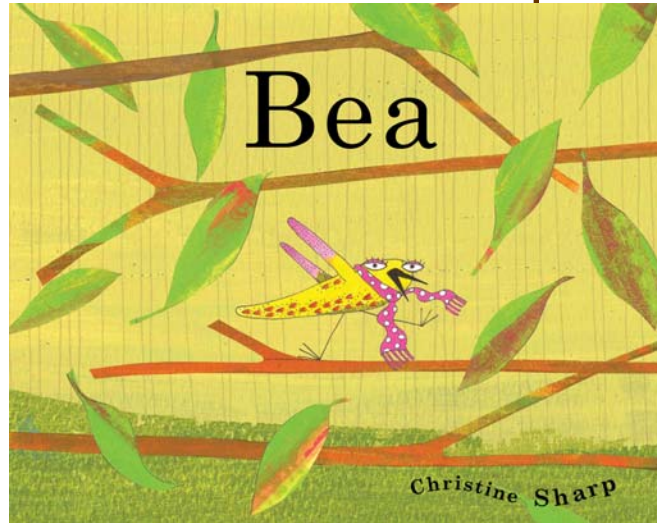


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# BEA

## Christine Sharp



### Teachers' Notes

Written by a practising Teacher Librarian  
in context with the Australian Curriculum  
(English)

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**SYNOPSIS**

*Bea* is a story about a bird named *Bea* who is a little bit different from the other birds. She likes to bake, dance and bathe in bubbles. The other birds don't always understand *Bea*, but that doesn't stop her from following her dreams.

In a story that celebrates individuality and differences, *Bea* shares an important message – that it's healthy to be yourself and that we all have a soul mate, no matter how different we are.

**THEMES**

Differences:

- *Bea* is different from the other birds. This doesn't stop her from following her dreams.

Birds:

- The 'usual' habits of birds feature in the text.

Friendship:

- Bernie is *Bea*'s soul mate. Bernie accepts *Bea* as she is.

Confidence:

- *Bea* has the confidence to be herself. She is an individual who doesn't feel the need to conform.

Poetry:

- Poetic devices such as alliteration, onomatopoeia and rhyme are used in the narrative.

**WRITING STYLE**

*Bea* is written in third person, present tense and is appropriate for younger readers. It successfully combines poetic language with a simple narrative that explores the themes of friendship and individuality.

**STUDY NOTES**

- Before reading ***Bea***, look carefully at the front cover. What predictions can you make about her? Discuss the use of colour, patterns and body language.
- The written text begins, '*Bea* is a bird of unusual tastes...for a bird, that is.' In small groups, brainstorm what these 'unusual' tastes might be. Consider what 'usual' tastes for birds might be also.

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- The author has used poetic devices such as alliteration, onomatopoeia and rhyme to help tell Bea's story. Discuss these devices and the author's choice to include them in the text. Some examples include:
  - Bake biscuits, buns and berry puddings
  - Watch worms wiggle
  - Dress up and dance to disco
  - Flock together and fluff their feathers
  - Bea likes to bathe in bubbles
  - Sticks and twigs, straw and sprigs
  - Chatter and cheep, chirrup and peep
  - Zoom, zip and zing
  - Hippity hop up high
  - When the wild wind blows
  - Whirl and wheel and wonder why
  - Sing a sweet song
- Experiment with alliteration and onomatopoeia in your own writing. Watch YouTube clips featuring typical behaviour of other animals to help stimulate ideas.
- Use the topic of birds to teach basic research and note-taking skills. Create an information report on birds, focussing on their habits such as building nests, digging for worms and other habits that feature in the text.
- Bea likes to bake. Bake some biscuits with the class. Create a recipe for the biscuits that Bea would make.
- Use *Bea* to revise letters and sounds, phonemes and graphemes.
- Create an invitation to Bea's dress-up disco.
- Choose an illustration from *Bea* that features lots of birds together. Take digital photos of students' heads and have students decorate and create their own unique 'bird' characters that reflect their individual personalities. Create a classroom display.
- Bea likes to 'bathe in bubbles' on rainy afternoons. Write a reflection about how you like to spend rainy afternoons?
- Bea dreams of travelling the world. Choose a range of places that Bea might visit. Read and research about these destinations. Imagine you are Bea. Create postcards from Bea to Bernie and the other birds about her travels.
- Imagine you are riding in a hot air balloon. Draw a picture that shows what you would see from above. Consider choosing a familiar setting such as flying over the school or local neighbourhood.
- Using different coloured crayons, colour in a piece of A3 paper. Paint over this with black paint. Once dry, scratch a scene into the page to reflect a scene from *Bea*.
- *Bea* is about being yourself and the importance of letting others be themselves. Discuss these important themes.

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- Why is Bernie such a great role model for friendship?
- Bea likes to watch day turn into night. View a time-lapse video of day turning into night. Use this as stimulus to brainstorm similes, metaphors and poetic descriptions of this transformation. Create a class poem using these ideas.
- Create your own individual character based on another animal. What might this animal do that is different from its fellow creatures? How would that type of animal usually behave? Research the common habits of this animal.  
Use poetic devices such as alliteration and onomatopoeia to create a text based on this character.

### **AUTHOR MOTIVATION**

‘Bea is a bird of unusual tastes ... for a bird, that is.’ The author wanted the story to be less a tale of an adventure, and more an allegory about appreciating the simple things in life and being true to yourself. Bea likes dressing up and dancing, driving a bus to the country, dreaming of travelling the world in a hot air balloon, and flying a kite with her best friend, Bernie. Her actions are contrasted with those of the ‘other birds’ who watch her with some bemusement. Bea is a bird that stands out from the flock; she dares to be herself. Bea is, of course, representative of the reader: riding bikes, bathing in bubbles and spending time with a much-loved friend may be unusual pastimes for a bird, but they are everyday activities for children. The message, then, is twofold – take the time to appreciate the simple things and be confident in being you.

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR**

Christine Sharp is an illustrator, a writer, designer, an artist and occasional performer who has worked in the creative industries for over 20 years. She runs her own freelance business in areas such as book design, graphic design, editing, illustration, writing and photography. In 2010 Christine completed a Master of Arts (Research) in Writing for Youth & Children at QUT. Christine is passionate about creating beautiful, inspirational and joyful books for children and adults. She works from her home on Tamborine Mountain, surrounded by birds and in the company of her dog, Billie Bear. This is her first book.

### **ABOUT THE ARTWORK**

Christine’s artwork combines both traditional and digital media, using scanned pencil drawings, paintings, photographs, fabrics and found objects to create a digital collage.