



## **THE WONDER OF WINSOME**

**Kath Murdoch (author);  
Sharyn Madder (illustrator) and  
Noisy Ocean Creative (Design)  
Seastar Education. 2021  
ISBN: 978064887171  
Age: 4 – Adult**

***Review by Lee FitzGerald***

Kath Murdoch is a well-known teacher, writer, lecturer and educational consultant to teachers and students in schools across Australia and internationally. She's written 15 books, and this is her first foray into the world of picture books. She was inspired to write *The Wonder of Winsome* through years of working with children, and sharing their curiosity and also by observing what happens when questions are dismissed, or diminished, in classrooms, in particular.

*The Wonder of Winsome* is about the joy of curiosity, which children are born with, some more than others! Winsome is destined to be super curious from before she was born, as her parents are such curious people too. She is no sooner born than she needs to find out about things and this is illustrated in the question worms scattered across every page of the book, and as she grows, Winsome explores everything with wonder. She forms deep questions as soon as she can talk, e.g. "Is air the same as wind"? and "Where do bubbles go when they pop"? and as she grows, she is alive with fascinating inquiries. Her parents echo and encourage her curious nature. Winsome is very excited to go to school, and carries a big bag of questions with her, which she can scarcely carry or contain.

Sadly, she finds that the teacher is not always interested in her great need to know, and slowly the gloss fades from Winsome, to the concern of her parents. Winsome's light of wonder seems to be fading, and she is tired and sad. Luckily, her curiosity bubbles up in the playground one day, when she and her teacher see a bird's nest. She can't resist asking, "How do birds learn to make nests"? This fascinates her teacher too, and she encourages an enormous flood of queries from the delighted Winsome and her classmates. All's well with Winsome! We must not let the light of wonder fade from children's hearts and minds. The book ends with question stems for readers to explore with their children and take them into their own wonderful world of things to find answers to, simple and complex.

The illustrations by Sharyn Madder bring alive Winsome's whimsical nature. Her abiding curiosity about the world is so joyful, and this is reflected in the energy and simplicity of the illustrations, which include question worms on every page, and tiny versions of the engaging characters in full size on each page.

This would be an excellent book to share in the inquiry classroom, particularly primary, to set the scene for an open-ended investigation, where wonderment is always encouraged and explored. It would also be a good addition to the primary and secondary school library – to remind children and teachers that we all began as children with a nearly endless supply of questions, just begging to be explored. We need to keep the excitement in learning, despite the demands of curriculum documents, content and time.

For more information on Kath's involvement in inquiry learning, please visit Kath Murdoch Consultancy - <https://www.kathmurdoch.com.au/>. And you can explore Sharyn Madder's natural history illustrations at <https://www.alphington.org.au/sharyn-madder>

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