

## Teacher Notes

# The Chicken Thief

Béatrice Rodriguez



## Synopsis

Rabbit, Rooster, Chicken and Bear live happily in the countryside—until Fox kidnaps Chicken. The friends pursue Fox through deep forests until nightfall forces them to rest. Next day, Fox hides inside a mountain cave while the pursuers camp out.

The captive Chicken starts to seem happy with Fox. They escape again in a rowboat. The others follow in high seas, using Bear as a raft. They corner Fox at home, and threaten them. But Chicken pleads for Fox and says they love each other. The friends are reconciled; they eat together, and leave for home.

Resources for teachers  
working with school  
children aged 4+ years

### Themes:

- Change in space
- Change in time
- Change in emotions

## Themes

An important theme in this picture book is change. The illustration style creates a flow of changes in space, time, and emotions.

We follow the exhausted characters through ever-changing landscapes. The horizontal 'landscape' format intensifies this sense of travelling across vast distances. It's also a journey through time, shown by the changes from day to night.

Most importantly, it's about how the characters change during the journey. At the start, Fox is looking for food, but starts to enjoy Chicken's company. Chicken becomes attached to Fox. The pursuers are driven by anger at first, but have changed by the end. Their expressions in the final fireside scenes reveal their feelings—look at the rooster!



GECKO  
PRESS

## Activities

### IMAGINE THE WORDS ALONE

Share the book with the class by telling the story in your own words.

Explain how you 'made up' the words. Then discuss how a wordless book can have many different interpretations.

### IMAGINE THE WORDS TOGETHER

Read the book again, but this time construct the story as a class. Students can volunteer their own words for each page. Encourage students to expand on character, setting, events (seen and unseen).

For example, they could name the animals and locations; add dialogue, expression, and thoughts; add suspense; describe landscapes.



### VIEWPOINTS

Extend the idea of possible stories by telling the story from different viewpoints. For example, tell Fox's version of the story.

### WRITTEN RETELLINGS

Move from oral retellings to written versions. Students could begin by making a Story Map, using locations and events from the book. Students could also create a diary of day by day events. Finally, students could write it as a narrative.

In pairs, students could write and print sentences to go with each page for a read aloud version.

### CREATING MOOD WITH ART

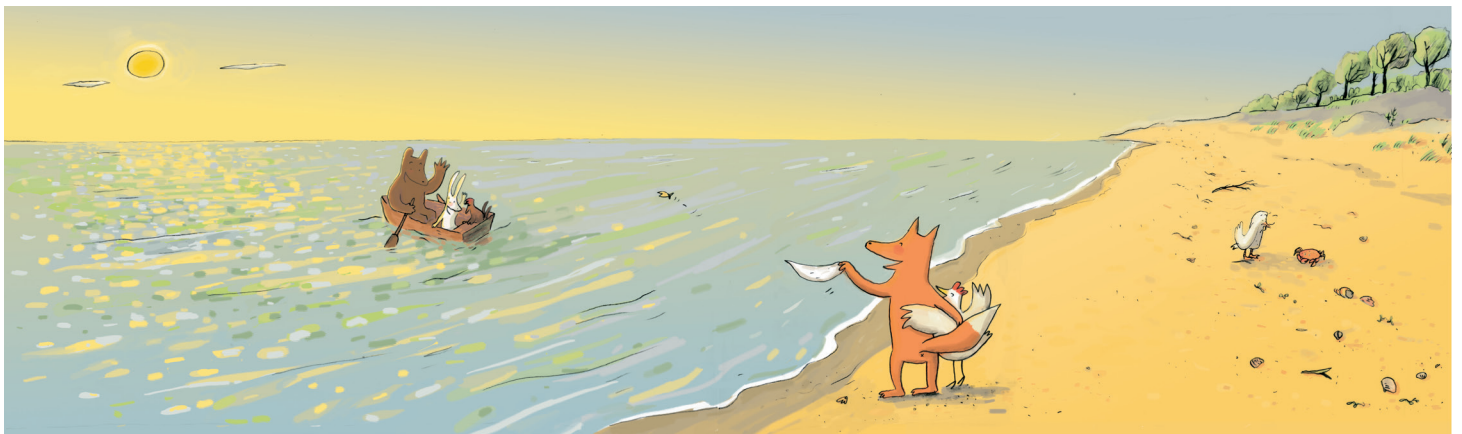
Look closely at the use of colour and line in the book. Discuss how flowing lines are used to create landforms. Hot and cold colours are used to create mood. Students could create their own paintings based on these principles.



### CREATE YOUR OWN WORDLESS BOOK

The class could create their own wordless picture book by painting different locations, then sticking on characters.

Look at narratives in some classic wordless picture books for more inspiration, such as *Flotsam* by David Wiesner, *The Grey Lady* and *The Strawberry Catcher* by Molly Bang, *Window* by Jeannie Baker, and *Zoom* by Istvan Banyai. The last two have a very open story structure.



### For more information

United Kingdom contact: Louise Corcoran, [LCorcoran@bouncemarketing.co.uk](mailto:LCorcoran@bouncemarketing.co.uk)