

THE COLOURS OF HOME



Written and illustrated by

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Teachers' notes prepared by Christina Wheeler

Thames & Hudson Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work. We recognise the continuing connection to culture and story passed down through generations of Indigenous Australians that unite people, environment and ways of seeing, and we pay our respects to their Elders past and present and to First Nations people everywhere.

Synopsis

When Bomi and her family move to a new country, she desperately misses the sounds and sights of home. Everything feels so different, all except for the silver moon.

Slowly, Bomi begins to recognise the colours of home in her new surrounds, from the greens of the forests to the blues of the birds and purples of the flowers; reminders of Australia are everywhere, helping her to appreciate the beauty of the Korean landscape.

With superb illustrations that share Bomi's memories, both new and old, *The Colours of Home* is a gentle story about change, beauty and perspective.

Themes

Home

Migration

Change

Open-Mindedness





Writing style

The Colours of Home is written in first person, present tense. Told with restraint, it allows readers to make connections between the story's setting and themes and Bomi's growing sense of belonging in her new homeland. More than a story of migration, it shares how Bomi adjusts to change through her appreciation of colour and beauty. Thoughtful framing of her memories shows a young girl given the space to process feelings of homesickness while adapting to her new life and landscape. Drawing on what she most values, Bomi gently observes her surrounds while readers are invited to do the same. Suited to early childhood and middle readers, this is an engaging text that encourages readers to look at the world through different perspectives.

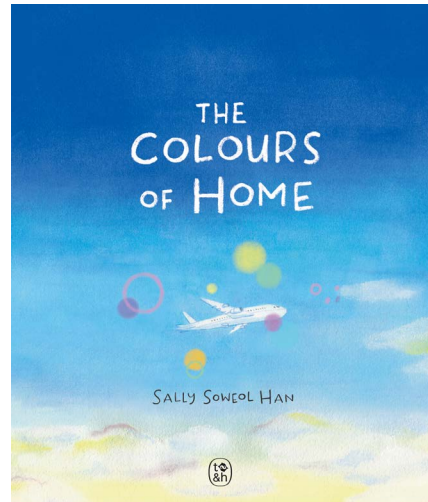
Author motivation

Two years ago, I made a major move from Australia to Korea. Such a transition, where both the environment and the people around you change completely, was a big decision. It was the publisher Clair who suggested using this experience as inspiration for a story centred around colours. While my second picture book, *Nightsong*, focuses on onomatopoeia, *The Colours of Home* explores the theme of colour. I first aimed to capture the distinctive features of both Australian and Korean landscapes.

Australia has a large immigrant population, and adjusting to a new environment can be challenging for many. But beyond that, moving to a new home, transferring schools, or adapting to new surroundings are common experiences for many people and it's never easy. With that in mind, I wanted the story to resonate with children who are going through similar experiences, or will in the future, and help them approach these situations more enjoyably.

Study notes

- Before reading *The Colours of Home*, look carefully at the front and back covers. Make predictions about the story. Discuss the use of colour, and how this may contribute to the text. Describe the little girl on the front cover.
- After reading the text in its entirety, revisit the title page (below). Why are the colours flying *with* the aeroplane? How does this illustration make more sense once you have read the story? Why is it important to read 'backwards and forwards' through a text?



- Describe the mood in the page opening below. How do Bomi's facial expressions and body language help create the mood for this part of the narrative? Retell this event from Bomi's point of view.

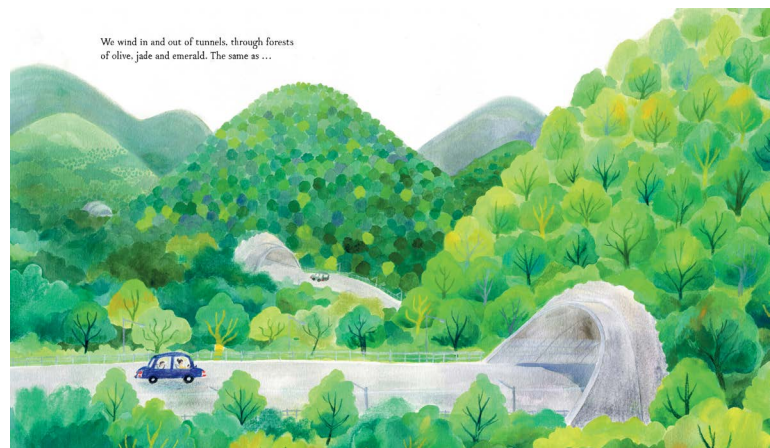


- Compare the misty and soft colour palette of the above illustrations with those throughout the rest of the book. Why do the colours become more vibrant as the story progresses? How does this reflect Bomi's journey?

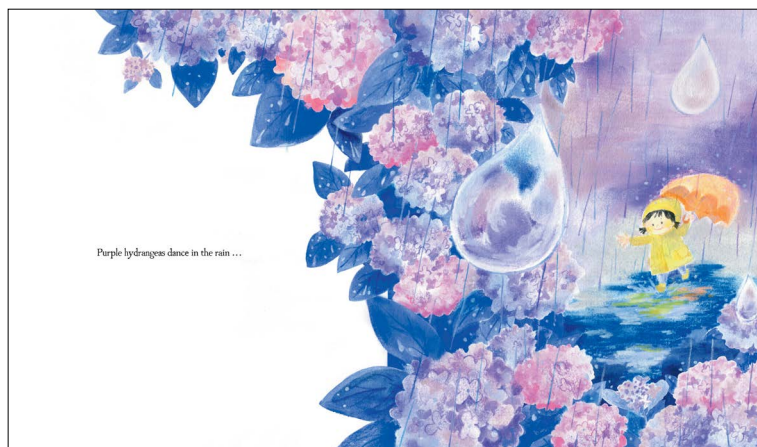
- In the role of Bomi, write a journal entry based on the page opening below. Share how you are feeling having just left Australia. What are your first impressions of Korea?



- Using the two-page openings below as an example, discuss the different frames used in the illustrations: a straight frame for experiences in Korea and a curved frame for Bomi's memories of Australia. How do these different lines help readers to navigate the text's various settings?

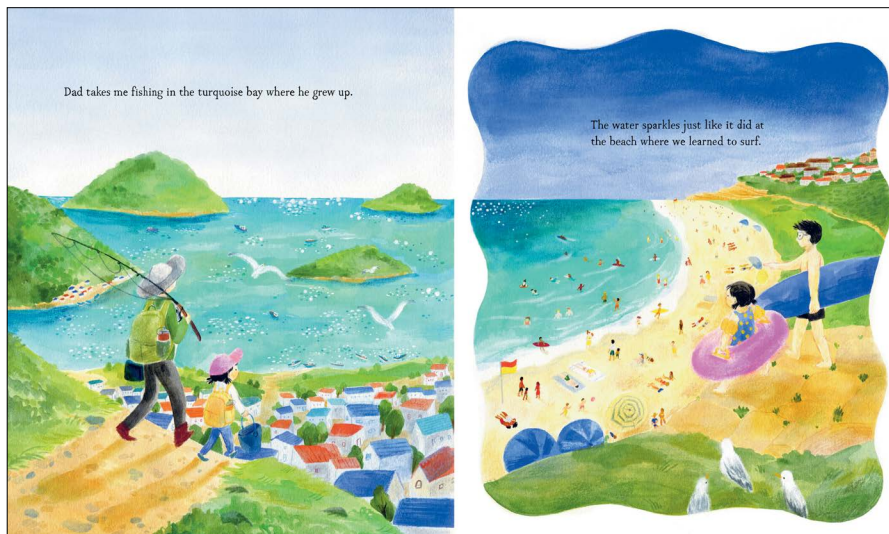


- In the role of Bomi, write a letter home to Grandma (or someone special in your life) sharing your experiences in *The Colours of Home*. Alternatively, imagine that Grandma (or someone special) has come to see you. What would you like to show her during her visit?
- In the page opening below, there is a lot of white space. If you could expand on the ideas on this page in a few sentences, what would you include? Share with a friend.



- Discuss the use of figurative language in *The Colours of Home* to describe various themes, settings and events. How does this help readers better connect with the story? Examples include:
 - ‘White mist hangs low on the morning we leave’
 - ‘The world below looks hazy through the clouds’
 - We wind in and out of tunnels
 - ‘I once flew like a bird’
 - ‘Purple hydrangeas dance in the rain’
 - ‘Grey birch trees ... stretch skyward’
 - ‘The water sparkles’
 - ‘Orange is the sun setting over the rice fields during harvest’
 - ‘Orange is the earth where we camped last holidays’
 - ‘Red is the strawberry pie we eat in winter ... and the cherries I picked with Grandpa’
 - All the colours ... shimmering in the snow
- Try creating your own metaphors to describe some of the colours in *The Colours of Home*. In addition, consider using the *Black Book of Colours* by Menena Cottin and Rosana Farier (Walker Books Australia) as a companion text.

- How does the page opening below show how far Bomi has come on her personal journey? How has she used perspective to adapt to this huge change in her life? If you could talk to Bomi, what would you like to say to her? What have you learned from her?



- In the page opening below, Bomi experiences Korean New Year. Before turning the page, make predictions of what the following page may look like. Give reasons to support your thinking.



- How does the illustration below celebrate colour and Bomi’s adjustment to life in Korea? What of Australian culture will she bring to her new experiences?



- Yellow is a colour often associated with hope and happiness. How is this evident in *The Colours of Home*?
- What would you miss if you had to move to another country? What strategies would you use to help adjust to your new home?
- Which is your favourite page opening in *The Colours of Home*? Why? Share in a reflection.
- What is the main message in this story? How might this help you face change in the future?
- With a partner, write and illustrate a book entitled *The Flavours of Home* or *The Sounds of Home*.
- Map *The Colours of Home* on a Story Graph, showing its beginning, middle and end.
- Discuss the importance of ‘reading pictures’ as well as the written text to fully understand the narrative.
- Use Talking Strips to tell your friend about this story.

First ...	Next ...	After that ...	Finally ...
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- Discuss the sequence of images below and how Bomi has grown and changed from the start to finish of *The Colours of Home*. Compare the first image with the last. What has changed? What is the significance of Bomi looking outwards in the final illustration?





- Why is it important that when Bomi wakes 'to a new day, the same yellow sun' is there to greet her?
- What are the colours of your homeland? Take photos or find images online that best capture what you most love about your country.
- If you have ever moved from one suburb, town, city or country to another, write a reflection about this experience.
- How does Bomi's growing open-mindedness help her to feel more settled?
- How do colours help Bomi overcome her feelings of homesickness? How do colours help you?
- Create a Colour Wheel to show different shades of the colours mentioned in *The Colours of Home*. Like Bomi, name some of these different shades (e.g. olive, jade and emerald green).
- Read the short story Eric in Shaun Tan's *Tales From Outer Suburbia* (Allen & Unwin) as a companion text to *The Colours of Home*. Compare how Eric and Bomi express themselves through their appreciation of beauty and colour.

