



# *Max and George*

## Corinna Sandys-Brooke

### SYNOPSIS:

Max only had one friend. Max's friend was called George. George lived in windows. Max is lucky to have a friend like George. George loves to do everything Max does. He also knows what it feels like to be Max . . .

### WRITING STYLE

Cori Brooke is a new author whose story speaks to the heart. Her manuscript was irresistible, and Sue deGennaro was the logical and perfect choice for such a gentle story for pre-schoolers uncertain about friendships and frightened about the move to big school.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

#### **About the author**

Cori Brooke has a double degree in Law and Creative Industries (Media and Communication) from the Queensland University of Technology. Her double degree says a lot about her personality. She has a very analytical side and a very creative side. She also has a Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Practice (also from QUT) and was admitted as a lawyer in 2009.

Cori has always loved writing and is passionate about picture books and their ability to drive and encourage the imagination and creativity of both children and adults. She also spends a lot of time at the beach, loves cooking and collects antiques. *Max and George* is her first book.

Originally from Canada, Cori married an Australian and they now live in Brisbane with their young son.

#### **About the illustrator**

Sue deGennaro studied film at university, learnt how to weld and draw at art school, and moved to Sydney to join the circus. She worked and performed with many touring

companies as an aerialist and finished her career working in an all-girl flying trapeze troupe. She now lives in Melbourne with her two girls. Her days are spent writing stories of things that make her giggle and painting pictures to stick on the fridge. Some of the book she has illustrated are *The Princess and the Packet of Frozen Peas* (by Tony Wilson), *The Tomorrow Book* (by Jackie French), *One Funky Monkey* (by Stacey McCleary) and *Just One More* (by Mark Macleod). *The Tomorrow Book* won the 2011 Environment Award for Children's Literature.

## EDITORIAL COMMENTS

This book has been a delight to work on. From the moment Sue sent through the first rough sketches of Max's imaginary friend, George, depicted as a rabbit, I knew it was going to be something special. It wasn't something that the author or I had imagined but we instantly loved it! The combination of Cori's gentle, poignant story with Sue's gentle, fun illustrations was a match seemingly made in heaven. Cori's love of the 1950s was happily also reflected in the muted retro feel of Sue's detailed collage work and illustrative style.

## STUDY NOTES/ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHERS

### Page 1

- What sort of boy do you think Max is?
- How do you know that George is an imaginary friend?
- Why might George be depicted as a rabbit? What qualities does a rabbit have that would appeal to Max?
- Why might Max have created George?
- How can a special friend like George help to make you feel better?

### Page 2

- What does the author mean by *George lived in windows*?
- Why do you think George's image appears so many times on this page?

### Page 3

- Why don't Max's parents understand about windows (and therefore about George)?
- How is a child's world different from an adult's world?

### Page 4

- Why does Max make George very similar to himself?
- Why does George mirror everything that Max does?

Activity:

- Divide into pairs. You and your partner are to mirror each other's movements. What happens when your partner lifts his/her right hand? Which hand do you need to lift? Try to catch your partner out. Maybe have a competition to see which pair makes the best mirror.
- How does this activity make you feel?
- How might it help Max?

Page 5

- How would trying to cheer Max up have helped George as well?

Page 6

- Why might George have been nervous about starting school?
- Why was Max more interested in the windows than in all the school things?
- We can't see Max's face, but from the picture of George, how do you think Max feels?

Page 7

- How did Max feel when he told George his funny joke?

Page 8

- How did the people react to Max when he told George his particularly funny story in the shop?

Page 9

- How does Max feel at school?
- How does this illustration help to reinforce this feeling?

Page 10

- Why does Max look for George at lunch time?
- How does George make him feel?

Page 11

- How does Sam react to Max telling him he was talking to a friend?
- Does he tease Max about George?
- How does he start up a friendship with Max?
- Was it hard for Max to make a real friend?

Page 12

- How do you think George reacts to Max's new friend? Is he jealous? Why not?

Page 13

- Why can Max no longer see George at school?
- How does Max feel now that he has a real boy for a friend?

Page 14

- *Max eventually stopped looking in windows.* Do you find this statement sad or happy? Why?
- Why do we all grow out of childhood toys?

Page 15

- Why does Max know that George will never be far away?
- Why do you think George appears with a friend of his own in the last illustration?

**FOR DISCUSSION:**

- Do you have a special friend / toy / blanket etc that provides comfort?
- How does it make you feel?
- Why do you think it makes you feel that way?
- When do you need your special friend / toy / blanket?
- How do other people (especially grown ups) react to your special friend / toy / blanket?
- How did you feel when you first started school?
- How would George have helped Max?
- How might Max's friendship with George actually help him to start a friendship with Sam? (What skills can you learn from an imaginary friend?)
- Can adults have imaginary friends? Do we have to leave them in childhood?
- Is it fair to tease someone who has an imaginary friend? What should we do instead?

Activity

Max's friend is a rabbit.

- What would your imaginary friend look like?
- What qualities would you like in this friend?
- Draw a picture of your special friend.
- Write a story about how your special friend helped you find the courage to face a challenge.