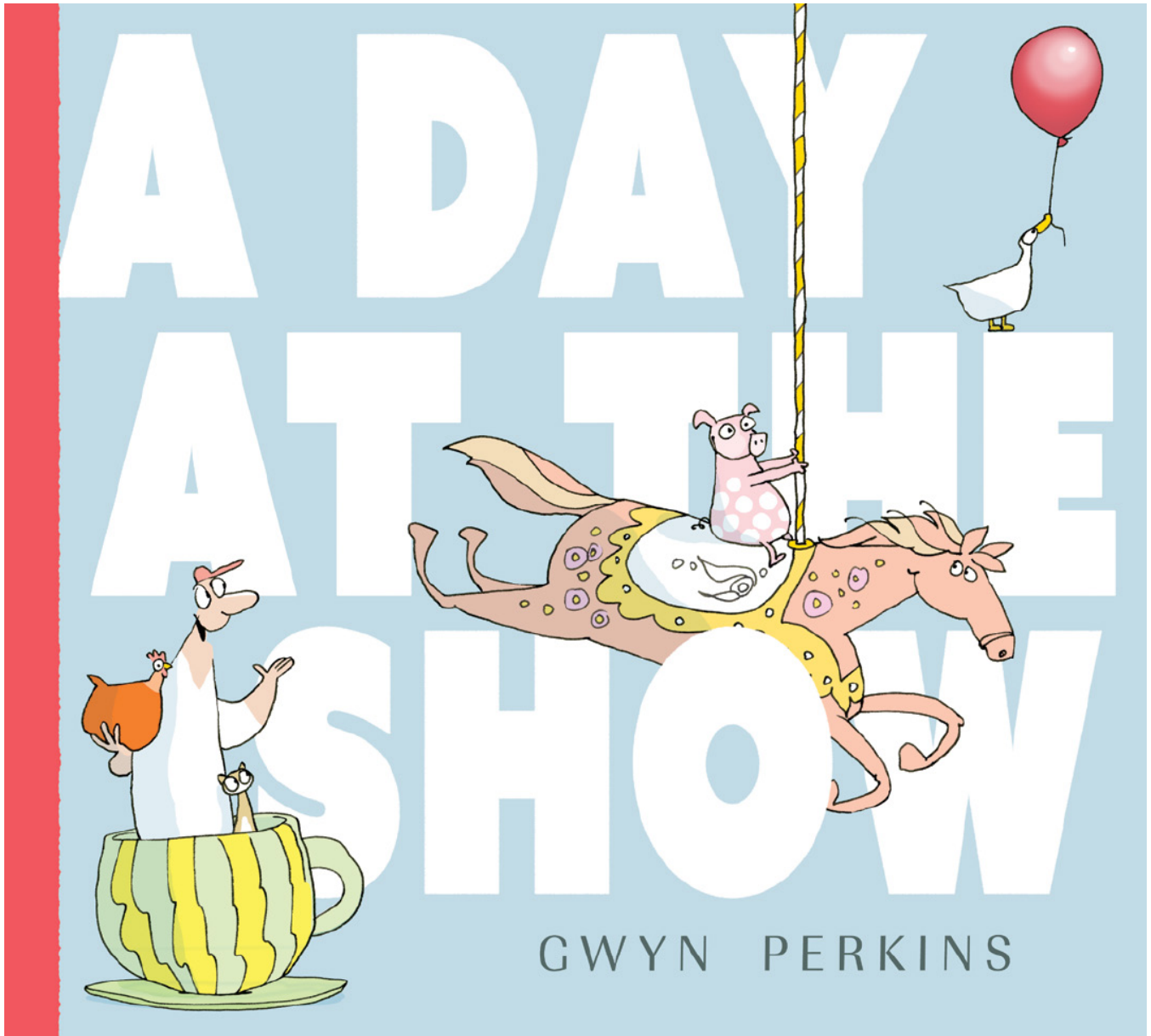


# TEACHERS NOTES

## A Day at the Show



By Gwyn Perkins

### THEMES

- Togetherness
- Learning through fun
- Competition
- Losing graciously

### SUITABLE FOR

Age 2-8: Pre-school to Grade 2

## DESCRIPTION

Doreen the hen has laid another perfect egg! Little Iggy and Grandad think she deserves a prize.

What follows is a family trip to the colourful chaos of the Show, filled with spinning tea cups, merry-go-rounds, lots of animals and some healthy competition.

Here is a story about family adventures, the magic of the show, and the joy of running one tiny car into another.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Born in Melbourne in 1942, Gwyn Perkins began his artistic career when he won a newspaper drawing prize of one guinea pig and a box of paints (mistakenly awarded to Miss Gwyn Perkins). He spent many years as a successful animator in the advertising industry before moving to an island north of Sydney to enjoy a slower pace. He spends his days drawing, sailing and doing odd jobs for his friends and family. Gwyn has two adult sons and lives with his wife and teenage daughter.

## AUTHOR INSPIRATION BY GWYN PERKINS

In about 2004, I was sitting in the old but cared-for grandstand at the Royal Bathurst Show listening to an address by TV vet Dr Harry, who explained the history of that show and how it was being kept alive by the dedication of a small group of locals, mainly farmers. It was a celebration of the farm life, and a yearly grand get-together for families that mostly lived miles apart from their nearest neighbours. It was also where, through showing and competition, stock breeds might be improved and knowledge could be shared. There were rides as well, of course, as well as sheep shearing, cattle judging, wood chopping, food competitions and equestrian events. Now, animal husbandry was always going to be a difficult topic to impart for a readership of four-year-olds, but perhaps I could give some inkling and set them thinking about country life. My editor had suggested that instead of Grandad and Iggy wandering around looking at things, they should come with the purpose of trying to win a prize, so Doreen showed up.

I didn't know at first how to overcome the difficulty of depicting the inevitable crowds of people that a show is also about, until most of them became colourful spotted and striped farm animals. It's not often I get to draw a horse spinning in a teacup whilst holding a strawberry ice cream, a duck in a dodgem car or a spotted pig sitting in a bus stop talking on a mobile phone. So I've had fun.



## THEMES

### Togetherness

Grandad and Iggy like going places together. This is a theme that was introduced in Gwyn's first book, *A Walk in the Bush*, and it very much continues here. *A Day at the Show* celebrates time spent with the ones we love, and the simple joy of exploration and adventure with family. It also highlights the way that events like a show can bring a community together.



### Learning through fun

Grandad takes great joy in introducing Iggy to new experiences. Much of *A Day at the Show* is framed around Grandad teaching Iggy about what happens at the Show – from the fun rides to the competitions. These lessons are never dull or overly planned, and are infused with Grandad's own sense of joy. It quite clearly shows that learning need not be boring, and that having fun can actually be the best way to learn.

### Competition

The book explores the range of competitions you might find at a show – wood chopping, show jumping, baking and animal showcases. It discusses the fun to be found in gentle competition, and takes care to point out that this is a key traditional aspect of a show.

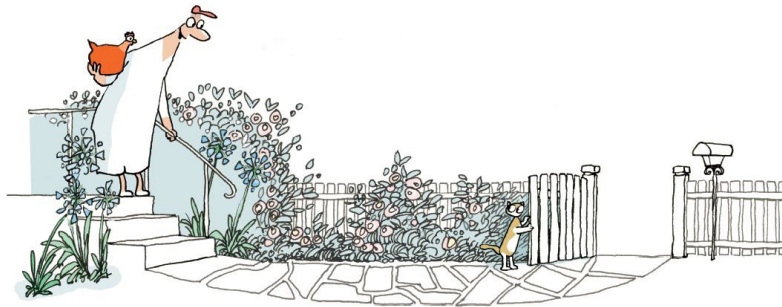
### Losing gracefully

Grandad and Iggy take Doreen the hen to the Show with the hope that she will win a prize. When it becomes clear that Doreen doesn't quite measure up to the other hens, Grandad and Iggy have to work through their disappointment. In a very sweet, gentle way, *A Day at the Show* introduces the idea of being a good loser, and appreciating the ones you love for their great qualities – even if not everyone can see these qualities.



## ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION POINTS

- Before you start reading, have a look at the cover of this book and read the blurb on the back. Discuss as a class what you think this story might be about. Also take a moment to discuss what it is about a book that makes you want to read it. Is it the cover? The description? Are you interested in this book based on these details?
- After reading the book, discuss as a class if the book has lived up to expectations. Draw your own version of the cover and write your own blurb, now that you have read the book.
- Are there certain animals you can spot on nearly every page? Did you see the cow with the smiley face?
- Have you been to a show? What was your favourite thing to do there? Tell the class a story about a time you have been to a show and how it made you feel.
- What is your favourite farm animal? Draw a picture, and don't forget to give them a name!



- Grandad and Iggy like going places together. Who is your favourite person to take on an adventure? What kind of things do you like to do together? Write a letter to this person, inviting them to join you. Talk about the special things that every letter needs. How do you set out a letter? And address an envelope?
- Do you have a favourite ride at the show? Draw a picture of it.
- What would you do if you could build a brand new ride? What would it look like? Draw your version of the perfect ride, and show it to the class. Discuss how it might work, and how you could make it safe to ride. Alternatively, make a model of your ride using craft materials.
- How do Grandad and Iggy react when Doreen loses her competition? How do you react when you lose something? Discuss as a class, and create a list of things you can do to feel better when you lose.
- Design your own showbag! Look up other showbag examples, then create your own. Draw what the outside of the bag would look like, as well as all the things you would find inside it.



- Discuss as a class how the real agricultural competitions at a show work. Talk about how farmers prepare their livestock to be shown, and what kinds of things the judges are looking for.
- Some shows have sections where kids can enter artwork, baking or crafts. Discuss as a class what you would enter, and if this book is being read to tie in with an upcoming show, use this as an opportunity to prepare items to be entered.
- There are different names for different baby animals. How many do you know? Discuss the common ones as a class and create a list.

