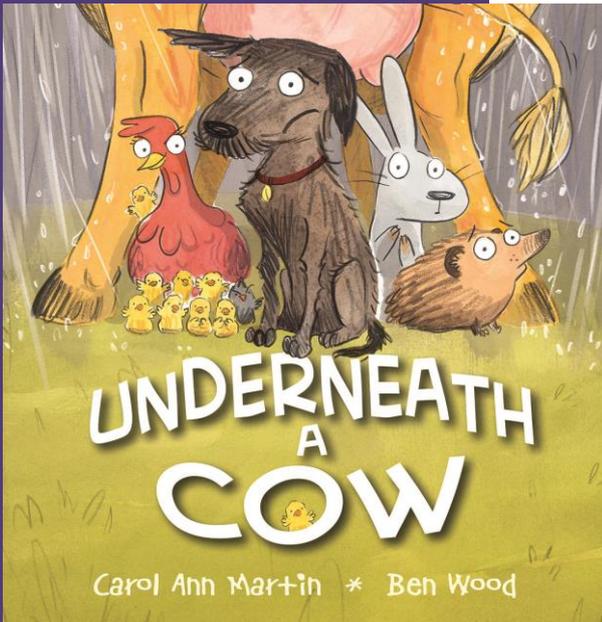


# Teachers' Notes

## Underneath a Cow

Written by Carol Ann Martin  
Illustrated by Ben Wood

Teachers' Notes by Rae Carlyle



### OMNIBUS BOOKS

Category	Picture Book
Title	Underneath a Cow
Author	Carol Ann Martin
Illustrator	Ben Wood
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#### Previous publications

##### Carol Ann Martin

*Captain Blunderbolt*

(Omnibus Mates, 2011)

*A Brief History of the Island of Dipsquittie*

(Omnibus Books, 2008)

*Once There Were Mermaids*

(Omnibus Books, 2005)

Dulcie and Dud series (Omnibus Books)

##### Ben Wood

*The Bush Book Club*

(Omnibus Books, 2014)

*Redcap's Christmas*

(Omnibus Books, 2013)

*Larrikin Lane* (Omnibus Books, 2013)

*Big Bad Bushranger* (Omnibus Books, 2009)

*Give Me a Home Among the Gum Trees*

(Omnibus Books, 2008)

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## Introduction

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When Madge the cow sees a storm approaching, she doesn't think about trying to find shelter for herself – instead she offers shelter to smaller animals nearby. One at a time (or several at a time in the case of Cackalina and her chicks), they accept her offer, and beneath her kindly stomach the uncertain assortment of creatures finds unexpected companionship as they seek to keep their spirits up while the storm rages over the farm. Madge's gentle nature and brave spirit shine through as she encourages and supports her temporary dependents to stay unafraid and dry while the rain pours down. And when the storm clears and the animals all return to their regular activities, Madge stands content, as only a cow who has helped so many can be.

## About the Author

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Carol Ann Martin began working in publishing when she was seventeen, and has also been a feature writer and a TV scriptwriter. This is her seventh book for Omnibus after *Dulcie and Dud and the Really Dumb Play*, *Dulcie and Dud Give a Really Big Party*, *Dulcie and Dud and the Really Cool Club*, *Dulcie and Dud and the Really Secret Secret*, a YA novel (*Once There Were Mermaids*), *A Brief History of the Island of Dipsquittle* (by Professor Loder-Bull) and *Captain Blunderbolt*, a title in the Mates series. She lives with her husband in southern Tasmania.

## About the Illustrator

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Ben Wood is a freelance illustrator who lives in Sydney. For many years he has illustrated for design companies and publishing firms, creating enjoyable characters and stories. He has also illustrated a number of children's books for Omnibus Books including *Redcap's Christmas* by Susan Cason, *Give Me a Home Among the Gum Trees* by Bob Brown and Wally Johnson, *Big Bad Bushranger* and a book in the Mates series by Kate Darling, *Larrikin Lane*. When not drawing in his studio, Ben also visits schools to teach students about the world of publishing and the joys of creating stories.

He talks about his books and his design and illustration process on his colourful blog at <http://www.benwoodillustrations.com/blog/>.

# Activities

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## English

The author uses many different descriptive words and phrases to describe the storm that the animals are all hiding from in *Underneath a Cow*. Some of them are: *roaring deluge*, *pelted*, *flashed*, *boomed*, and *raged*.

- 1) As a class, think of as many other descriptive words and phrases as you can that you could use to describe a rainstorm.
- 2) Choose one of the words that your class has thought of and, using acrylic paints, create an artwork illustrating your word.
- 3) Share your painting with the class and use them to make a wall display of everyone's storm-word artworks.

When Cackalina and her chicks take shelter underneath Madge, the chicks are so excited that they run around *like crazy little dodgem cars*. Saying that one thing (like chicks) is like another, different thing (like dodgem cars) is called a simile.

- 4) As a class discuss this simile. Can you think of another simile that you could use to describe the way the chicks are running around?
- 5) Look at the pictures of the other animals under Madge. Think of some similes that you could use to describe the way they are acting.
- 6) Choose one of the similes and draw a picture illustrating it. You can choose one that your class has thought of, or you can draw chicks acting like dodgem cars.

## Creative Activities

- 7) Make a farmyard diorama. Paint the inside of an old shoebox with a farmyard scene like the one in the story. Use plastic animals for the farm animals, or you can make cardboard cut-outs and stick them into globs of plasticine to hold them upright. Crumple tissue paper into clouds and stick them to the sky of your diorama, and hang strands of tinsel down for rain.
- 8) Act out the scenes in *Underneath a Cow* at assembly, for another class, or for parents. You will probably need two people to play the part of Madge and they might have to stand on chairs to get high enough for everyone else to shelter underneath them.

- 9) As a class, invent a tune to go with the song that the animals sing about being underneath a cow. Use percussion instruments to accompany your singing and to make thunderstorm sounds. Perform your song at assembly or for another class.
- 10) Go for a walk around the school area. How many different animals can you see that might fit underneath a cow? When you return to class draw pictures of the animals you saw.
- 11) Pretend you are another type of animal, and are underneath the cow in the story. What would you think about the animals already there? Paint a picture and write a caption to go with it that shares your reaction.
- 12) When there is a big storm, most people and animals try to find shelter – but they don't usually hide underneath a cow! Go for a walk around your school and local area, and see how many places you could shelter from a thunderstorm. When you return to school share your ideas with the class. Try to be as inventive as possible! (Note: some places you think of might actually be dangerous in a real storm. Be sure to pay attention to what is a good pretend place to shelter and what is a good real place.)
- 13) Play a variation of 'stick in the mud' called 'caught in the storm'. When you are tagged you have to crouch down and cheep like a small chick that has been caught in the storm. You can be freed when someone else acts as a cow and crouches over you on hands and knees and moos.

## Science

The cloud that slides across the sky before the storm hits is a dark purple. Clouds can come in all sorts of different colours, and can be a variety of shapes and sizes. As a class discuss what you know about clouds.

- 14) Go outside and look at the sky. Can you see any clouds? If you can, how would you describe them?
- 15) Make a list of words that you can use to talk about clouds. These words might be like *purple* and describe the colour, or like *fat*, *puffy*, or *wispy* they could describe the shape.
- 16) Look online at photos of clouds. You can find some good photos at the Cloud Appreciation Society website: <https://cloudappreciationsociety.org/gallery/#p=1&i=6>  
or at the National Geographic website:  
<http://science.nationalgeographic.com.au/science/photos/clouds>

- 17) Discuss the photos of clouds that you have found online. What colours can you see in the different clouds? What shapes are they? Which ones look like they might be bringing rain or a storm? Which clouds look like they will blow over and there will be no rain? What do you think gives the different clouds their different colours?
- 18) Remembering the cloud photographs you have looked at, glue cotton wool balls dipped in different dyes to a piece of coloured paper to make a cloud collage. You can use short pieces of tinsel, or sprinkle glitter on to represent rain. Write a caption for your artwork telling what sort of clouds are in your collage (e.g. 'sunset storm clouds', or 'clouds on a sunny day').

Look at the picture inside the cover of the book (the endpapers). Can you tell what season it is on the farm? (Hint: look at the colour of the leaves on the trees).

- 19) Make an autumn leaf display for your classroom. Draw leaf shapes on red, yellow and orange paper and cut them out. Use a crayon or black Texta to draw the veins. Sticky tape short pieces of string to the end of your leaves and hang them in layers from the doorway of your classroom and along the top of the window frames.
- 20) What vegetables are growing in the garden of the farm at this time of year – what is Lally the rabbit eating?
- 21) Do you know of any other vegetables that will be growing in autumn?
- 22) Plant lettuce seeds in plastic cups, and put them on the classroom windowsill to grow. Plant half of the seeds in soil or potting mix, and the other half in sand and gravel. Remember to water your seeds and be sure they get plenty of sun. Which seedlings grew better, the ones in soil or the ones in sand? Why do you think this happened? Take your seedlings home and when they are big enough pick the leaves to eat in a salad or on a sandwich!