

# **The Mad Tadpole Adventure**

**Melanie Drewery / illustrated by Jenny Cooper**

## **SYNOPSIS**

*This is a thriller – or maybe it's a horror story. It could be a mystery or a romance. There are even some really good nature bits. Actually, I don't know for sure what you would call this story. I do know that it all started with my tadpole. Of course I know that you know about tadpoles. We've all read the books and seen the pictures, but have you actually grown one yourself?*

So begins Maddie's story about the release and rescue of her precious tadpole that insists on growing into a frog, against Maddie's wishes. At a crucial stage in Maddie's adjustment to the idea that maybe she has to let Isabella Princess Big Eyes go she spies someone catching tadpoles in the same creek where Isabella Princess Big Eyes was released. As result she is convinced that her pet has been captured. So begins the rescue attempt. But Maddie is looking for a tadpole, and as the reader will have realized, her Isabella Princess Big Eyes has certainly changed to a frog by now.

## **WRITING STYLE**

Melanie Drewery has written this story in the first person narrative, so that the reader can be there as Maddie learns about her tadpole's development and starts on the rollercoaster of emotions that the story entails.

To ensure the humour it is important that the reader knows what Maddie knows, and guesses the rest.

Jenny Cooper's amusing characters were developed in close discussion with Melanie to ensure her feel for the character of both Maddie and the people in her life were accurately captured.

## **EDITORIAL COMMENT**

It was agreed that, though the level of this story is quite high due to the length of the sentences, there was a place for a higher-level story for more advanced junior readers. The addition of the illustrations, it was felt, would also assist in the interpretation of the text.

## **STUDY NOTES/ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHERS/POINTS FOR DISCUSSION**

- The story is told by Maddie, so as a reader we can know only what Maddie knows. Take a section of the story and try retelling it in the third person, including information that, as a reader, you have gleaned that Maddie possibly doesn't know. Discuss whether it is easier to tell the story this way.
- There are a number of theme's in this story: loyalty, friendship, trust, all focused on the relationship between Maddie and her world. Discuss examples of each of these in the story.
- Where possible, introduce tadpoles to the class and study their development. Some may wish to write a report on the developmental stages so that other student's will have an understanding of Maddie's tadpole.

- Maddie has come up with a particularly impressive name for her tadpole, suggest the class develop names for the class tadpoles that equally describe their appearance.
- On page 34, Maddie has designed a particularly unpleasant trap for the 'Witch' whose children she believes have stolen her beloved pet. Suggest that some student's may wish to design a trap for catching tadpoles instead.
- Buzz and Maddie take their detective work very seriously, adding disguises and keeping careful notes. Suggest the class have a 'disguise day' where the children are allowed to add camouflage items to their school clothes. A selection of students could then be encouraged to explain their disguises to their fellow students.
- All of the action in this story happened over a very short period of time. Suggest that some of the student's draw up a timeline of the action, marking each of the special moments in this story.
- Those students who have enjoyed this story may wish to tell the class what they liked about the story and give it their recommendation for others to read.

### **MARKETING AND PROMOTION**

There are two editions of this story being released. A saddle stitched edition for general school sales, and a section-sewn edition for ASO and Trade release.