

## *Go To Sleep, Jessie!* Teacher Notes

Written by Libby Gleeson  
Illustrated by Freya Blackwood

Published by Litte Hare, November 2014

### SYNOPSIS

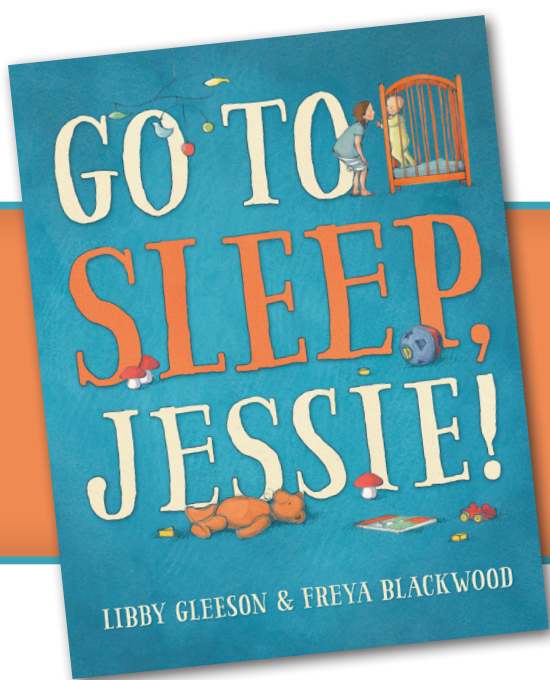
A beautiful tale that encapsulates the love of siblings. The story takes the reader on a journey of two sisters who share a bedroom. The baby, Jessie, will not stop crying when it's time to go to bed. Jo finds this very frustrating and tries absolutely everything to get Jessie to sleep, like asking her parents to take Jessie for a drive to calm her down. But when Jessie has gone, all of a sudden, Jo is lonely without her sister in her bed next to her. In the end, Jo realises that Jessie is simply longing for human interaction and climbs into her cot to cuddle her little sister to sleep.

### THEMES

This is a story about the bedtime struggle of a little girl who longs for peace and quiet and a room of her own, and of her toddler sister who longs for a bit of company as she falls asleep. It explores themes of upstairs and downstairs, parent time and child time, exasperation and forgiveness, private time and shared time, isolation and togetherness, misunderstanding and empathy.

### WRITING STYLE

Libby Gleeson uses her trademark pared-back minimalist style with a focus on dialogue and action. The story is told in the first person, so that the reader sees everything through the narrator's eyes, but the simple impartial voice allows space for the readers to engage individually with the story and develop their own conclusions. Libby avoids telling the reader too much, at the same time as providing enough information to develop a vivid and insightful narrative. For example, she avoids telling us the narrator is angry or frustrated or empathetic, but we are able to understand the anger, frustration or empathy through her dialogue and actions. The vocabulary repeats certain pairs of contrasts—screaming/quiet, upstairs/downstairs—to suggest the dissonance, disconnection and exasperation that the narrator experiences.



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### ILLUSTRATION STYLE

The contrasts expressed in the text are amplified in the illustrations. Freya has chosen a palette based on orange and blue, which fall opposite each other on the colour wheel. The orange represents warmth and light and is used to illustrate the downstairs scenes, and the deep blue is the colour of the dark room upstairs where the children are trying to sleep. Further plays of visual contrasts are found in the depiction of light versus dark, tidy versus messy. Freya uses a combination of full-bleed pictures and multiple picture-boxes to show how a sequence of events can happen in one part of the house while a single event occurs in another. Multiple levels in the pictures, repeated diagonals, and strong horizontals and verticals that divide the page help contribute to a range of responses in the reader. Most importantly, Freya's illustrations show Jessie's side of the story ... the frustration of a tiny child unable to express that all she wants is a cuddle! The illustrations also add humour to the story.

### AUTHOR BACKGROUND

LIBBY GLEESON was born in Young, a small town in south western NSW. As a child, books and reading were hugely important to Libby. She remembers going to the library on a Saturday morning and borrowing five or six books and reading them all by Sunday night.

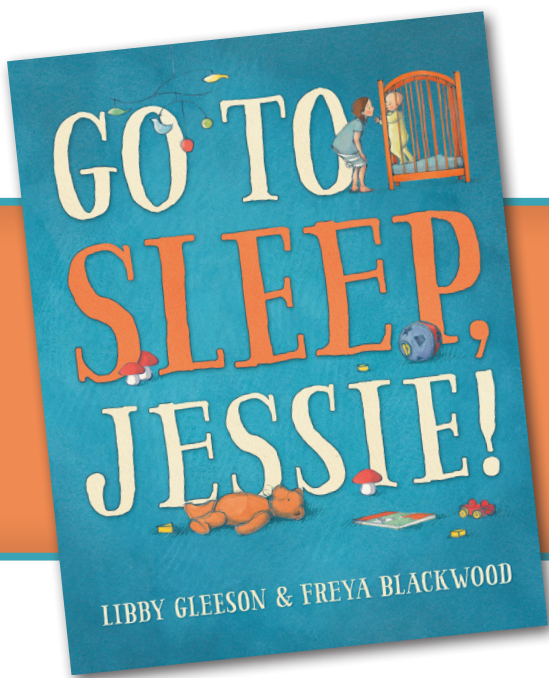
Libby has been awarded armfuls of Australian Book Awards, including the CBCA Award for best picture book (*An Ordinary Day*), best book for younger readers (*Hannah and the Tomorrow Room*) and best early childhood book (*Amy and Louis*). She is frequently featured on Premier's short lists and she has also scooped her fair share of International awards, including the Bologna Ragazzi Award.

It is not surprising that in 1997 Libby was presented the Lady Cutler Award for Services to Children's Literature.

Libby works full-time and thinks that the writer's life is pretty good!







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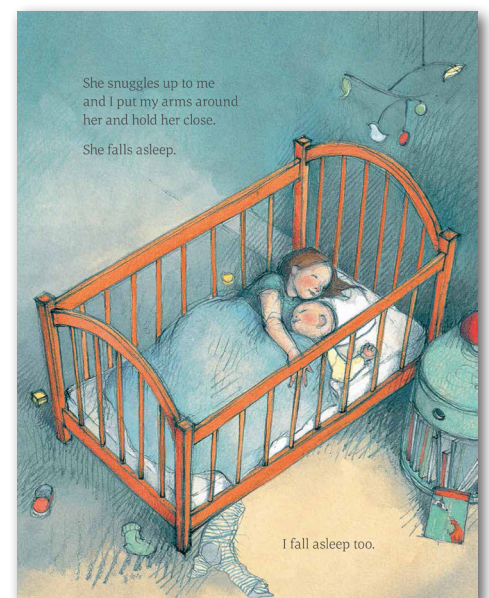
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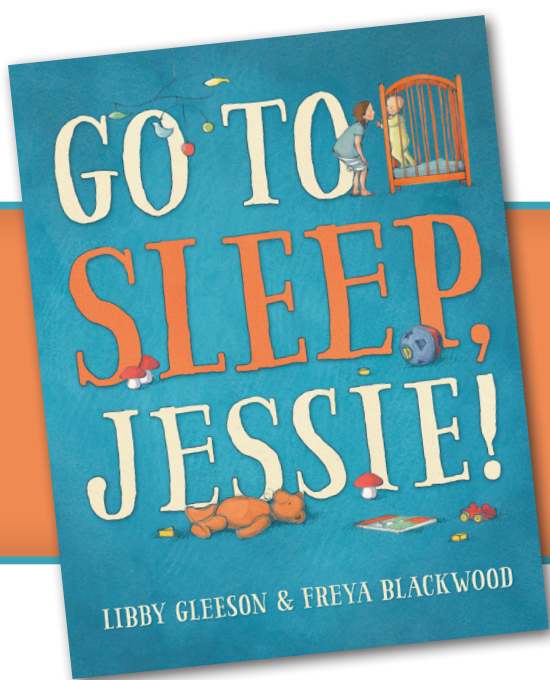
### ILLUSTRATOR BACKGROUND

FREYA BLACKWOOD is a rising star in the international world of children's books. She was born in Edinburgh and grew up in Orange in NSW, Australia. Freya's illustrations for *Two Summers* won the Crichton Award in 2004 and the book was shortlisted for the Picture Book of the Year Award in the Children's Book Council of Australia 2004 awards. *Emily Rapunzel's Hair* was shortlisted in the Early Childhood section of the Children's Book Council of Australia 2006 awards. Her latest book *Amy & Louis*, which won the 2007 CBCA Picture Book of the Year for Younger Readers, was written by Libby Gleeson and has been published in Australia, the US, Germany, France and Korea. Freya has just illustrated a book written by Roddy Doyle which was published by Arthur A. Levine Books.

*Clancy & Millie and the Very Fine House*, written by Libby Gleeson was published in October 2009 by Little Hare and has been shortlisted for the 2010 CBCA Early Childhood book of the year. In October 2010 Little Hare will be publishing *Maudie and Bear*, a picture book with renowned children's book writer, Jan Omerod.

Having spent many years living in Wellington, New Zealand, Freya now lives in Orange with her little girl Ivy, who was the inspiration behind her picture book *Ivy Loves to Give* (Little Hare, September 2010). Freya is also the illustrator for the award-winning *Look, a Book!*





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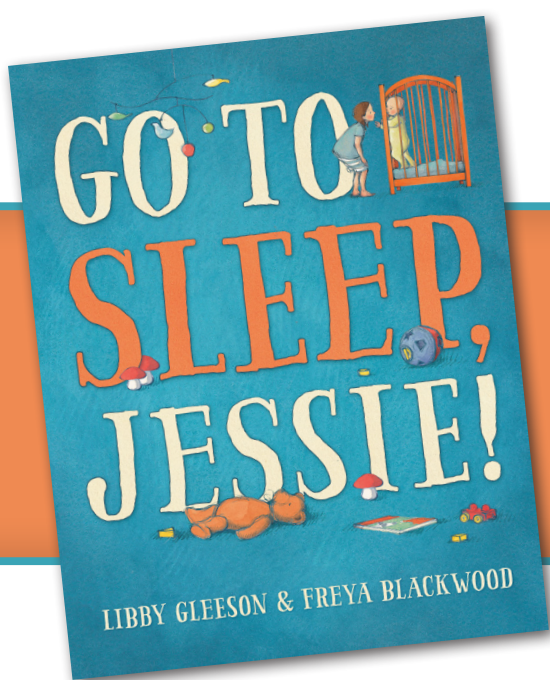
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### STUDY NOTES

1. If you read just the text, whose story does this seem to be? (To help you, the big girl's name is Jo, and the toddler is called Jessie.) Why do you think Libby Gleeson has decided to tell the story from this person's point of view?
2. Pictures often tell us much more than words are able to do. How many people's stories are told in Freya Blackwood's illustrations? Pick one of the characters in her pictures and tell the story from that person's point of view. (You might even like to think about telling the story from T-Bear's point of view.)
3. Jo and Jessie are Libby Gleeson's own children. They are now adults, but this story is about something that happened when they were young. Think of a funny bedtime event in your own life—or even a story from your parent's lives—and write a short story about it.
4. How many pairs of opposites can you find in the illustrations? Why do you think Freya has included so many opposite ideas in the pictures? What do they tell us about the mood of the story?
5. Freya has used many colours, but has concentrated on two colours more than others. Which two colours are they? What mood does each of these two colours seem to create? Think of some other colours and the moods they represent. Draw a picture about a particular mood, using mainly one colour to create the mood.
6. The text part of this story seems quite serious. In what ways do the illustrations add a funny side to the story?



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### ACTIVITIES

- Go back through the first few pages and ask your class to write a list of things that Jo does to try and get Jessie to stop screaming and go to sleep. For example, she offers Jessie T-Bear, if she will just go to sleep.
- Referring to the list you have just created, ask your class to come up with their own suggestions of how they would get their sibling to stop screaming and go to sleep.
- Discuss with your class why babies cry. Discuss if any of them have younger siblings that cry and what it is they think their siblings want from crying. For example, are they hungry? Thirsty? Or do they want to be cuddled?
- Discuss some things that might keep your class up at night and how it makes them feel. Is it a busy road? Or loud neighbours? Or are they afraid of the dark? As a class, come up with some solutions to these problems, perhaps they play quiet lullabys or have a night light in their room.
- Refer to Jo feeling lonely once Jessie has gone for a drive with their dad. Discuss with your class if they have ever wanted to do something or change something. Then, once it was done, did they regret what they wanted? Ask them what it was and how they went about asking for it back, if they did. For example, if they gave away a toy to their siblings and then wanted it back, why might that be? And how did they cope with that?
- Have a look at the spreads that show both Jo and Jessie's sides of the bedroom and compare the contrast between the chaos of Jessie's side and the calm and cleanliness of Jo's side. Ask your class to comment on whether they like to keep their rooms messy or tidy? Do they enjoy cleaning up their toys? Ask them why they think cleaning up after themselves is important.