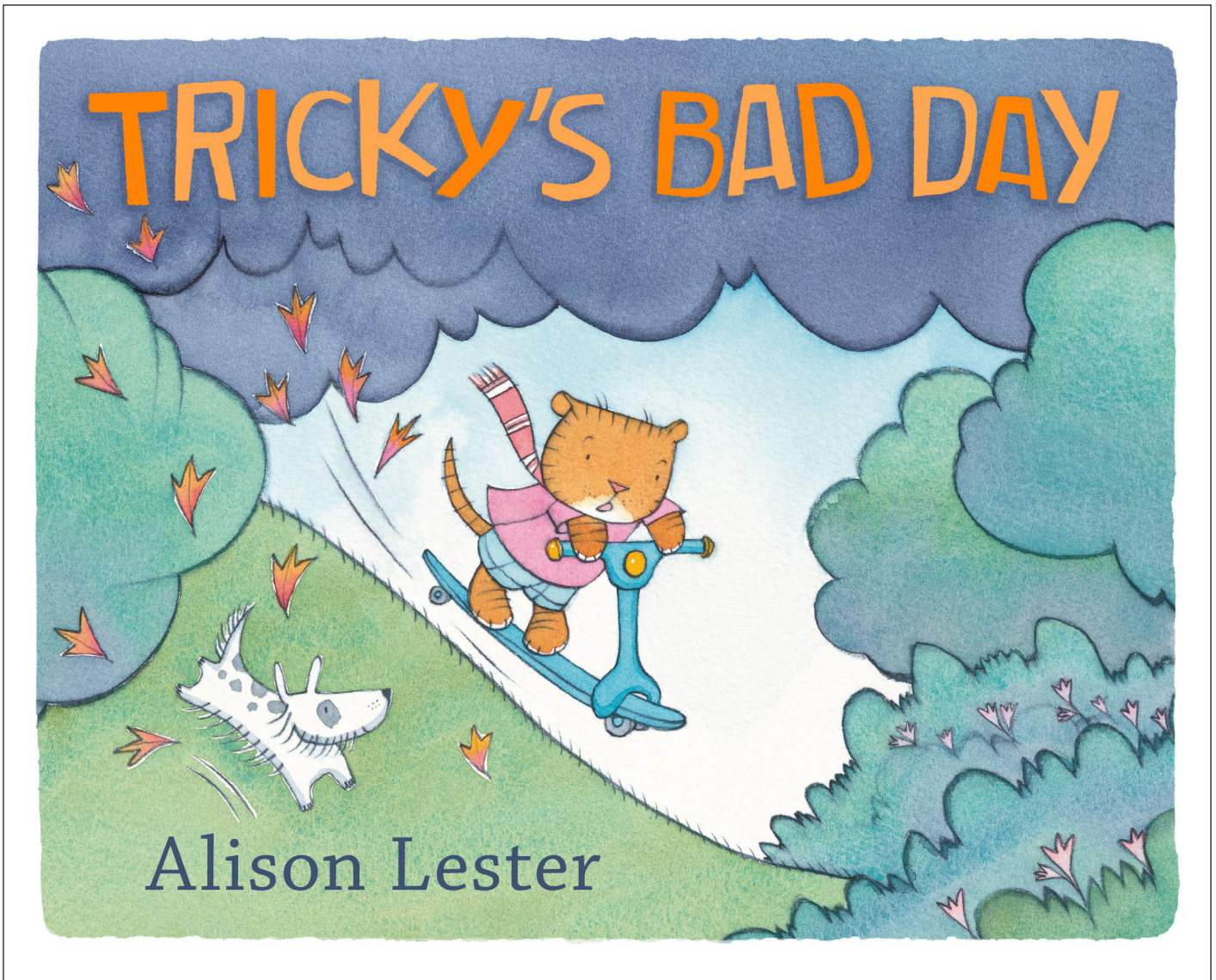


# TEACHERS NOTES

## TRICKY'S BAD DAY



By Alison Lester

### THEMES

- Moods and emotions
- Family dynamics
- Wildness
- The power of nature

### SUITABLE FOR

Age 2-8: Pre-school to Grade 2

## DESCRIPTION

Poor Tricky! Nothing is going right for him. Milk spills, pyjama buttons won't work, his little sister wrecks their game, and when he tries to help out, everything gets worse.

Tricky's having a very bad day!

Then Dad has an idea. Outside it's wild, but there's a lot to explore...

From Australia's favourite picture-book creator comes a warm and funny story about the very recognisable mess, muddle and love that is the life of a young family – and the freedom of an outside adventure.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

In a career spanning decades, Alison Lester has written many books, and won several prestigious awards including the 2005 Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Picture Book of the Year Award for *Are We There Yet?* and the 2012 CBCA Eve Pownall Book of the Year Award for *One Small Island*. Alison was Australia's inaugural Children's Laureate from 2011 to 2013.

## A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Of all of Alison's previous titles, it's the *Clive Eats Alligators* series that *Tricky's Bad Day* reminds me of most – its warmth, humour, fun and pathos. This is the first time that Alison has drawn animals in a human setting, and she's somehow managed to capture the innate wildness of childhood as well as the familiarity

of domestic life in this funny story. As the grandparent of seven grandchildren under five, her eye for the triumphs and tragedies of everyday family life is sharp. Alison's love for the natural world underpins the ultimate message of this book – a reminder of the healing and redemptive power of the outdoors, which strengthens us as we move through it. *Tricky's Bad Day* is a heartfelt and memorable drawing together of everything that makes an Alison Lester book special. At its heart is a celebration of love and togetherness, and children will find comfort in seeing their own struggles mirrored back in an atmosphere of understanding and forgiveness.



## THEMES

### MOODS AND EMOTIONS

Poor Tricky! Nothing is going his way. From the moment he wakes up, things go wrong - milk spills, buttons are stiff, shoes are too tight. As the day goes on, Tricky's foul mood leads to outbursts of anger and bad behaviour, much to Dad's frustration. *Tricky's Bad Day* explores the ways that moods and emotions can shift over the course of a day, and how sometimes it only takes something little to turn a bad mood around.



### FAMILY DYNAMICS

*Tricky's Bad Day* also explores a day in the life of a young family, showing what that reality can look like and how the mood of one child can affect the rest of the family. It shows the relationships between siblings, as well as between parent and child, in a sweet and moving way. It also quietly plays with gender roles: it is Mum who goes off to work while Dad stays home with the kids, and Tricky happily wanders off to the park in high-heels. *Tricky's Bad Day* is both modern and classic in its depiction of family.



### WILDNESS

Tricky's stubborn bad mood sticks around all day – until he is given the opportunity to run around and be a little bit 'wild', with Dad at his side. Splashing in puddles, climbing trees and braving the weather allows Tricky to calm down in a way that the tame, indoor nature of the rest of the story has not.

### THE POWER OF NATURE

While the chance to run around helps Tricky, the story shows that it is being outside in nature that saves the day. *Tricky's Bad Day* explores the idea that the natural world can be a powerful tool for healing. Interacting with the elements as well as fauna and flora helps Tricky to calm down and be a bit more grounded, and this encourages young readers to see going outside as a way to manage their own emotions.

## ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION POINTS

- Before you start reading, have a look at the cover of this book and read the blurb on the back. Discuss as a class what you think this story might be about. Also take a moment to discuss what it is about a book that makes you want to read it. Is it the cover? The description? Are you interested in this book based on these details?
- After reading the book, discuss as a class if the book has lived up to expectations. Draw your own version of the cover and write your own blurb, now that you have read the book.
- Tricky's day goes wrong right from the beginning. Discuss this as a class – have you ever had a day that feels bad from the very start?
- Discuss what you think caused Tricky's bad mood, and make a list of all the potential reasons. Do you think there was just one thing? Does Tricky have a good reason to be in a mood? Do you think you need a reason to feel bad?
- Go through the text and find all the words about feelings – like angry, cross and cranky. What do these words tell you about the book? Do the kinds of words change through the book? Have you ever had a bad day, like Tricky? What kind of words would you use to describe how it made you feel?
- Tricky's family is made up of Mum, Dad, Tricky, Matilda, Frankie and their dog. Who makes up your family? Draw a picture of them, and don't forget to include yourself!
- In Tricky's family, Mum goes off to work in the morning while Dad stays home with Tricky and his sisters. What happens in your family? Can you describe a typical day in your house? Draw a series of pictures to show exactly what a normal day would look like.



- Even though Tricky has been pretty grumpy for most of the day, at the end he describes it as a 'really good day'. Why do you think this is? If you go through the book, can you pick out the pages where Tricky's day is going from bad to good? How can you tell? Is it just in the words, or in the illustrations, or in both? Talk about how these elements work together to tell a story, and how they make the reader understand what a character is feeling.



- For Tricky, running around and playing seems to make a difference to his mood. Does that work for you? Why, or why not? Draw a picture of your favourite thing to do if you are having a bad day.
- Tricky loves splashing in puddles and going to his and Dad's favourite trees. Where is your special outside place? Draw a picture and describe it to the class. How does it make you feel to visit this place?
- As a class, go outside and talk about all the things you can see, smell, hear and feel. Are there any animals nearby? Is it windy or still? Overcast or sunny? How does being outside make you feel?
- Do you prefer being outside, or inside? Think about how much time you spend outside each day – does it make a difference to your mood?
- What is your favourite season? Do you like the wild, wet days like Tricky, or do you prefer clear, sunny days? Does the weather ever change how you feel? Why?

