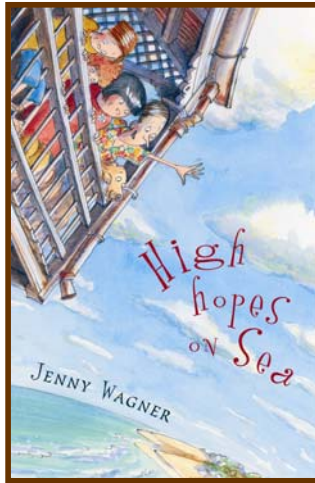


UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND PRESS

# HIGH HOPES ON SEA

## Jenny Wagner



### Teachers' Notes

### Written by Jenny Wagner

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**ABOUT THE BOOK**

The Hope family live by the sea in a small run-down house they rent from the Mortlock brothers. They are a contented bunch, happy in their family unity (which includes their dog, Princess Sassy), although Mr Hope dreams of the day when one his inventions will work and he can buy a boat for the family to live on. In a roundabout way their dreams come true and by the end of this short novel the Hopes can settle into a well-deserved secure future.

The joy of this book is in the language and imagery. Wagner creates word images that are immensely satisfying; Rogers has responded to them with obvious affection. His monochromatic illustrations are as individualistic as Wagner's text; together they produce a piece of work that brings a smile to the face.

*High Hopes on Sea* is just right for reading aloud as a chapter book. Each of the five chapters (one per day for a week) introduces a new concept and (with the exception of Chapter 2) ends on a hopeful note.

At the end of each chapter children can discuss what has happened.

**CHAPTER ONE**

In which the Hope family are introduced to the reader.

**Discussion:** Language and characterisation

**Language:**

*The Hope family lived by the sea in a squeeze-in, sit-down, have-a-cup-of-tea sort of house... If you knew the house well, you would also know that it had its hands in its pockets and wore a tin roof over one eye*

1. Ask children if this is a normal way of describing a house.

- What is the author doing by describing the Hope's house this way?
  - Giving the house a character?
  - Letting the house reflect the character of the people who live in it?
- Can the children describe what they associate with *squeeze-in, sit-down, have a cup-of-tea*
  - Friendly?
  - Cozy, not grand?
- Can the children describe what they expect a person who *had their hands in their pockets and wore a [hat] over one eye* would be like?
  - Friendly?
  - Cheeky?
  - Likeable?

Could those terms be applied to a house?

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2. Princess Sassy barks at words with 'o' (as in boat) sounds in them, but not 'o' (as in shop).

List some words with 'o' in them and divide them into ones Princess Sassy would bark at, and ones she wouldn't.

**Characters:**

Do children think they would like, or not like:

Marissa  
Dion  
Mr Hope  
Mrs Hope  
Princess Sassy  
Mr Mortlock?

Give reasons why.

**CHAPTER TWO**

In which the Hope's learn of possible problems.

**Discussion:** Conflict

Mr Owen Mortlock brings conflict into the story by:

1. Creating an unhappy atmosphere with noise and hustle and bustle next door, intruding into the Hope household. The idea of noise pollution is brought up.
2. Threatening the Hopes with either losing Princess Sassy or their home.
  - Ask the children to point out things about Owen Mortlock that indicate the future for the Hopes could be bleak. For example: He is the only person to scare Princess Sassy into not barking. Mrs Hope thinks he is dangerous and would only shake the fingertips of his hand.

**CHAPTER THREE**

In which the Hope's problems come to a head when they lose their breeze BUT a solution MAY have been found when Mr Hope comes up with a plan.

**Discussion:** Conflict and solution.

- Neighbourliness. Is it all right to cause distress to other people just as long as you get what you want?
- What does environmentally friendly building mean?
- Should the Mortlock Brothers have instructed their architect to build the flats in such a way as to allow a free flow of air around them?
- Is it environmentally sensible to use a lot of electricity keeping a swimming pool going when the ocean is just over the road?

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- Do you think the Mortlock brothers even considered if the building could have side-effects they didn't anticipate?
- More importantly:
- Do the children have much faith in Mr Hope's ability to find a solution to their problem of being cut off from the breeze?

**CHAPTER FOUR**

In which Mr Hope puts his plan into action.

**Discussion:** Family/scientific principles/anticipation

- Point out how the family all work together to get the breeze back, although they weren't too sure Mr Hope's idea would work. Why do they do this?
- Explore the principles underlying Mr Hope's invention: how sailing ships catch and use the wind. Also windmills and wind farms.
- What do the children think has happened at the end of the chapter?

**CHAPTER FIVE**

Are the children satisfied with the ending?

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Jenny Wagner lives with her husband, their dog and three lazy cats in a small Queensland farmhouse that looks like a witch's cottage. The garden is full of possums, lizards, goannas, frogs, scrub turkeys and other birds. Sometimes a couple of wallabies come to visit, too.

Jenny likes writing best of all, unless it's going badly, in which case she hates it. She also likes going for walks, listening to classical music, studying languages, doing cryptic crossword puzzles, getting together with friends and putting off the vacuuming.

She likes two-minute noodles with tomato paste stirred in, brussels sprouts and good coffee.

She doesn't like racism, cruelty to animals or people, or getting up early.

As well as her best-selling novels featuring the nimbin, Jenny Wagner has also written several very successful children's picture books.

*The Bunyip of Berkeley's Creek* and *John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat* both won the Children's Book Council of Australia Book of the Year Award (Picture Books) and are widely considered to be classics.