and end of the story.
- How long do you think Mr. Tiger stayed in the wilderness before he got lonely? How long would you want to live by yourself?
- How was Mr. Tiger’s life different when he returned to the city? Do you think he will get bored again? Why or why not?

- Notice Peter Brown’s use of color in his illustrations of the city; Tiger and his speech bubbles are orange, but everything else is black and white. Compare the lack of color in the city to the many colors used in illustrating the wilderness. What does the use of color tell the reader about these two settings?
- Peter Brown says that this is his “most autobiographical” book. What does that tell you about his personality?

Activities: [RL.1.5, 1.7, 1.9; RL.2.7; W.1.7, 1.8; W.2.7, 2.8]

- Make a two-column T-chart comparing occasions when people might need to use their best behaviors vs. when it is okay to let loose and show their “wild sides.”
- Read *The Story of Babar, the Little Elephant* by Jean de Brunhoff. Compare the two books, making a list of similarities and differences.
- Peter Brown used a computer to make some of his illustrations; he scanned drawings he had made of flowers and other plants and placed them onto his pages. See if you can identify where he might have used this method.
- Research tigers and their habitats. Learn about the different varieties of tigers, where they live, what they eat, and which types of animals share their habitats. Iowa AEA Online is a good place to begin your research; Britannica Online has age-appropriate information (<http://www.iowaaeaonline.org/>).
- Download the Mr. Tiger Activity Kit, found in the “Store & Freebies” section of Peter Brown’s website. Activities include a matching game and some crafts.

Visit Peter Brown’s website, www.peterbrownstudio.com, for more information about Peter and his books.

My Teacher is a Monster! (No, I Am Not.)

by Peter Brown

Type of literature: Realistic Fiction

Characters:

- Bobby – a young boy who doesn't always behave in school
- Ms. Kirby – Bobby's teacher, who Bobby believes is a monster

Setting: Present day; Bobby's school and in a park

Plot: According to a young boy named Bobby, he has the worst teacher. Ms. Kirby yells, and if he throws paper airplanes, she won't allow him to enjoy recess. She is a monster! Luckily, Bobby can go to his favorite spot in the park on weekends to play. Until one day... he finds Ms. Kirby there! After the initial awkwardness, they feed the ducks together. When Bobby saves Ms. Kirby's favorite hat and when she helps him to fly a paper airplane, they grow to better understand each other.

Point of view: Third person limited (from Bobby's point of view)

Theme: People (and monsters) are not always what they seem.

Pre-Reading and Background:

- When we talk about someone "acting like a monster," what do we mean? What kind of actions does that phrase imply?
- Think about your teachers. Are teachers always happy? Are they always grumpy? What do you think causes their behavior to change? Then think about your behavior in school. Does your behavior also change? Why?
- Why is it important for students to follow directions in school?

Discussion: [RL.1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.6, 1.7, 1.9; RL.2.1, 2.3, 2.6, 2.7]

- How does Bobby act at school? Why? In what ways does Bobby's behavior affect how Ms. Kirby treats him?
- How does Bobby feel about going to the park? How does he react when he sees Ms. Kirby there? How does Ms. Kirby react when she sees Bobby?
- Have you ever seen your teachers outside of school? What did you think? How did you feel?
- What does Bobby do that makes Ms. Kirby say, "Bobby, you're my hero!"?
- What activities do Bobby and Ms. Kirby do together at the park?

- How have Bobby’s and Ms. Kirby’s feelings about each other changed after their day together at the park? How do they act differently when they are back in school?
- Look at the pictures again, taking note of the progression of Ms. Kirby’s face and body from monster to human. Make sure that students understand that Ms. Kirby doesn’t change; Bobby’s impression of her does. How do the illustrations help tell the story?
- Were you surprised to find out that Bobby’s teacher isn’t actually a monster?
- Have you ever had one opinion of someone after you first met him/her but then had that opinion change after you got to know him/her better? Describe your experience and how you felt about it.

Activities: [RL1.9; RL2.6; W1.3; W2.3]

- Read *Miss Nelson is Missing* by Harry Allard. In what ways are Viola Swamp and Ms. Kirby the same? In what ways are Miss Nelson and Ms. Kirby the same?
- Read *Arthur’s Teacher Moves In* by Marc Brown. What does Arthur discover about Mr. Ratburn that is surprising to him? What is a book-to-book connection between Peter Brown’s book and this Arthur book?
- Read and discuss another story in which students change their perspective of their teacher, like *Miss Fox’s Class Gets It Wrong* by Eileen Spinelli, and compare it to this story.
- The story is told from Bobby’s point of view; the illustrations of Ms. Kirby change as Bobby’s view of her changes. Retell the story from Ms. Kirby’s point of view.
- Imagine that you meet one of your teachers somewhere out of school. Create a story about what happens, using words and/or pictures.
- In school, Bobby gets in trouble for flying a paper airplane in class, but in the park, Bobby and Ms. Kirby enjoy “the single greatest paper airplane flight in history!” Make paper airplanes and hold a contest to see which one can fly the farthest.
- Download the *My Teacher is a Monster* Activity Kit, found in the “Home” section of Peter Brown’s website. Activities include games, a coloring sheet, and directions for making paper airplanes.

Visit Peter Brown’s website, www.peterbrownstudio.com, for more information about Peter and his books.

You Will Be My Friend!

by Peter Brown

Type of literature: Fantasy

Characters:

Lucy—a girl bear who is anxious to make a friend

A flamingo who wears a green bowtie and is not like the other flamingos

Setting: Present day; in the forest where Lucy lives

Plot: A young bear named Lucy starts her day determined to make a new friend, but her enthusiasm leads to all sorts of problems. She is too forceful, causing animals to run away from her. She tries to be like other animals instead of being herself. Just as she is about to give up, a unique flamingo asks her to be his friend, and she gladly accepts.

Point of view: Third person limited (from Lucy’s point of view)

Theme: Be yourself; you’ll find friends who like you just the way you are.

Pre-Reading and Background:

- As a class make a list of the qualities that make a good friend.
- Read the book’s title and discuss how its meaning differs from the question, “Will you be my friend?”

Discussion: [RL.1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.7; RL.2.1, 2.3, 2.7]

- What is Lucy’s plan for finding a new friend? Why doesn’t Lucy’s plan work? Give several examples.
- Why are the human children squeaking when they play with Lucy? (See the discussion questions for *Children Make Terrible Pets*.)
- What does Lucy mean when she says, “You WILL be my friend! I can wait.” to an egg in a nest.
- What advice does Lucy give herself when she is having trouble making friends? Is that good or bad advice?
- Lucy finally makes friends with a flamingo. Describe that flamingo; is he like the other flamingos? Explain how and why this friendship works.

Activities: [RL.1.9; W.1.3, 1.8; W.2.3, 2.8]

- Read another book about two different people/animals who are friends and compare it to *You Will Be My Friend!* (Possibilities are *Bink & Gollie* by Kate DiCamillo, *Cork & Fuzz*

by Dori Chaconas, *Boy+Bot* by Ame Dyckman, *Squid & Octopus: Friends for Always* by Tao Nyeu.)

- *Flora and the Flamingo* by Molly Idle is a wordless book about a friendship between a girl named Flora and a flamingo. Show students the pictures and ask them to write words for the story, describing the actions and the developing friendship.
- Ask students to write their own story describing a fun adventure they have had with a friend, or ask them to use their imagination to describe an adventure they would like to have with a friend.
- Have a class meeting and make a list of the qualities of being a good friend. (Peter Brown shares three lessons about being a friend on the back inside jacket flap of the book.) Post this list in the classroom. Have a discussion about what students should do if someone is not being a good friend.
- Lucy doesn't have a friend for most of the story. Ask students to think about a time when they saw someone who didn't have a friend. Discuss what they could do in a situation like this.
- Go to the following web site for additional activity ideas for *You Will Be My Friend*:
https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/_assets/downloads/lbyr/PR2487_YWBMF_ActivitySheets_Final_LR.pdf

Visit Peter Brown's website, **www.peterbrownstudio.com**, for more information about Peter and his books.