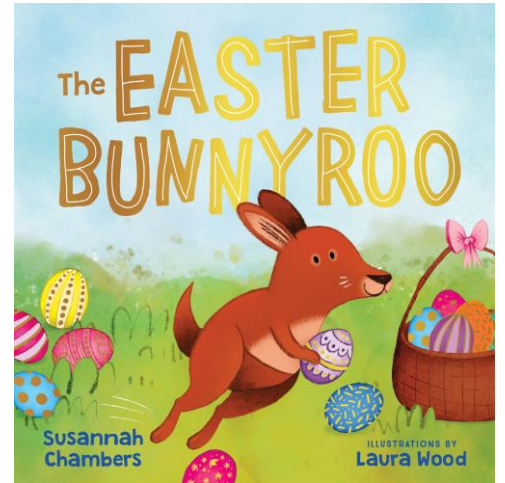


The Easter Bunnyroo

By Susannah Chambers
Illustrated by Laura Wood



February 2020 ISBN 9781760635015
Hardback picture book
Recommended for 3-5-year-olds

Summary

When Dad rescues Ruby the joey, Charlie begins to suspect she is really the Easter Bunny.

After all:

- Ruby has LONG ears and BIG feet.
- Ruby is very good at jumping.
- Ruby has a built-in basket for carrying Easter eggs!

Although, there could be a problem – how will Ruby know what to do? Luckily, Charlie can teach her what she needs to know.



The Easter Bunnyroo is a delightful tale of mistaken identity – or not. Told and illustrated very much through the eyes of a small child, this story is filled with misunderstandings and unintended mischief, and features a very Australian animal fulfilling a traditional European role.

Susannah Chambers' text uses short sentences with key words and phrases in different colours and occasional capitals for emphasis. The story begins in the past tense, and moves into the present as the action builds, liberally sprinkled with puns and humour. One particularly cute scene involves the main character struggling to stay up until all the world is asleep – as late as 8.30pm! – all the while worrying that it is Ruby the kangaroo who will drift off.

The Easter Bunnyroo is a joyous celebration of a popular ritual – Easter – and of a very Australian family working together across generations.

Themes

- Easter
- family
- Australian animals
- orphaned wildlife

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Discussion questions

1. Hold up the book's cover, making sure its title is covered. Ask questions such as:
 - Look at the coloured eggs and guess what time of the year you think this story might be set.
 - Who usually delivers these kinds of eggs? [*Hint: the Easter*]
 - Instead of a bunny, what kind of famous Australian animal is shown here?
 - How many Easter eggs can you count on the cover?
 - The basket looks pretty full of eggs. Where else might a female kangaroo be able to store lots of Easter eggs? [*Answer: in her pouch*]
2. Now uncover the book's title and read it out loud to the class. Ask if anyone can guess what the story might be about before you turn to the first page? Encourage students to put together the 'when' and 'what' they guessed earlier [Easter + kangaroo] to come up with scenarios.
3. Read *The Easter Bunnyroo* through and ask students the following questions to help them explore the story:
 - What did the dad in the story find?
 - But the child in the story is convinced the orphaned kangaroo is really the Easter Bunny...
 - How did the kangaroo come to be called Ruby?
 - Charlie mistakes the kangaroo for the Easter Bunny because of her long ... [*Answer: ears*], big [*Answer: feet*], she is very good at j....ing [*Answer: jumping*], and she has a built-in b.... [*Answer: basket*]. [*Hint: if students are struggling to remember the text, make exaggerated movements to help.*]
 - Why does Charlie hide Mum's mobile phone, Grandpa's glasses, Dad's car keys, the baby's nappy bag, the remote control and the library card?
 - How do you think Mum, Dad and Grandpa felt about their things being hidden? What helped you guess that?
 - Who falls asleep first on the night before Easter Sunday – Charlie or Ruby the joey?
 - Who do you think hid all the eggs?
 - Which do you think is the better name for the kangaroo in the story, Easter Bunny or Easter Bunnyroo? Why?
 - Dad brings home three new creatures on the last page. Can you identify what they really are?
4. Explain to the class that the way words look on a page can help us better understand the word and the story. Turn to the double-page where Charlie is holding the kangaroo's ears and measuring her feet.
 - Ask students: what is different about the words LONG and BIG here?
5. *A picture is worth a thousand words.*
Explain to students that pictures can sometimes tell us a lot more than the words on a page if we look very closely. For instance, Charlie never tells us what Dad's job is but the clothes he is wearing in the story can help us make a guess that he might be

a park ranger or someone who works in a zoo. Later in the story, Charlie doesn't tell us where the hidden things are, but we can tell from the pictures.

- Turn to the corresponding pages and ask students where Mum's phone, Grandpa's glasses, Dad's car keys, the nappy bag, the remote control and the library card are hidden.
6. Looking at pictures of an Easter egg hunt is almost as much fun as having one yourself. Turn to the double-page spread showing Charlie running down the steps on Easter morning and ask students to count all the eggs they can find across the two pages. Look very carefully on the shelf, in the pot plants, under the rug and in Grandpa's pocket!
 7. Grandpa helps the kids paint Easter eggs but there are lots of ways to decorate eggs, which you can try in your classroom. Why not try dyed eggs? All you will need are the eggs, food colouring, tape, vinegar, tongs, an empty egg carton, wax paper and old clothes (for the mess). There are so many places to find advice on how to decorate eggs on the internet, but we recommend:
<https://www.kidzworld.com/article/26746-how-to-paint-easter-eggs>

Another great idea is to create a marbled effect. To find out more go to
<https://www.delish.com/holiday-recipes/easter/g2327/make-marbled-easter-eggs/>

The author's motivation

'My small son's beloved and constant companion is a soft kangaroo puppet called Bunny. He named her Bunny even though he knew she was a kangaroo. She is our Bunnyroo, and has been on many adventures with us.

'I grew up not far from Barwon Park, where in 1859 Thomas Austin released 24 breeding rabbits into the countryside. That did not go well for anybody, except maybe the rabbits. So I love the idea of an Australian alternative to feral bunnies – an Easter Bunnyroo, with a built-in egg basket. (Although I am also on board with the Easter Bilby movement!)

'While I was writing, I was also thinking a bit about gender and domestic life. Mums are often the ones tasked with keeping the household in order, the ones who know where to look for lost things, so I wanted the dad in this story to be the finder. I love how Laura Wood has drawn him in his wildlife ranger khakis. His professional life and his home life overlap, which is true for so many families.

'I love reading stories about the dedicated people and organisations who rescue injured or orphaned animals, rehabilitate them and return them to the wild. One article I read was accompanied by a picture of three tiny flying-fox pups wrapped up in blankets, like three furry little burritos. They are not the stars of this story, but they stayed with me, and they make a wee cameo at the end.'

— Susannah Chambers

The illustrator's inspiration and method

'This was the very first book I illustrated within an Easter setting.

'I grew up in Italy, so it was interesting for me to research the differences about this holiday in Australia.

'For me, the first bit of inspiration comes from reading the story; that's what always gives me the first spark of creativity. Also, as I said, research is very important in my process –

that's when I gather information from the real world in order to combine it later with my imagination.

'My process to illustrate a book from start to finish has lots of different stages. From coming up with the main character's design, to sketching out the layout of every single page, finalising those sketches in more detailed drawings and, last but not least, painting and rendering all the illustrations.

'To sketch, draw and paint I use the same tool: my drawing tablet and my computer. Not very romantic like paint or crayons, but very effective!'

— Laura Wood

About the author

Susannah Chambers is the author of several picture books for young children. Her first book *The Snow Wombat*, illustrated by Mark Jackson, was short-listed for the CBCA Book of the Year Awards. She lives in Melbourne with her family, which includes her son's favourite stuffed animal – a kangaroo named Bunny.



About the illustrator



Originally from a small town in the north of Italy, Laura Wood studied illustration in Melbourne, Australia, where she started her illustration career. After a few years of seeking adventures and travelling around the world, she currently lives and work as a freelance illustrator in Milan, Italy. Among her favourite things there are coffee, dancing and visiting new places. Laura creates her art digitally using lots of textured brushes and a fun colour palette. She is the illustrator of bestsellers *What Do They Do with All the Poo from All the Animals in the Zoo?* by Anh Do, *The Cow Who Tripped Over the Moon* and *Hickory, Dickory, Dash* by Tony Wilson.