

QUESTIONS

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

1. What do you see on the cover?
2. Do you think this book will be a story? A fact book? A book of poems? What makes you say that?
3. What part of the birds do we see? Is it unusual? Where do we 'stand' as observers? What is the effect?
4. Look at the title. Who can the 'little one' be? Who is talking to them?
5. For older readers, what do you call the kind of angle (perspective) chosen by the illustrator for the cover image?

AS YOU READ

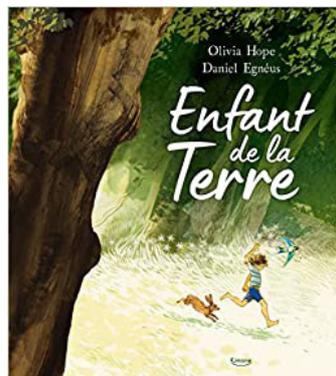
1. 'This bright world can make you fly.' Can it? How does the picture answer this question?
2. Who is the hero of this story? What do we know about them?
3. Where is it set? Are there places like these near you? Are the places in the book all real?
4. There are lots of butterflies in this book. How many can you count? What about birds? (Don't forget their shadows!)
5. 'Grow a hero inside you.' What does that mean?
6. 'Chase tornadoes ...' What do you notice about the words on this page? What is the hero's balloon made out of? Does it sound like a good idea to chase tornadoes? Why does the narrator think it's OK?

AFTER YOU HAVE READ

1. What does being wild mean to you? For a plant? An animal? A human kid? Is it usually a good thing? Is it the same as being bold? Being brave? What does being wild mean in this book?
2. Which is your favourite spread (double page)? Why?
3. What do you notice about the little one's size throughout the book? Compare the first spread ('Wake up early') to the next page, for example. Why do you think our hero is sometimes small and sometimes big? Compare the tornadoes page with the final spread.
4. How many animal and insect species are pictured in this book? Now just read the text. How many species are named?
5. Jungles, oceans, mountains ... Do you think it's important to be connected with nature? How do *you* do it? In *Be Wild, Little One* which page feels the least

'natural'? Does it have any nature in it? How does it compare to where you live? How could you bring in more nature – to your life, to your home, to your world, to your local area and so on?

6. Compare these two versions of the cover. Which one do you prefer? Why?



7. The title in French is different too. It means 'Child of the Earth'. Is it a good fit for this book? Which title do you prefer?
8. Did you enjoy this book? How many butterflies out of five would you give it?

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR OLDER READERS

1. What does the narrator ask of the 'little one'? Is it always possible or realistic? Base your answer on what is in the text only. Now look at the pictures. Does it make you change your answer? Does the book overall still work? What do you think of the gap between text and image?
2. The narrator uses the imperative throughout the book. Does it make it feel bossy? What's the tone here?
3. Who is this book addressed to? Are there any adults involved? (Think about the story, the pictures, but also who might be doing the reading.)
4. When and where can *you* be wild?
5. Look at the typography (the shape and size of the letters of the text) throughout the book. What do you notice? Does it make you say the text in particular ways? Do you think it works?
6. Daniel Egnéus's illustrations are very cinematic (film-like). Can you spot all the ways he shows movement? Can you name the different kinds of angles (perspectives) he uses? Can you find an example of: eye-level angle; bird's eye view; low-angle shot; hip-level shot? This handy guide to camera angles from Studio Binder also has examples from various movies: <https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/ultimate-guide-to-camera-shots/#camera-angles>

BE WILD, LITTLE ONE

Olivia Hope

Illustrator Daniel Egnéus

Bloomsbury Children's Books

Paperback, 32PP, £6.99

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Themes

- Nature and connection with the natural world
- Wildness within
- Exploring
- Self-expression
- Confidence

Summary An invitation to explore nature and to embrace the wildness within, *Be Wild, Little One* is a beautiful combination of soaring art and uplifting, song-like verse. A young, unnamed 'little one' (and by extension the reader or listener) follows an unseen narrator's advice to 'Cross the ocean, sail the seas / Trek in jungles, climb up trees', always accompanied by a menagerie of animals and insects against a lush natural background. Spanning habitats and seasons, *Be Wild* also confidently crosses the line between realism and imagination, encouraging multiple interpretations of this inspired and inspiring picturebook.

Judges' Comments This is a heartwarming and inspiring call to be wild, to be brave, to go out and meet the world. Expertly written and beautifully illustrated, this inclusive book brings the reader on a journey into jungles, across skies, into deep blue seas, along snow-capped mountains, up to rooftops and through stormy skies. This enchanting picturebook demonstrates how so much can be said with just a few words and is a wonderful reminder of the life-affirming world that surrounds us.

About the Author Olivia Hope is a writer from Kerry with a special love for children's fiction. A former record-breaking athlete, she competed internationally representing Ireland. With twenty years' experience teaching children, she has worked with all ages in the creative arts, most recently as a creative associate with the Arts Council on the Creative Schools programme, and as a creative learning assistant with Siamsa Tíre (the National Folk Theatre of Ireland). *Be Wild, Little One* is her first picturebook.



About the Illustrator Daniel Egnéus is a prolific artist who has illustrated numerous books, including several Neil Gaiman titles. He was voted Best Illustrator by the Association of Illustrators in 2005, and his picturebook *Lubna and Pebble* (written by Wendy Meddour) was chosen by *Time* magazine as one of the ten best picturebooks of 2019. He is based in Athens.

7. Now look at the types of ‘shots’ by size. Can you find examples of an extreme long shot, a long shot, a full shot? How about medium shots or close-ups? What is the overall effect? Why do you think Daniel Egnéus chose this approach in general throughout the book?

ACTIVITIES

- **Butterfly art.** Take inspiration from the beautiful wings of the butterflies in the first double spread. Cut the outline of your butterfly (body, head, wings) out of construction paper and place on contact (adhesive) paper. Decorate inside the outline using small pieces of tissue paper in various colours. Place a second sheet of contact paper over your finished butterfly and press with your hands to seal it. Cut around the outline and tape your art onto a window. Enjoy seeing it catching the sun!
- **Simon says: Be wild.** Play a game of Simon Says using the animals illustrated in this book, and mix it up with instructions from the narrator (‘Simon says: Wake up’; ‘Simon says: Stomp’ ...). What will ‘Simon says: Be wild’ look like?
- **Action rhyme.** Olivia Hope’s text is like a song, with its short lines and rhyming pattern. It’s also full of action. Can you come up with a different action (or more) for each double page? Think big moves and smaller signs (you could use sign language, too). What will you do for the chorus (‘Be wild, little one’)? Perform your action song to an audience!
- **Big or small.** Play with scale. Take an object from your desk (a pen, a rubber, a paper clip, pencil shavings ...) and imagine a tiny character found it. To their eyes, it appears huge! What could they use it for? Would it be useful to them or dangerous? Place your object on a piece of paper and draw your tiny hero using it. Take a photo of the whole scene when you’re ready!
- **Be in charge.** ‘Make the world your own playground’: imagine what that would look like. What would you and the rest of the world do all day if the world was a playground? What games would you play? Would it be a noisy place or very quiet? Would there be rules? Draw a picture of your playground world, or make it 3D and build it out of Lego or play dough.

ACTIVITIES FOR OLDER READERS

- **Go wild.** Who is the wildest creature or person you know? Would you like to be them for a day? What might be different from your normal life? What is better? What might go wrong? Tell us how it goes in a story or a comic, or imagine it’s a movie and design the poster for it.
- **Create a wild-o-metre.** Look at all the ways this book suggests you can be wild (in words and pictures). Are they all the same level of ‘wildness’? Organise them from very wild to pretty tame. Can you think of other ways to be wild or wilder? Of other creatures that should feature? Add them to your scale. Use this personal wild-o-metre to let the world know how wild you’re feeling today!
- **Create a sensory story.** The senses are very present in this book (think of the ‘noisy sound’, the ‘deepest blue’, sand, snow ...). Select interesting sensory elements that can help you tell the story in a different way. Author Sadhbh Devlin’s ‘Creating Sensory Stories’ YouTube video, https://youtu.be/kL_B_frJgWQ (from Children’s Books Ireland’s Mind Yourself project), will help you choose and use your elements. Who will you perform your sensory story to?
- **Land art.** Could you use only natural materials to create a work of art? Or could you bring a bit of natural wildness into a city space? Gather some natural materials (leaves, stones, sticks, feathers, a sand beach ...), first making sure that you don’t disturb the local wildlife and that they are safe for you to handle. Make art! You could recreate a picture of something non-natural out of natural elements for contrast; you could invent a patterned mandala ... Take inspiration from land artists such as Agnes Denes (<http://agnesdenesstudio.com/works1.html>) and James Brunt (<https://www.jamesbruntartist.co.uk/>).

FURTHER RESOURCES

- Find more recommendations of great ‘green’ books for all ages in Children’s Books Ireland’s Going Green reading list: <https://childrensbooksireland.ie/our-recommendations/going-green>
- For more empowering and beautifully illustrated books that will help ‘grow a hero inside’ young readers, try *Life Doesn’t Frighten Me* by Maya Angelou and Jean-Michel Basquiat (ages 6+), and *Courage in a Poem* by a wonderful collective of poets and illustrators (Little Tiger Press, ages 9+).