

wonderful SHOES



Teachers' notes

Written by Emma Bowd | Illustrated by Tania McCartney

A Note From the Author

I wrote this book for all the babies and toddlers in the world, who I know love big people's shoes just as much as I do. If we all look in our baby albums or treasured first home videos, I think there's a fair chance that a prancing, plodding toddler in an oversized pair of adult's shoes can be found grinning back at us. This simple pleasure, of early exploratory play with a familiar household object, is where the seed was sown for my idea that shoes simply are the best toys in the world. I chose to write the text in verse because it sings with the rhythm and playfulness of this wondrous phase of life. I'm also a former Occupational Therapist, and am very aware that our children's physical skills develop more rapidly than their language skills, so I specifically chose child-appropriate language when describing the various types of shoes. I'll never forget my daughter, at almost four years of age, asking me if she could have a pair of 'little girl's shoes with long black sticks' – in other words, her very own stilettos, to match mine that she click-clacked around our wooden floors in. Young children really are great observers and fearless adventurers, who always seek fun. And what a complete joy that is.



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A Note From the Illustrator

My illustration inspiration for *Wonderful Shoes* was driven by white space—to allow the characters and their extraordinary shoes to shine. Grown-up shoes are ever entrancing for little ones. They are scrumptious to clip-clop and stamp-stomp around in—the sounds! That lovely onomatopoeia kids adore. They give the child height, presence, and very best of all, make them feel able to do so much more.

But most of all, grown-up shoes allow a child to emulate an adult they love and admire. They can make the child feel grown and capable, and able to take on the world (particularly important when children feel so vulnerable and small). This is why white space was employed in my illustrations... to pull pure focus onto the children and their fabulous, bright, textured, clompy, tappy shoes. Adults

were deliberately side-lined by removing their faces (akin to the cartoons of the 1940s and '50s), to bring each child to centre stage. Adults have enough power! The kids had to shine. Lastly, onomatopoeia is a symphony to the ears of children. These words are escalated by their prominent placement on each page, highlighting not only the literal sound each pair of shoes makes, but adding gravitas to the child and how they feel in each pair. Illustrations were created in Procreate on the iPad, with a modern style and watercolour feel.

Activities

Before Reading

- Looking at the cover, what do you think this story will be about?
- Is there something strange about the girl's flippers?

After Reading

- Which was your favourite page in the book and why?
- Which shoes are your favourite?

Language

- This book uses lots of onomatopoeia. Can you come up with more shoes and sounds they may make in the same style as this book?
- Make a poster with pictures of shoes and the sounds they might make.
- Make a class list of onomatopoeic sounds.

Drama

- Make a variety of different shoes available for the group to dress up with.
- Allow the children to act out the book using the shoes.
- What other things might make the noises in

this book?

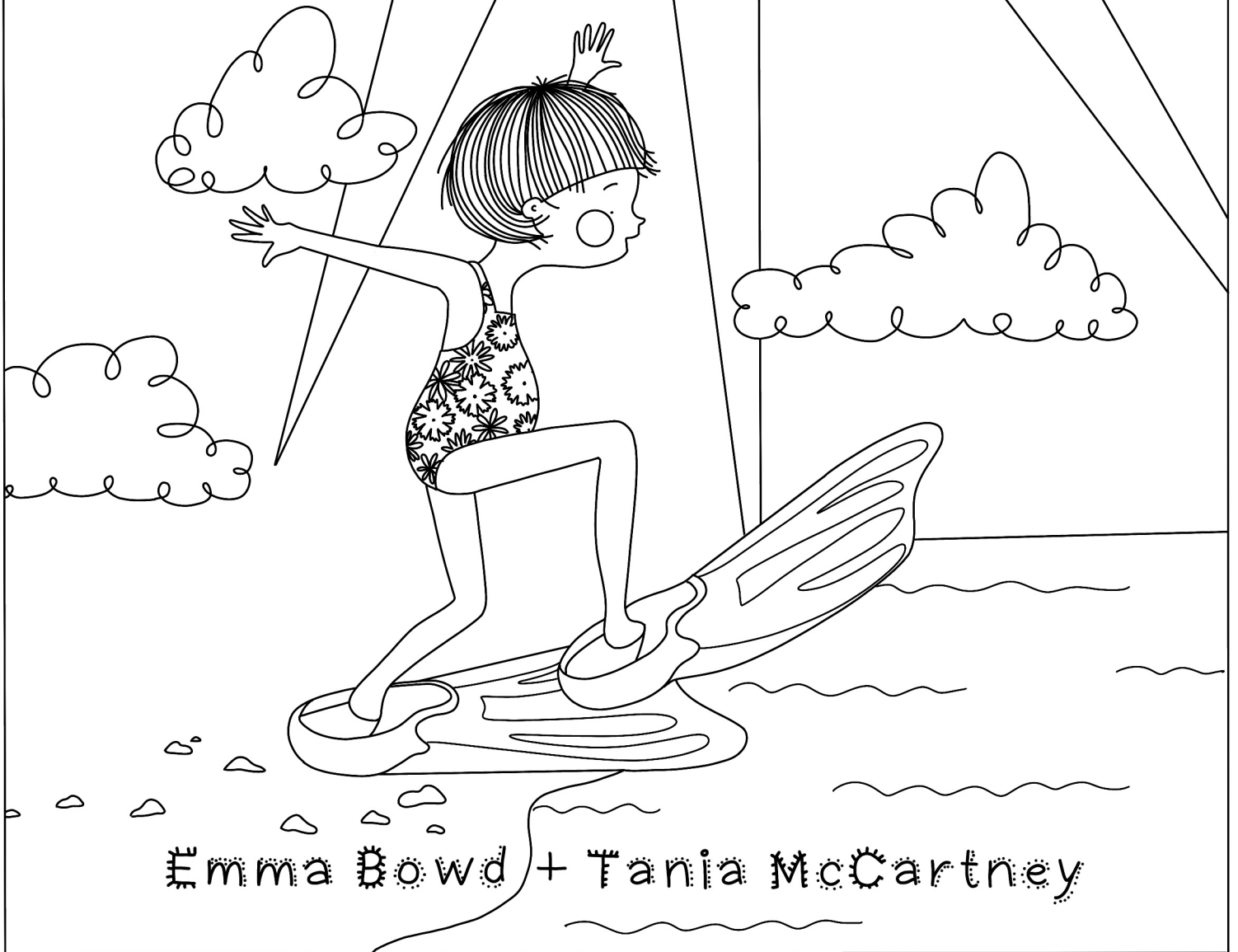
- Find other objects to make the sounds and have the children use them as you read the story aloud.

Art

- In this book the noisy words are part of the illustrations. Explore using words and font as art.
- How can you write words to make them look like they might sound? (You can also see good examples of this in *My Possum Plays the Drums* by Catherine Meatheringham and Max Hamilton)
- Draw a design of your own wonderful shoes.



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