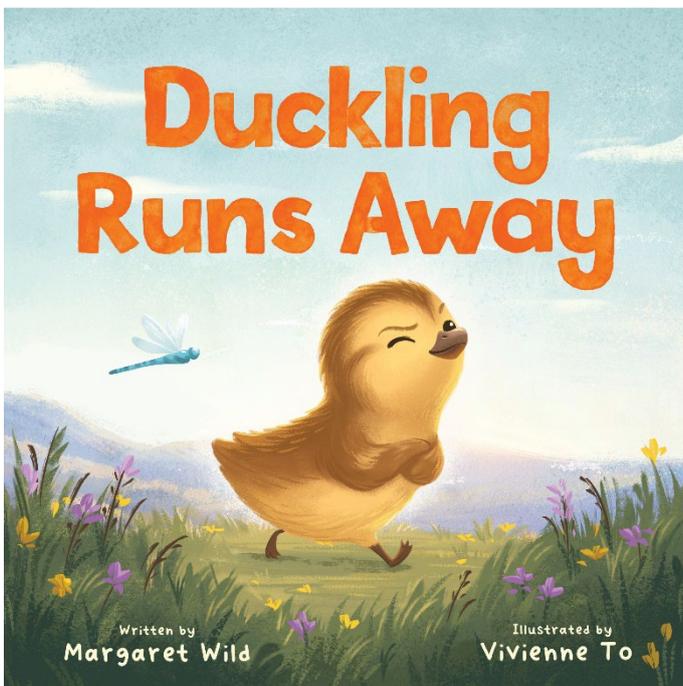


# Duckling Runs Away

By Margaret Wild,  
Illustrated by Vivienne To



A warm, comforting story about a cross little duckling and her mother's unconditional love, from the award-winning and bestselling team behind *The Sloth Who Came To Stay*.

**RECOMMENDED FOR**

Preschool and K-Year 1

**THEMES**

Independence, defiance, identity, unconditional love, mothers, family, animals

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## SYNOPSIS

Duckling won't play leapfrog with the lambs or paddle with the piglets – she's running away and never coming back. Until night starts to fall and Duckling realises there is somewhere she'd much rather be. Luckily, a mother's love is never far away.

Perennial themes, cute animals and a lovely heartwarming ending make this children's picture book a strong follow-up to the bestselling *The Sloth Who Came to Stay*.

## A WORD FROM MARGARET WILD

'The idea for this book actually arose from an incident more than forty years ago. My little niece had an argument with her mother, so she packed up her green bunny, her piggy bank and an apple. She then rode off on her trike, declaring she was running away and never coming back. She got as far as the next-door neighbour, then returned home very pleased with herself. It was a small show of independence and spirit, which ended happily for everyone.'

'In this story I put Duckling in a safe farmyard setting. She knows everyone and they know her, so there's no chance she will be put in harm's way. And there's no questioning the affection and love between Duckling and her mother.'



## A WORD FROM VIVIENNE TO



'The first pass of my sketches was completely different from the final version. It was very much character-based, without much emphasis given to the setting and location. After some great feedback I decided to set the story on an Australian farm. I'm very much a city girl, but my husband grew up on a small hobby farm filled with all kinds of animals. Whenever we visited his parents, I'd hear about his childhood there and it seemed so idyllic with its rolling hills, spectacular sunsets and huge gum trees.'

## CLASSROOM DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- Let's look closely at the cover and see if we can answer these questions:
  - How is a 'duckling' different to a 'duck'?
  - What does it mean to 'run away'?
  - What do you think Duckling is feeling about running away?
  - Will this be a funny or sad story?
  - What was it on the cover – title, colours, image or all three – that helped you answer the previous question?
  - What do you think might happen to Duckling in the story?
- Now let's open the book and read the story through once. After finishing, let's see if we can come up with answers for these questions:
  - Why did Duckling decide to run away?

- Did Duckling's mother seem worried about her running away?
  - What might Duckling be thinking and feeling when she stomps away?
  - Did her thinking and feelings change as the day progressed?
  - Why do you think they might have changed?
  - Do you think she might run away again? Why or why not?
  - Did you like the story of Duckling? Why or why not?
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- The English language is full of words that can mean the same or similar things. Can you come up with different words that mean having an 'argument'? [Hint: fight, disagreement, quarrel.] It is a writer's job to come up with the very best word to use to tell their story. In this case, Margaret Wild used the word 'squabble' for the fight between Duckling and her mother because that word tells us that the fight is over something very unimportant. Let's look at the pages where Duckling walks past the other farm animals sleeping with their mothers and see if you can come up with ideas why Margaret Wild chose to use the words 'nestling', 'nuzzling', 'squashing up to', 'snoozing', 'cuddling' and 'snuggling up to' instead of just the words 'sleeping with'.
  - Sometimes the way words appear on a page also helps tell the story in a more interesting way. Can you see how words, such as 'hide', 'swing', 'paddle', 'leap', 'why', and 'warm wings' are different to all the other words? And sometimes devices such as **italics** (words that slant) and **fonts** (the style a word is written) can help us recognise key words in the story. Let's turn to the page with the words, 'And into the **warm wings** of *her* mother' and talk about how colour, italics and font emphasise the moment that Duckling realises how wonderful her own mother and home are.
  - It's always interesting to look very closely at illustrations because background details can expand the story beyond what the words tell us. Let's re-read the story and see if we can find clues that tell us that Duckling lives on an Australian farm. [Hint: can you find kangaroos, an echidna, a magpie, a wombat, three cockatoos and a possum sitting in a tree?]

- **Body Language:** Sometimes the way we use our body can express emotions as well, if not better than, our words. Look closely at the first few images of Duckling and describe how her face and body tell us she is very, very angry. Without using words, how might you show that you were feeling angry? Turn to the page where it is getting dark and Duckling is starting to get a little frightened. How does her body language here show how she is feeling? How might you show that you were feeling the same way? Now turn to the final images of Duckling where she is feeling happy and content and describe her body language. How might you use your face and body to show similar feelings?
  - Make a game of it! Your teacher will write down feelings such as anger, fear, amusement, boredom, love, tiredness and tranquillity on index cards (one card per emotion) and ask you to pick a card and act out the emotion printed on it without using a word or sound.
- How do you think Duckling's feelings for her mother and home changed after running away? Go back to the beginning of the story and look closely at Duckling's mother. Do you think her feelings have changed at all at the end of the story? What do you think the story tells us about a mother's love?

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Margaret Wild is one of Australia's most respected picture book creators whose award-winning children's books are loved by children all over the world. Margaret has published over seventy picture books for young children and she has been the recipient of the Nan Chauncy Award, the Lady Cutler Award and the CBCA Lifetime Achievement Award for her contributions to Australian children's literature.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Vivienne To is an illustrator and concept artist for publishing and film. She loves drawing animals and creating interesting characters for stories. She has illustrated several books including *The Sloth Who Came To Stay*, written by Margaret Wild, which was short-listed for the CBCA Award for New Illustrator. Vivienne was born in Melbourne, grew up in Sydney and lives in Wellington, New Zealand. [www.vivienneto.com](http://www.vivienneto.com)