

# TEACHER'S NOTES

## Waiting for Mummy by Tae-Jun Lee & Dong-Sung Lee

ISBN 0958557146, \$26.95 hb  
Published by Wilkins Farago



### CONTENTS

1.

About the book

2.

Notes for teachers and parents

by Alison Lough (Chelsea Heights Primary School, Victoria)

3.

About the author, Tae-Jun Lee, and illustrator, Dong-Sung Kim

4.

Also available in this series

### 1. About the book

Set in Korea in the 1930s (a time of poverty and danger when Korea was under Japanese rule), *Waiting for Mummy* is a deceptively straightforward story of a young child waiting at a tram stop for his mother.

Trams come and go, people alight, yet her devoted son waits stoically and patiently, even as a snow-storm gathers. Will Mummy ever return? The reader must be as patient as the child, as the story is subtly resolved—for those looking closely—in the final magical illustration.

A new edition of a story by one of Korea's best-loved children's writers, *Waiting for Mummy* has been a publishing sensation in Korea since its re-release with Dong-Sung Kim's new illustrations in late 2004. The book won the major Baeksang Publishing Award (Korea's equivalent of the Children's Book Council of Australia or New Zealand Post children's book awards), and was selected as Book of the Year by all three of Korea's national newspapers. It also won the Korean Publishers Association 'Book of the Month' award.

Marrying distinctively Oriental illustration to a moving and universal theme—separation anxiety—*Waiting for Mummy* is a first-rate example of the extraordinary quality of contemporary Korean children's literature. Its publication in Australia and New Zealand by Wilkins Farago will mark its first publication in English anywhere in the world.

## **2. Notes for teachers and parents** **by Alison Lough (Chelsea Heights Primary School, Victoria)**

This book could be used widely in the classroom or at home. Aside from being a lovely book to just read for enjoyment, it lends itself to an extensive range of activities covering a variety of topics. It would work best with young children of Pre-School, Kinder and Early Primary age. However, there are many ways in which the book could be incorporated into classrooms for middle primary years.

*Waiting for Mummy* is a good introductory story for children who are learning how to pose good questions, and for those who enjoy or require assistance with predicting. You could use this book as a literacy focus, or in conjunction with an integrated unit on families, history, Korea, multi-culture, or trams/transport.

I have set out below, a list of ideas for activities you could use with this book. I have included some worksheets and a set of 'thinker's keys', which may be reproduced for classroom use.

### **ACTIVITY IDEAS**

#### **Before you open the book ...**

1. Look at the cover and ask 'what could this book be about?'
2. Encourage children to talk about the title. Who do you think is waiting for mummy? Have you ever been waiting for your mum or dad? Why? Do you know where they were when you were waiting? What were you doing while you were waiting?
3. Discuss the meaning of fiction and non-fiction. Which do they think it is? Why?
4. Can you tell who wrote the book? Who drew the pictures? What do we call someone who writes books or draws pictures for books?
5. Have the children design a picture for the front cover, based on nothing but the title and your class discussion about the title.
6. Look at the pictures of the village at the front of the book. Does it give any clues about what will be in the story? Does the picture look familiar? Where could the story be set?
7. Look at the back cover. Is there a blurb or other information? What does it tell us?

#### **The style and layout of the book ...**

1. Flip through the book (without reading) and focus on the layout and pictures:
  - What are some of the things you notice?
  - Are all the pages set out the same?
  - Point out all the similarities and differences between each page.
  - How is this book different to other books you may have read or seen?
  - How is it the same as other books?
2. Look at the pictures:

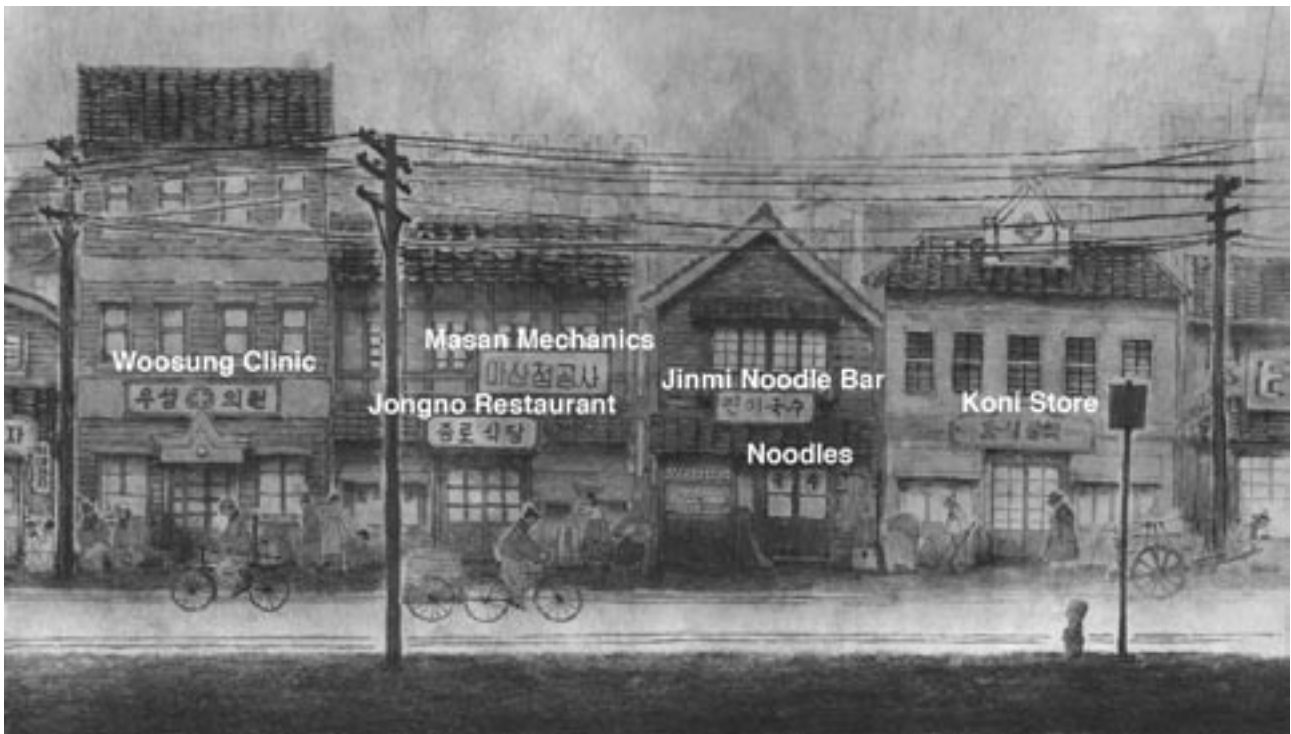
- How have they been made? Do you think they've been drawn, painted, copied, photographed?
  - Do the pictures look real? Are they based on real life images?
  - Are all the features in the pictures accurate?
  - Think of some other books you know (or look through some). What other ways are illustrations sometimes made or presented in books?
  - Would the book be as interesting if photos were used instead of painted illustrations?
  - Discuss the colours used throughout the book. Which colours have been used most often? Why do you think this is? Would the pictures look as effective if a wider range of colours had been used? Why or why not?
  - Discuss pictures that have been painted. Have you painted a picture before? What materials do you need to paint a picture? Do you know of any famous paintings?
3. Have children paint their own picture in one of the three styles used by the illustrator, Dong-Sung Kim.
- Young children could use water paints to make quite an effective illustration.

### **Building on prior knowledge ...**

1. Discuss the main character. Do you think he is an Australian or New Zealander? What clues give away his nationality? What country do you think he may be from?
2. Show the children a world map and point out Korea. Show it in relation to Australia or New Zealand's location. Do you know anybody else from Korea or another country?
3. This could be a good starting point for introducing the notion of multiculturalism. Plot on a world map, any countries the children are aware of where their parents, grandparents or more importantly themselves, were born. Have a show-and-tell session where the children can share their knowledge and any items they may have from their country.
4. Look at the clothes the boy is wearing. How do they differ from everyday clothes in Australia and New Zealand? What clues about his environment does the way he is dressed give? Draw a sketch of your everyday winter clothes next to a sketch of the boy in the book and make a 'same and different' chart.
5. If you are doing a unit on weather, you could look at how the four seasons in Korea differ to the way we experience them in Australia/New Zealand. Think about how you feel in winter when your nose is red and compare that to the boy in the book. How do you think the weather might have been affecting his mood? Does it snow in Australia/New Zealand in winter? Where does it snow? Why doesn't it snow around city areas here like it does in Korea? If working with older children, you could discuss the monsoonal changes that affect Korea's climate.
6. Look at the different transport and ways of moving things in the story. Where are all the cars? Categorise the different styles of transportation (pushbike, tram, rickshaw, carrying packs on backs/heads, etc.)
7. Use the World Wide Web, school library or Atlas to research Korea.
8. Discuss the houses and shop fronts features in the illustrations. Are they modern? Talk about the era (the 1930s) when the book was set. How might the illustrations look different if the book was set in the present day?

### **Using the content in the book ...**

1. Ask the students to predict what will happen in the story. Where could the boy's Mummy be? Continue to seek predictions from students as you move through the story, e.g. brainstorm a list of



possible responses the Tram driver might give to the boy's question 'Is my mummy on the tram?' before you turn the page. When you get towards to end, ask students what they think the outcome might be. Will the boy's mummy arrive on a tram? Why did the boy stop asking whether his mummy was on each tram? Prompt them to think about a time they wanted an answer to a question and gave up asking. Why did they give up? Was their problem solved?

2. Discuss the names on the shop fronts (translated above). They are written in Korean. Have they children what they might say and what the shops could be. Did they guess correctly?
3. Use the comprehension sheet (available for download at [www.wilkinsfarago.com.au/books.shtml#Books](http://www.wilkinsfarago.com.au/books.shtml#Books)) to check for student understanding. This worksheet could be adapted to suit children of various ages.
4. Make a photocopy of the pictures and ask children to sequence the story. Can they retell the story from the pictures?
5. In small groups, have the children act out a dramatisation of the story. They could use various styles (eg. mime, puppetry, etc). Have students make props to support the story.
6. Ask students why they think the author has chosen to end the story with an illustration, rather than with text. Has the publisher forgotten to stick the words on the page? Can you work out what happens in the end of the story by examining the pictures? Look closely!
7. Look closely at the last picture. Compare it to the picture at the beginning. Are they the same? What is different about them?
8. What is mummy carrying in the last picture? Does it give any clues as to where she has been? Make a list of all the possible items that could be in her basket.
9. Discuss the changes the children can see happening in each scene at the tram stop. Are all the people waiting for someone too? Why do you think they might be there? Where could they be heading? Select various characters to focus on and ask individual children to come up with a character profile.
10. Have students write their own short story (2 or 3 pages is sufficient) with words or sentences

to introduce the beginning and middle, but have them end their story with an illustration instead of words.

### **Specific literacy based activities ...**

1. Ask young children to pick out words in the text that they recognise. Make a list of these words on the board. Make another list of unfamiliar words from the story (just choose a few words, age appropriate). There are plenty of High Frequency words in the story, so there are countless spelling activities you could do using those words, starting with making a set of flashcards.
2. Break unfamiliar words into syllables, listen to the sounds that make the word. Copy some of the words onto flashcards (you could cut the words into syllables and ask children to match them up). This could be done prior to reading the book and then the children could try to find the word during the story, or do this activity after reading. This would be an appropriate activity for a small group (such as during literacy rotations).
3. List or categorise words from the book (depending on the age group using the book), e.g. list all the double letter words in the book; find as many two/three/four letter words as you can, identify nouns, adjectives, verbs etc.
4. Discuss the function of a question mark. Children could brainstorm a list of questions, either directly related to the book, or random questions.
5. Use the Cloze worksheet (available for download at [www.wilkinsfarago.com.au/books.shtml#Books](http://www.wilkinsfarago.com.au/books.shtml#Books)) or copy a few sentences onto the board for students to complete.

### **Expanding on the book ...**

1. I have created a set of 'Thinker's Keys'\* based around the story (available for download at [www.wilkinsfarago.com.au/books.shtml#Books](http://www.wilkinsfarago.com.au/books.shtml#Books)). These would be a good follow-up to the book. You could adapt the topic and questions to suit your current unit of work. Students each get a copy of the activities sheet and colour the boxes as they complete them.
2. Give students a photocopy of a page with the question 'Is my Mummy on the ...' (this can be substituted for Daddy, Grandma etc.). Have students complete the question by writing their own chosen form of transport (eg. bus, plane, train etc.) and completing by adding a question mark. Students could then draw a picture to match their question.
3. Building on the previous activity, students could use their question as a title page to create their own story.

**Alison Lough**  
**Chelsea Heights Primary School, Victoria**  
**email: [mitchell.alison.a@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:mitchell.alison.a@edumail.vic.gov.au)**

\* If you are not familiar with Tony Ryan's 'Thinker's Keys,' they are twenty thinking strategies designed to enhance students' critical thinking skills and questioning techniques. Each 'key' encourages student's to challenge and develop their thinking, thereby extending their learning. I encourage you to explore what the keys mean if you're not sure. There are many fabulous websites to assist.

### 3. About the author and illustrator

#### THE AUTHOR

Tae-Jun Lee was born in Korea in 1904 and, poignantly, was orphaned as a child. He wrote his most famous stories, including many for children and young adults, during the 1930s. His works are well-loved in Korea for their poetic prose and emotional sensitivity. He also taught and wrote about creative writing.

After Korea's liberation from Japan in 1945, Lee settled in North Korea and was a war correspondent during the Korean War (1950–1953). Little is known of his activities thereafter, except that he was 'purged' by the North Korean Communist Party, probably in 1956.



First published in 1938, his celebrated story *Waiting for Mummy* has now received new life 50 years after his death.

#### THE ILLUSTRATOR

Contemporary Korean artist Dong-Sung Kim's exquisite illustrations—sometimes historically accurate, other times fantastical—movingly capture the emotional experience of a child waiting for its parent.

Kim was born in 1970 and graduated from Hong-ik University, Seoul, with a major in Oriental Painting. He has illustrated several children's picture books. *Waiting for Mummy* is painted on 'han-ji' (traditional Korean paper), using traditional 'muck-sun' (Chinese ink line) techniques.

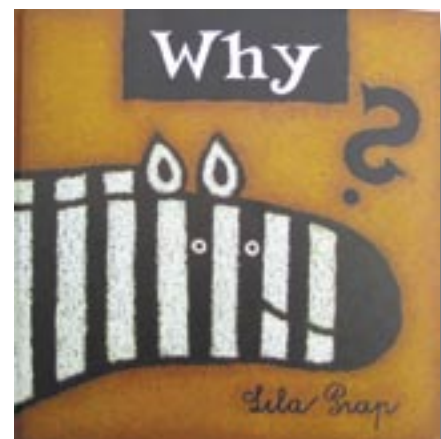
Dong Sung Kim lives in Seoul with his wife and young son.

### 4. Also available in this series

*Why?* by Hans Christian Andersen Award nominee Lila Prap is a delightfully playful and informative picture book that celebrates and explores the many wierd and wonderful creatures in our world.

Each illustration poses a question ('Why do giraffes have long necks?', 'Why do elephants have trunks?') and then provides lots of fun, child-friendly answers, some delightfully silly, others factual.

Teachers' notes by Alison Lough available from [www.wilkinsfarago.com.au/books.shtml#Books](http://www.wilkinsfarago.com.au/books.shtml#Books).



ISBN 0958557152, A\$16.95 pb