

***Ruby Roars* by Margaret Wild, illustrated by Kerry Argent**

This is an adorable children's book that is lovely to read together. The children laughed as poor Ruby struggled to find her roar. They loved the non-traditional family and continue to talk about how Ruby's Dad did the knitting. They loved predicting what might happen and trying out their own scary roars... The book is a great way to introduce Aussie animals and my children enjoyed making "Ruby" posters and talking about Tasmanian Devils. The untold story of the little mouse friend that follows Ruby through her adventures was a great story starter, with the children writing and telling stories about what the mouse was doing and what the mouse thought of Ruby's roars. A great book!

Carolyn Hicks, Winton Primary School, Vic

Ruby Roars tells the tale of a little Tasmanian Devil, trying to find her voice.

As a baby she pops, gurgles, giggles. But now she is growing up, she starts to try to make scary noises. But nothing seems to scare anything – the owl, the fox and the bull – even the fish and the frogs!

So she goes off and tries all different sounds to make her sound scary. She tiptoes into the kitchen and scares her Mum so much, she spills the soup. She was very proud of that. So she sneaks up on Dad and he dropped three stitches in his knitting! Again Ruby was very proud of the loud scary noise she was able to make.

Mum and Dad decided to give Ruby a real howl and then chased her around the cave. They caught her and hugged her and put her to bed.

But just before Ruby went to sleep, she roared a forceful roar into the night's sky and the owl, fox and bull were all frightened. They did not know what would make that fierce sound – after all, it couldn't be Ruby! Could it?????

This is a charming book that young children would love to read either by them selves, or in a group situation, where they can make all the loud Roars they can.

A credit also goes to both the Author and Illustrator, who have donated part of their royalties into the Save the Tasmanian Devil program, to help save the Devils which unfortunately has now been listed as Endangered because of the spread of mouth cancer in the groups.

Pauline Dunn, Mountain District Christian School, Vic

Ruby Roars is a picture book destined to become a firm favourite of children, as well as teachers and parents. It allows plenty of scope for exuberant participation.

Ruby is a Tasmanian Devil who wants to be scary. But no matter what noise she makes her parents aren't scared. Neither is Owl or Fox or Bull. The look on Bull's face is priceless and Owl is decidedly cute. The water colour and pencil illustrations are bright, colourful and expressive. They add a great deal to the deceptively simple, sound filled text with its occasional sound rhymes.

'Skreekle bleekle fleekle' said Fox with a grin.

Finally after a lot of practice and after lots of interesting sounds emerge, Ruby finds a way to overcome the problem. She scares Mum so she spills the knucklebone soup and scares Dad so much he drops three stitches in his knitting, which is a lovely reversal of a usual stereotype.

I particularly like the way Mum and Dad participated in Ruby's play and development. This is a book that will have children asking for it to be read again and again.

Those who buy this book will not only end up with a fun read but can know that a portion of the royalties due to both the author and illustrator will be donated to the *Save the Tasmanian Devil Appeal*.

From a teacher's point of view *Ruby Roars* could be used to lead into discussions about persistence and not giving up, as well as about teaching about endangered animals.

Dale Harcombe, NSW

Ruby Roars is a rollicking read-aloud family adventure suitable for ages one through eight. Ruby is a rambunctious Tasmanian Devil who delights in frightening her family and friends with a slew of scary noises.

Kerry Argent's wonderful collaboration with Margaret Wild led to the rich characterisation of Ruby with her fast-paced dialogue a wonderful cacophony of noises engaging the reader and the audience. The text placement, changes in text size and alliterative style – 'ready to rip and roar, Ruby hurried home', add a rich dimension to the experience. Even when Dad's knitting and Mum's home cooking is interrupted by Ruby; the family is shown to be warm and loving.

Kerry's engaging watercolour and pencil illustrations allow insight into the life of a Tasmanian Devil's family cave and their local environment. A key element throughout Ruby's scare-filled

journey is her constant companion, her patchwork baby blanket. This humanises her character and makes her more relatable. Kerry's great artistic style includes the ability to soften the normally fierce teeth and jaw of the Tasmanian Devil.

Margaret and Kerry are generously donating part of their royalties to the Save the Tasmanian Devil Appeal managed by the University of Tasmania.

Ruby Roars has the potential to become an iconic book in the rich environment of Australian Children's Literature.

Classroom – Resource Centre

English: Excellent example of a narrative with the structure clearly defined, orientation, complication and conflict, sequential events and resolution. Engaging extension lessons could include developing a Reader's Theatre, a play, modelling to develop a story of other endangered animals and constructing a story map. This website is a great resource for sharing texts and includes great ideas for extending the reading of this story.

<http://wwwfp.education.tas.gov.au/English/sharetexts.htm>

Author and illustrator studies can be undertaken as well.

<http://www.allenandunwin.com/default.aspx?page=311&author=41>

http://www.scholastic.com.au/common/books/contributor_profile.asp?ContributorID=36

Science – Society and Environment:

Underpinning the story is the raising of awareness of the plight of Tasmanian Devils; this is mentioned in the blurb. The link on the title page leads to the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries and Water's rich and informative website focussed on the preservation of this endangered species. Students can develop investigative reports on the plight, conservation and investigation into the facial disease destroying the Tasmanian Devil population.

<http://www.tassiedevil.com.au/>

Fundraising could be included as part of the unit of work.

* <http://www.girl.com.au/ruby-roars.htm>

Rhyllis Bignell, Allenby Gardens Primary School, SA

Ruby is a Tasmanian Devil and she's on a mission. She wants to be scary. The trouble is, when she opens her mouth to make frightening noises, all that comes out is, *scrrr* and *screekle* and *scrunch*. Poor Ruby can't even scare Mum and Dad. When Owl, Fox and Bull make fun of her scary efforts, Ruby gets worried.

But she's a determined little devil and sets out to achieve success. After listening to the sounds around her Ruby opens her mouth to see what noises *she* can make. When Mum spills the knucklebone soup and Dad drops three stitches (good to see a knitting dad!), Ruby knows her new repertoire is working. Soon there's a cacophony of yammer-ammer-ooing and yeee-oww-eeeing all around the house.

This is a thoroughly entertaining book for toddlers through to anyone who loves onomatopoeia – perfect for reading aloud. Margaret Wild supplies a rollicking text that romps and rolls with Kerry Argent's delightful illustrations. Together they capture mischief and tenderness, exuberance, disappointment and discovery.

With young children, this book would be a perfect springboard for exploring the senses. What sounds can *you* hear? What noises can *you* make? It would be an ideal resource for discussion about persistence or the theme *Me and my Family*. What can you remember trying to learn to do? Skipping? Whistling? Clicking your fingers? How do you feel when your brothers or sisters or your friends can do something that you can't? How do you think Ruby felt when she couldn't scare Owl and Fox and Bull?

Rumour has it there was a LOT of deliberating about getting just the right sounding words for this text. It certainly paid off!

Carole Poustie, Vic

Whenever I see a title by Margaret Wild, I know I am in for a treat. It reminds me of opening a packet of Tim Tams, as I know exactly what I am going to get, I know how much I will enjoy it, and with the first read I rush it, (being a little greedy) then with the following reads, I savour and enjoy them, perhaps even getting sticky fingers. Kerry Argent captures the essence of Ruby beautifully with her illustrations.

Ruby is a likeable character, a Tasmanian devil, with a personality many young readers can relate to. She lives in a cave with her mum and dad and is finding her voice. Ruby is hoping to be come proficient at making scary noises. She practises on her mum and dad, but feels unsuccessful. She

then experiments on her neighbours, the owl, the fox and the bull. She is disheartened as she realises she is just no good at scaring anyone with her noises. She pauses for a moment, and listens to the noises around her. She then tries again, and successfully frightens her mum and dad so much it causes them to stop what they are doing and chase her around the cave after returning the scare, cuddle and huddle her off to bed. The end of the story keeps her friends guessing too....

This story is a warm one, with a never-give-up theme to it. For parents and teachers, this is something we can help teach our youngsters through stories. Ruby is a perfect example of success after failure. She does not quit, she keeps trying, and finds within herself the answers she is hoping for. The response of her parents is encouraging as they delight in her new skill (after an initial shock of course!!) and reward her with their time and attention. I love how the “noise words” are featured throughout the text, the size and shape encouraging the reader to match the roar. Before reading aloud, perhaps practise the sounds to get them just right. As Ruby is a Tasmanian Devil, it is a good opportunity for the teacher to look into Tassie Devils, their history, their endangered state and also their native home. This would be a fantastic book for your classroom library, or your collection at home. I am certain it will be requested over and over. A word of caution—you will need to summon up the same level of energy each time you read it!

Mrs Wilson, Calvary Chapel Christian School, NSW

Ruby Roars is a very fun, beautifully illustrated, delightful and imaginative story that captivated my pre prep class. The characters and story line was age appropriate for my 4-5 year old group as they easily understood the words, concepts and were caught up in the bright, colourful and creative illustrations. They roared as loud as ruby during the story and were eager to talk about the book. The main character Ruby a cheeky and adorable Tasmanian devil , has developed the urge to use a scary roaring voice, the scariest noise she can make – ‘ Scrrr! Screekle! Scrunch!’ to scare her animal friends and family. As well as getting the attention of others, however this does not always work to her advantage and leaves her frustrated, upset and annoyed. Ruby overcomes the need to roar when she sees how much her mum and dad love her and know how special she is.

I believe this story related to my class because as they are early learners they also can become frustrated easily and often roar as loud as Ruby. We took this opportunity to use this book as a classroom activity. We brainstormed how we feel when we become frustrated. And put these thoughts on paper for all to see. The whole group joined in and it was very productive. We also talked about our families and how they helped us to overcome problems and make us feel happy and loved. So we drew pictures of our families helping us or just pictures of our loved family. This story will be a favourite at group time as well as one of mine.

Claire Evans, Qld

Ruby Roars by Margaret Wild and Kerry Argent is a book full of delightful illustrations and words that bring the characters alive.

Ruby is a Tasmanian Devil that is growing up. When she was a baby she could make popping noises with her dummy, she could gurgle and she could giggle. Now that she is older Ruby can make scary noises but Mum and Dad never look alarmed.

Margaret Wild and Kerry Argent take the reader on a funny and noisy journey with Ruby as she travels through the trees, crosses the river and walks across the paddock practicing being noisy. It is on this journey that Ruby meets owl, fox and bull and listens to the sounds around her. Ruby returns home ‘ready to rip and roar’. She scares Mum who is cooking and Dad who is knitting. Upon being put to bed she lets out one more roar.

“What was that” asks owl, fox and bull.

It couldn't be Ruby or could it.....

This book is a feel good book full of colourful bouncy illustrations. An ‘I can’ book about growing up which promotes self esteem in a non threatening environment. My 2 year old daughter loves it. Used in lower primary school this book could be the starting point for the introduction to Tasmanian Devils. Do Tasmanian Devils really make a noise? Why? Do they live in caves? What do they eat?. Being easy to read and having attractive illustrations to draw in the child this book would sure be a winner with the struggling reader.

Jennifer Deaves, Homeschooler, NSW

I shared this beautiful story about a young Tasmania Devil, Ruby, who is like a typical child in many ways, she loves to make noise, have fun, is scared of the dark, loves to play jokes and mostly importantly wants her family and friends to respect her. The only way that Ruby feels she can be heard is by making loud noises, she desperately wants to find her own unique roar to scare the wits out of her mum, dad and friends.

My class thoroughly enjoyed this children's picture book, they were really excited to help Ruby roar and loved making all the different noises when prompted. We even pretended to be the main character Ruby, by creating our own paper masks and tails, we practiced walking around the classroom making wild, scary and loud noises.

This book also highlighted that many of the children in my class, were unaware of the Tasmanian Devil species. As, the children live in Victoria, I only had one child who had visited Tasmania and seen a real Devil at a zoo. So, this prompted further investigation and research through factual books and the Internet, the following questions were explored; *What does a Tasmania devil looked like? *Where do they live? * What do they like to eat? *What things did they like to do? *How many Tasmanian Devils are left in Australia and the world?

Also, as part of building on the children's passion for reading, every month we pick our favourite author or illustrator. For the month of June, the children picked Margaret Wild, which meant we could go to our school library and find other books that she had previously written.

Overall, this book was very enjoyable, fun, easy to read and age appropriate.

Rhiannon Neate, Don Bosco Primary School, Vic

When our little ones first begin to talk, we delight in the slightest gurgle. And, as we know, there will one day come the time when they find their voice and a moment of peace is all that we long for... Wild and Argent create a lovely scene with this family of Tasmanian Devils; and quite fitting the animal they choose, as Ruby turns out to be quite the little devil in her attempts to scare fox, bull and owl.

There is a strong sense of family that spills over the colourful pages of this book, as they encourage Ruby to keep trying. They provide positive role models through their own roaring and make it a fun experience despite the fact that Ruby is clearly being unsuccessful in her attempts to scare.

There is a wonderful use of the letter 'S' in this story and many opportunities to explore new words, which our young audiences certainly find enjoyable. The way that text has been intentionally spread out encourages the reader's intonation to move and change accordingly in this delightful dance of words.

The illustrations are vibrant and expressive, and can readily be used to discuss feelings and emotions with young children. Each page also opens up new opportunities to discuss families, Australian animals and endangered species as part of group projects.

Yes, Ruby eventually finds her roar along with her confidence through the pages of this heart warming story. It just goes to show that certain skills come at moments of readiness and we, as teachers, need to continue to encourage our students to feel confident in their growing abilities.

Linda Zammit, Trinity Grammar School, VIC

What scary noises does a Tasmanian Devil make?

Ruby Roars introduces a cute and lovable, enthusiastic Tasmanian Devil, Ruby, complete with her colourful comfort blanket, mouse mate and homely parents, as she moves from the 'pop, pop, pop' noises of her babyhood, trying to perfect the frightening noises every Tasmanian Devil should make. It's great fun for parents, teachers and children practising these scary noises with Ruby, through onomatopoeia, alliteration and rhyme, in Margaret Wild's brilliantly-crafted sound bites: 'scrunchy, wunchy', 'crick, crack', 'gurgle, durgle, furgle' and 'screekle, bleekle, fleekle'. There's humour at different levels, such as her father admonishing Ruby with "You little devil" when she scares him and he drops three stitches from his knitting.

Kerry Argent's bright and engaging cover and large, simple illustrations of a larger-than-life Ruby, her parents and Owl, Fox and Bull as she tries to scare them, cleverly mirror the loud and exuberant nature of Ruby herself and of her screeching; font size and style reflecting the increasing scariness of her outbursts. Readers will also appreciate the visual humour of the Tasmanian Devils and their quaint cave life – Ruby's devil dummy, vibrantly dressed Mum and Dad Devil, TV- watching Devil parents, with animal AFL on 'the box', and Ruby's bedroom, with its teddy bear, toys, tennis racquet and kitsch kookaburra bedside lamp.

Ruby Roars is a delightful book, a wonderfully energetic and warm tale of Aussie animal icons, in much the same vein as the irrepressible *Too Loud Lily*, another of Argent's picture books, with text by Sofie Laguna. Ideal for reading out loud by parents to their youngsters, *Ruby Roars* is recommended for inclusion in kindergartens and in primary school libraries for individual borrowing by 'new' readers, aged 4-6. As a teacher read-aloud in Prep and Year 1/2 classrooms, children will delight in the NOISY participation possibilities of this lovely story, designed 'to provoke a wild rumpus'.

This book will be loved by 'everyone who loves to roar'.

Alison Cassell, Qld

This exuberant story about devilish family capers, explores the feelings of growing up for Ruby the main character in the story.

We can all identify with Ruby's feelings of despondence at her inability. But her scaring practice and parents' encouragement pays off. The reader is positioned to see and enjoy the results, leaving Ruby in the dark about her new found talents to scare even bull, owl and fox.

She is a devil after all!

The illustrations are bright, colourful, soft and sizeable. The setting is very safe and natural. The word and image combine equally making this a perfect early childhood read-a-loud.

The image of Ruby with her rug and toy mouse depicts childhood in a beautifully transformed theme.

If you like to 'roar', to be outspoken, you'll like this picture book with Margaret Wild's skilful interpretation and Kerry Argent's extraordinary illustrating talent.

Notes for teachers:

Early childhood teachers will find this book very useful in the unit 'change' and 'me' and could use the story for literacy lessons by arranging the text into a Reader's Theatre for students to role play the characters of mum, dad, owl, bull and fox.

The book could also be used to identify the Tasmanian Devil as an Australian animal and listening to the taped sounds of the Tasmanian Devil could also be useful in discussion about night sounds for this stage.

This 30 page picture book has words in it that will be fun and interesting for anyone who reads it and likes to roar out loud.

Helen Latimer, Lakemba Public School, NSW

Margaret Wilde has created an amusing story for younger readers. Ruby, the baby Tasmanian Devil, tries to prove that she is growing up and capable of doing everything a big Tasmanian Devil should. She practises asserting herself by attempting to scare Mum, Dad, Fox, Owl and Bull with strange noises to no avail. Finally she learns to listen to the sounds around her and it is then that she is able to be convincingly scary. This is a life lesson for Ruby as she realises that we all have to listen carefully to who and what is around us if we are to truly grow.

This is a great book to share with small children and to allow them to imitate the noises in the story. There is a huge scope for lower primary students to develop Speaking and Listening skills through acting out the story, as we all know how kids love to act!

The vivid illustrations will capture the imagination of all and the simple text is sure to be a hit with the younger audience. The story could also be used in an Integrated Studies unit on Australian native animals or threatened species. Hopefully the profile of this magnificent animal will be raised through this book and the proceeds make a real difference to the protection of these unique creatures.

Therese Reghenzani, Holy Spirit School, Ringwood North, Vic

A lovely story of Ruby a young Tasmanian devil who is learning to make the appropriately scary noises a devil should make. Her first attempts fail to scare any of the animals she encounters. She continues to practice and then once she masters some noises she hurries home to try them on her parents and they are scared by her noises. They are all very happy that she has mastered her language and can take up her position as a true Tasmanian devil.

This is a wonderfully colourful presentation by Kerry Argent who makes a story about Black and White animals so full of colour by giving them such colourful accessories. Though a scary beast, the devils in this story are not so scary, they seem round and friendly.

This is a paperback version of the original hardback publication which was first appeared in 2007.

This story will give classroom teachers ample opportunities for discussing language and animal noises and their purpose. A fun book to share with Kinder to year 2.

Lorene Furmage, Blackmans Bay Primary School, Tas

Full of colour and action, *Ruby Roars* will delight children and adults alike. Margaret Wild's simple story is full of visual imagery as beautifully depicted by illustrator Kerry Argent. It is wonderful to have Australian animals throughout the book, but extra special and unique to have a Tasmanian Devil as the main character.

Ruby is a very cute young Tasmanian Devil who has, since she was a baby, loved making noises. As she grows older, she starts making scary noises. Initially, Ruby tries scaring her family but no one is bothered at all. She sets out one day to practice but still none of the animals she meets are frightened. All that practice wears off and Ruby succeeds in giving her family a fright. At the end Ruby comes into her own but will the animals in the bush believe it was her?

This book is ideal for reading aloud and will no doubt become a favourite, soon to be dog-eared with use. Ruby is an endearing character whom readers will love.

Julie Huntley, Noosa Library, Qld