

# Ivy Bird



## Teachers' notes

Written by Tania McCartney Illustrated by Jess Racklyeft  
Published by Windy Hollow Books

### AUTHOR BACKGROUND

If she could, Tania McCartney would live inside a book, and as an author, illustrator and editor—she kind of already does. Tania has 30 years' experience in magazines and publishing, and has 40 books in print or production. In 2013, she reconnected with illustration and has gone on to produce several illustrated maps and books, including *Mamie*, a picture book on the life of May Gibbs (HarperCollins, 2018) and *This is Home: Essential Poems for Australian Children* (with Jackie French, National Library Publishing, 2019).

The founder of Kids' Book Review, Tania's books have been published in nine countries. She has received various awards including several CBCA Notable books, the SCBWI Crystal Kite Award and the CBCA Laurie Copping Award for Distinguished Service to Children's Literature. An ambassador for the Chief Minister's Reading Challenge (ACT), she is a fierce advocate for juvenile literacy. Tania has lived in Paris, London and Beijing, and currently lives in Canberra with her family, a forest of artwork and a mountain of books. [www.taniamccartney.com](http://www.taniamccartney.com)

### ILLUSTRATOR BACKGROUND

After working in the publishing industry sales world for many years, Jess jumped ship a few years ago to follow her dream of illustrating rather than selling books. She's illustrated eight picture books including SCBWI Crystal Kite Award winner and CBCA Notable Book, *Smile Cry*, and several other titles including *If Baby Could Talk* and *Love Was Hiding* with Windy Hollow Books.

Working with watercolours and digital illustration, she also creates work for greeting cards, prints and portraits, and more work can be seen at [www.jessesmess.com](http://www.jessesmess.com).

With two young children, if she's not drawing, she's either constantly reading picture books, visiting the library or book shop, usually with a coffee in hand.





### A NOTE ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS BY JESS

This book was created with a variety of materials and techniques, combining my love for watercolours with various patterns, textures and processes - all collaged together in Photoshop.

Roughs were created on an iPad Pro, then some elements such as character body and faces were drawn digitally on an iPad Pro (with Procreate).

Some background acrylic paint textures licensed and collaged with my own original scanned textures, as well as watercolour paintings for elements such as a clothing and plants/birds.

Many of the artworks created by the character Ivy in her wall and floor, and on endpapers, original drawings by my daughter (then aged 6) and digitally collaged into the final pages. Everything was assembled and finally put together in Photoshop.

## Classroom ideas:

- Read the story and have children choose a particular bird they resonate with. What is it about the bird they have chosen that appeals the most?
- What do they think the main themes of the book are?
- Are there any birds they didn't know before reading the book?
- Some of the pages have an illustration of the bird, some don't. Ask the children if they can tell which bird Ivy is pretending to be in the pages that don't illustrate the specific bird?
- Throughout the book the author uses words that are specific to birds to describe Ivy and her actions. Can the children find these words? Can they think of some others that the author could have used? Make a class list of bird words.
- The author has given some information about each bird at the back of the book. What other facts can the class come up with about each bird?
- Ask the children how many of the birds in the book they have seen and where they have seen them. What are some other birds they have seen?
- Get the class to make a list of the birds they have seen and where these birds live.
- Make your own class birdwatching cards with an illustration and information on each bird.
- In addition to the story about Ivy, the illustrator has

told a story about Ivy's pet canary. Children could write a story based on the illustrations of the canary throughout the book.

### THE ARTS

The illustrator has used digital collage and water colour to illustrate this book. Have the children use collage to create illustrations of the birds in the books.

In the book Ivy uses different props to mimic the birds. Using props found in the classroom or in the garden have the children come up with bird costumes.

Have the children act out the actions and noises of the various birds in the book.

### SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

As well as being a story of a girl and her love of birds, Ivy Bird is a celebration of birds and our natural environment. Some questions to consider as a class

Are any of the birds in this book on the threatened species list?

What birds do you know of locally that are threatened or endangered?

What can you do to help?

On publication of Ivy Bird, the author had an auction to raise funds for Birdlife Australia. What can you find out about Birdlife Australia as a class and what could you do to help?

