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Editor's Choice:

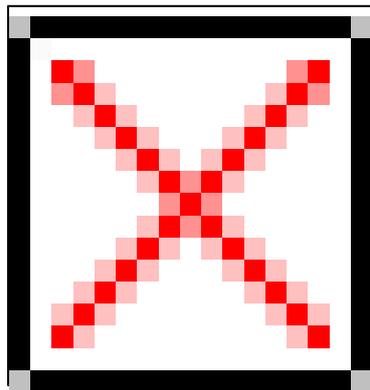
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Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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Have you ever wondered why there are so many bears in children's books? Or what they think about being at a writer's beck and call?

The bears in this book don't like being woken by the bear alarm just as they're having a nice doze. Being forced to jump right up and do whatever the book says has become a chore, and the biggest bear is keen to get their message across.

'You can't quit!' says the writer.

'We can,' says the bear, 'and we just did.'

So the writer has a go at making the bear participate in a tutu, on a bicycle. The bear needs to strike a deal, and fast. But his friend the elephant is too big to fit inside a picture book, and none of the other animals will do. The peacock is too fancy, the marmoset too silly and the dodo too extinct. As for the blobfish? seriously?

Bear is out of options, but that's OK because the writer has a cunning plan - a story upgrade, because it's easy to change things when you're in charge. 'One day the bear fell asleep and hibernated, uninterrupted, for eight long months.' And if that leaves Goldilocks working with a leopard, a monkey and a kangaroo, it's only for a while.

The Buntings live and work in Australia, so readers will meet some exciting animals alongside the usual suspects - think flying fox and echidna, as well as cat and horse - and the gently transgressive interplay between bear and writer will be appreciated by young audiences. The humour in this book is visual as well as verbal, and opens the door to other literary pleasures.

By drawing attention to expectations, story structure and the relationship between creative ideas and finished product, **Another Book about Bears** may give children a taste for playing the impresario. You don't have to be a grown-up to boss a story-character around, and using your creative power can be the best kind of fun.

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