

Animal School

by **Amelia Penney-Crocker**



Acknowledgments

Thanks first and foremost to my parents! They fostered a love of stories and did their fair share of proofreading. I'd also like to thank Jonathan Shaw, who did an amazing job laying out my book. A very special thanks to Bridget Brownlow. She was the one who offered me this amazing opportunity and supported me all the way. And the book would not be as good as it is today without Karen Schaffer and my other editors, Dave Bourgeois, Emily Anderson, Patrick Guerra, Brian Hotson and Lucy d'Anjou. And last, but never ever least, my two best friends Ruby Jangaard and Marin DeWolfe. They've been my friends since elementary school, and each illustrated some of the books I've written for Peaceful Schools. I'm so glad they agreed to draw the pictures for my book, and so glad to have them as friends.

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Illustrations by

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ISBN 978-0-9812804-1-7



RUBY

Once upon a time there lived a tiger named Jay Jay. He loved to learn, and on his first day of school, he woke up very early and ate breakfast very fast then sat at the window waiting for his mother to say it was time to go. He hopped all the way to school. He was sure that he'd make lots of friends and have lots of fun.

“Have a wonderful day!” said his mum and kissed him between the ears.

Jay Jay couldn't wait to dash off onto the playground. His tail flicked with excitement as he spotted his best friend, Camila the rabbit.

“Jay Jay!” she called, “I'm so happy to see you, I'm was so nervous about school.”

“I'm excited!” said Jay Jay.

“You're brave,” said Camila, “I'm not. I'm scared for school.”

“Of course you're scared,” said Bruce the moose, “you're a bunny. Bunnies are scardies.”

Renaldo the fox, Una the seagull, and Paula the cat, who were all standing nearby, began to laugh.

“Bunnies are scardies, bunnies are scardies,” called Paula.



“It’s such a funny rhyme,” said Renaldo.

“It describes bunnies perfectly,” said Una.

Jay Jay laughed along, but noticed that Camila didn’t look so happy.

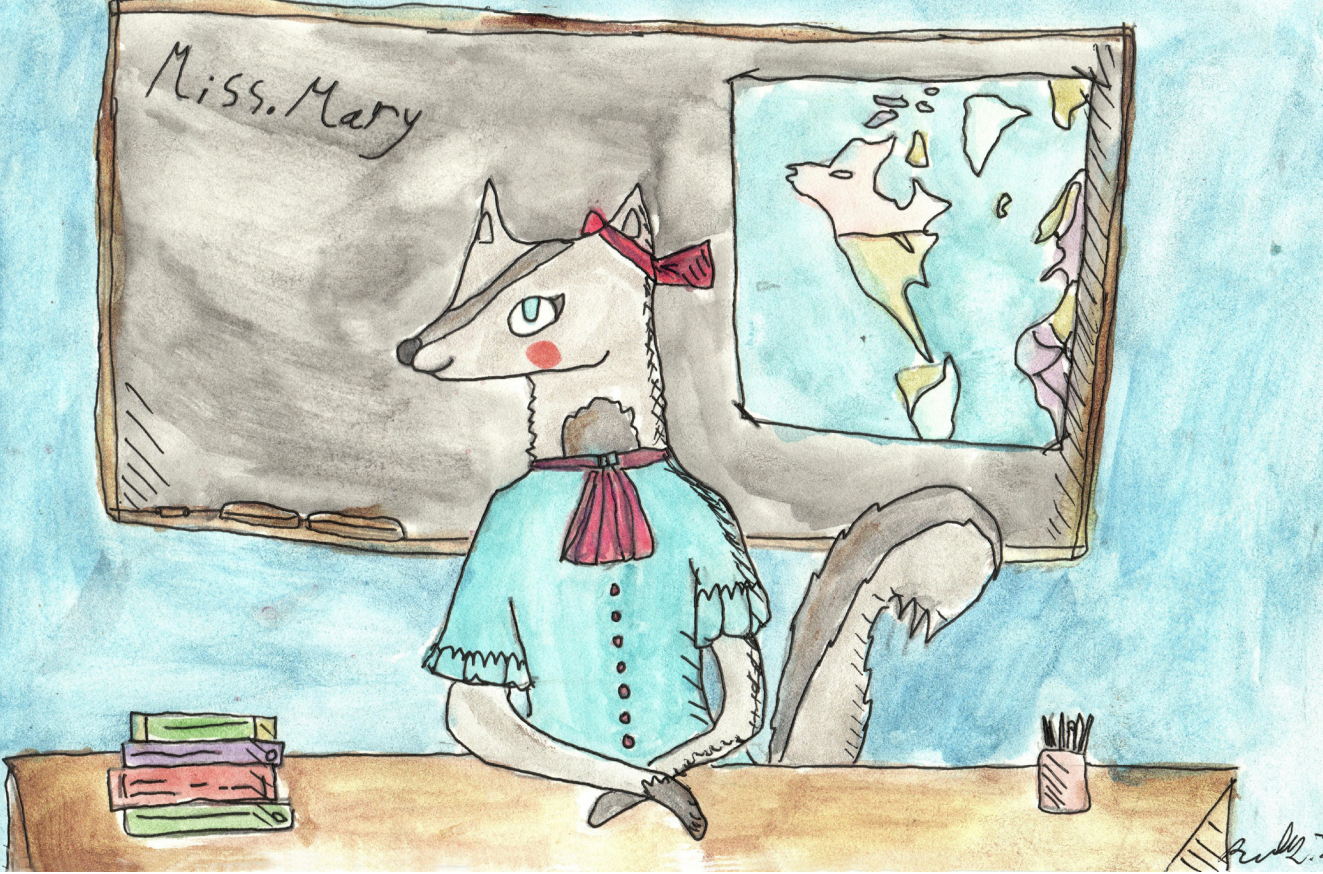
“I’m not afraid,” she said as they walked towards class.
“I’m not!”

“Do you feel bad about what they said?” asked Jay Jay.

“No,” said Camila, “of course not... Well, yes actually. But I know Bruce was just trying to be funny, and I guess it was a little funny.”

“It wasn’t funny if you didn’t like it,” said Jay Jay. But now they came into their new classroom. Jay Jay was so excited, the walls were blue and the desks were green. There was a big map of the Animal world on the wall behind their new teacher.

Miss Mary sat in front of the board waving her tail with excitement to see her new students. She was a husky, with perked-up ears to listen for students misbehaving and soft paws for helping them on their first year of school.



“I know what to do,” said Jay Jay, “we’ll ask our new teacher what to do!”

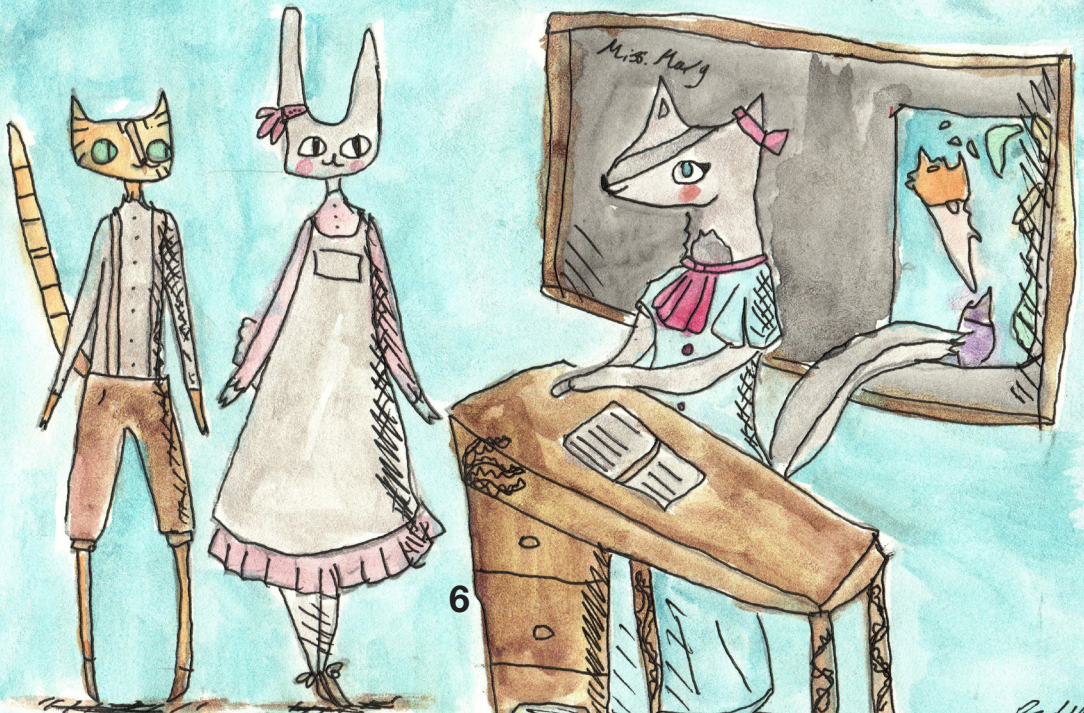
At recess they spoke to Miss Mary, she listened until they were done, and said, “There’s nothing to be ashamed of in being hurt, Camila.”

“Bruce was trying to be funny,” said Camila in a soft voice, “but he really made me feel bad.”

“Well,” said Miss Mary, “you need to tell him what offended you in a way that isn’t mean or rude.”

Camila nodded, “Can you help me?”

“Maybe tell him what you told me,” said Miss Mary. “Say ‘you’re really funny Bruce, but when you said that you really hurt me.’ Then tell him you know that he meant no harm. Do you want to tell him now or wait until you have more confidence?”



“Talking with you and Jay Jay has really helped,” said Camila, a bright smile lighting up her face. “I think I’ll tell him now.”

She hopped across to classroom to Bruce.

“Bruce,” she said, “may I talk to you?”

“Yes,” said Bruce, “What’s up?”

“You’re super funny Bruce,” said Camila, “but when you said that thing about bunnies being scardies, it really hurt me.”

“I didn’t mean to,” cried Bruce.

“I know you didn’t,” said Camila kindly.

Bruce saw that she didn’t hold anything against him and said, “I’m sorry Camila. Can we be friends?”



“Yeah sure,” said Camila. “Come play with me and Jay Jay.”

As they were playing pocko ball (a game Jay Jay and Camila had invented), Miss Mary came over to them.

“So I see that you’re all happy now,” she said. “Can you tell me what you learned from this?”

“I’ve learned that I need to think before I speak,” said Bruce.

“I’ve learned that it’s okay to tell people that you’re hurt,” said Camila.

“I’ve learned that sometimes people don’t mean to hurt you when they do,” said Jay Jay, “and you can always make it up to people, and be friends.”



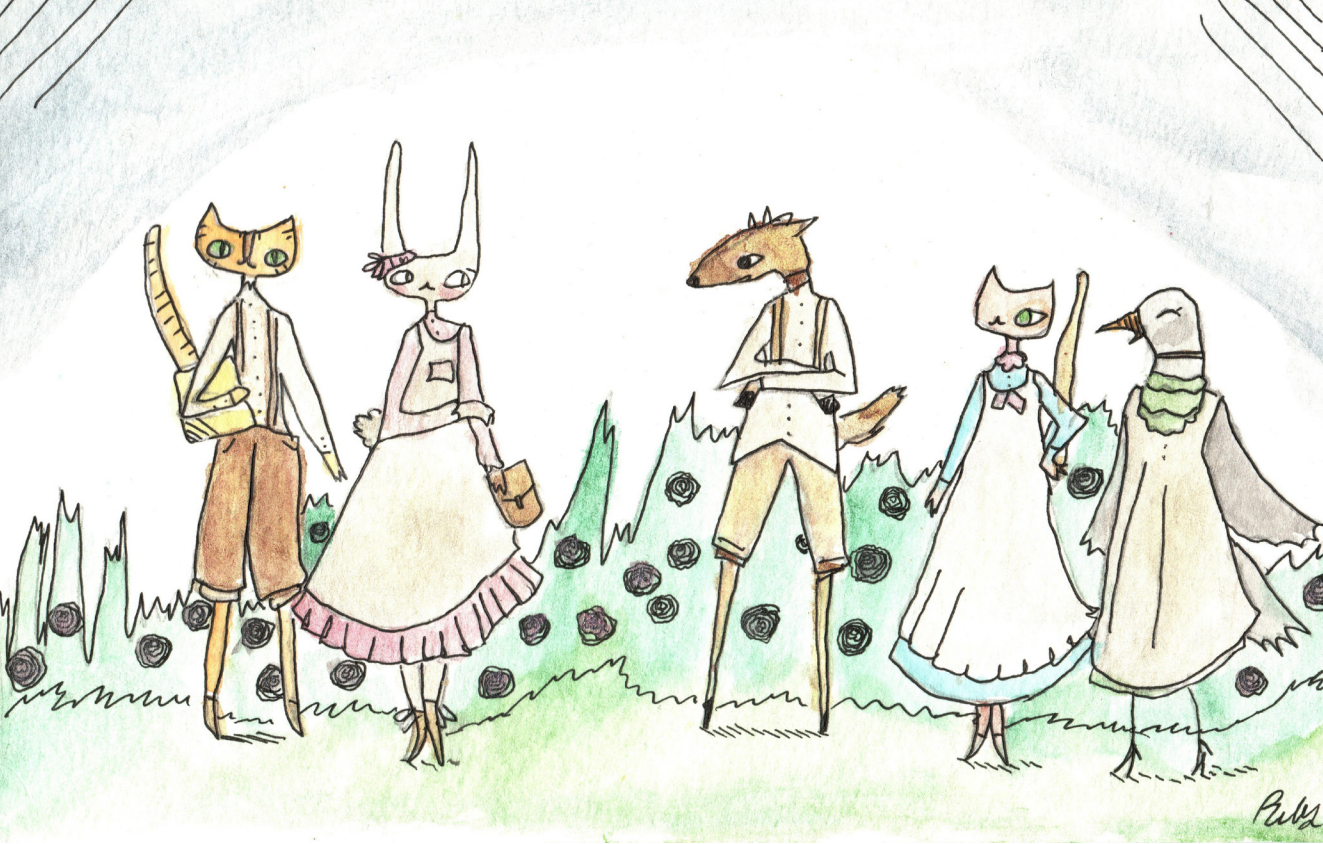
“I think those are very valuable lessons,” said Miss Mary, “lessons that are always important to remember. I’m sure that we will have a great school year together.”

They all thanked her for the lesson, and ran back to their game of pocko ball.

The End







About the Author

Amelia Penney-Crocker was born in Halifax, Nova Scotia. She is in Grade 8 and attends Oxford school. She has been writing stories since she was very young, and making them up long before she could write them down. She won the 2016 Wozzles writing contest when she was 10, and she co-wrote an article about Syrian refugees for *Our Children* magazine. She also traveled to Northern Ireland with the Saint Mary's Peaceful Schools International team last year and visited the schools there. She loves writing, reading, doing theatre, and taekwondo.

About the Illustrator

Ruby Jangaard has been best friends with Amelia Penney-Crocker since elementary school. She was delighted that Amelia asked her to illustrate *Animal School* and *The Enchantress from Canada*. They are the first books she has ever illustrated. She lives in Halifax Nova Scotia, with her cat Miss Spew, and plans to continue drawing comics and illustrations. Ruby loves reading, animals and being in nature.



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