

Not all bears want cubs!



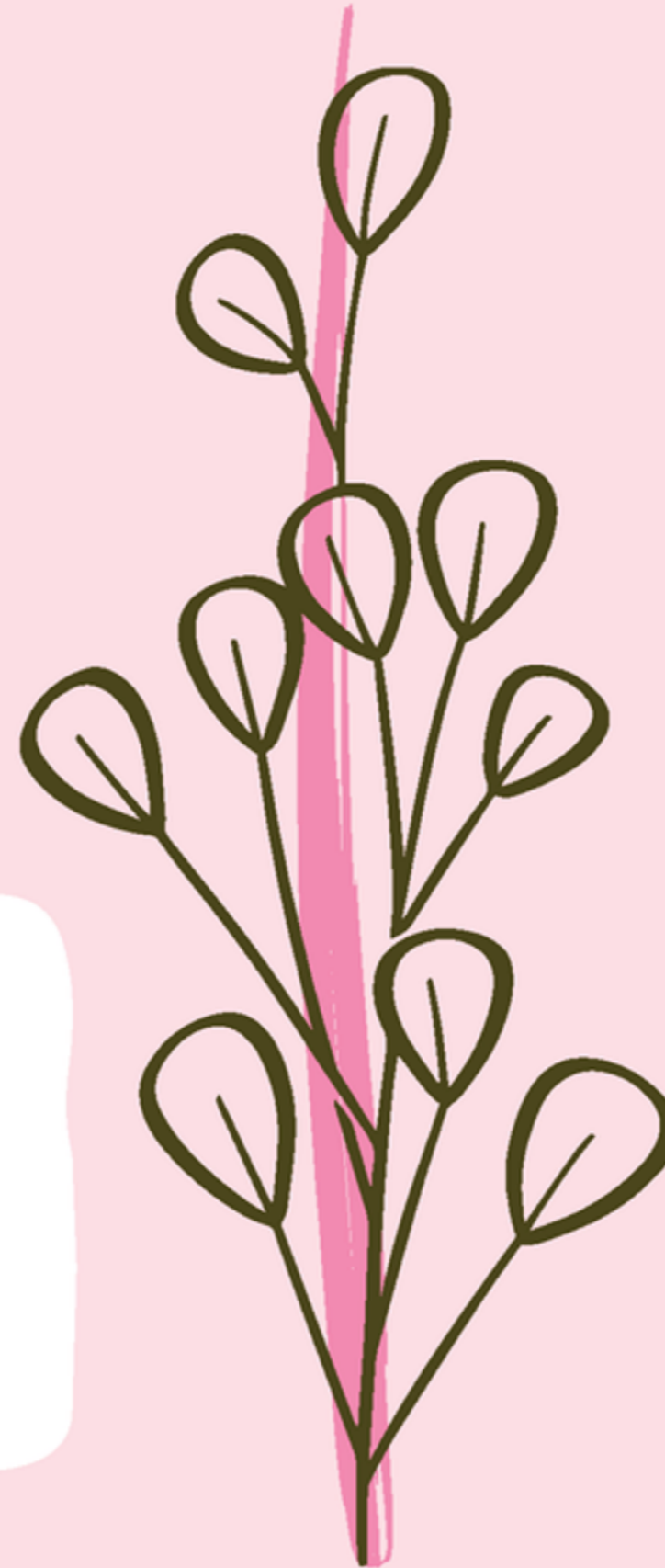
Transforming stereotypes of women who dare not to bear children

Mummy's Not For Me

Mummy's not for me is a social led campaign that aims to change the negative stereotypes surrounding voluntarily childfree women. Children learn ideas and expectations of gender at an early age, and we hope that the material and messages in our campaign will change outdated gender roles while also making the world a kinder place to women who choose not to have children.

With additional supporting materials that follows the journey of Belle outside the pages of this book, we hope that this story is the start of you and your child's journey in changing the expectation that dictates all women to become mothers.

Find our other material...



How to use this book

Reading as part of our drama lesson plans?

This picture book is designed to be used as part of our drama lesson plans aimed at children aged 4 and 8 years old which can be found by scanning the QR code in the back of this book...

Reading as a stand alone text?

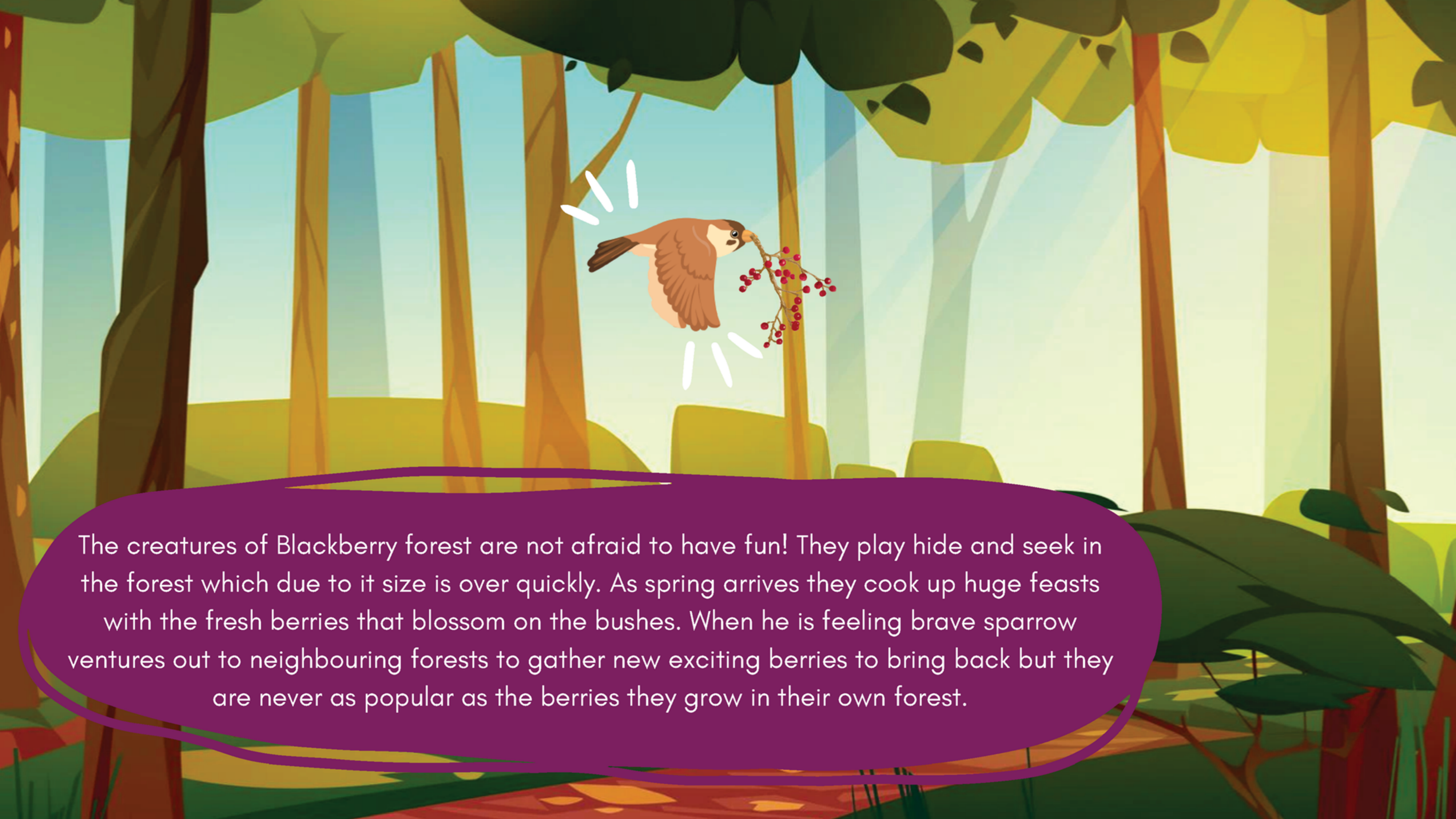
Although this book aims to transform stereotypes about childfree by choice women, Belle's journey is one that can be enjoyed in isolation. Whether it be a Sunday afternoon read or a bedtime story, we want the narrative of Belle the bear to capture and warm the hearts of your children. We recommend spending a few minutes discussing the story by using the prompts in the back of this book.





Blackberry Forest is not the biggest forest in the world, but it is certainly the busiest. Sometimes the wind is harsh and the rain is heavy, but this doesn't stop the animals who live here from feeling at home.

The forest is full of young creatures of all shapes and sizes. Some who fly and some who walk. Some who are big and some who are small. Some who are old and some who are young. But there is one thing they all have in common ... friendship.



The creatures of Blackberry forest are not afraid to have fun! They play hide and seek in the forest which due to its size is over quickly. As spring arrives they cook up huge feasts with the fresh berries that blossom on the bushes. When he is feeling brave sparrow ventures out to neighbouring forests to gather new exciting berries to bring back but they are never as popular as the berries they grow in their own forest.


Just a short stroll from Blackberry forest lives Belle. Belle is a brown bear with the richest and softest of fur and the kindest of hearts. But the creatures of the forest ignore Belle. They chitter and chatter and call her names because she is not like them. Belle doesn't have any babies. Belle doesn't want to.



One day, that at first felt like autumn but then quickly turned to winter, the animals of the forest were in trouble. In the midst of their fun and games they had forgotten to prepare for the most important time of all; hibernation!

As the snow fell and icicles formed the animals hurried to gather what withered berries they could from the trees. They ran to bury and dig dens in the nooks and crannies of the forest. But it was no good. The berries were frozen and the ground was solid. The animals were panicking, asking each other. 'What are we going to do?'. Time was running out, they needed to find somewhere to hibernate and fast.




A stylized illustration of a cave entrance. The cave is dark and rocky, with a large opening. In the foreground, a fox with orange fur and a white chest patch stands on a rock, looking towards the cave. A small grey mouse is perched on the fox's back. To the left, a brown bird is perched on a rock. The background shows a dark, rocky landscape with some light blue and purple hues. A large, pink, rounded rectangular text box is overlaid on the upper part of the image.

The creatures of the forest walked far and wide. They looked up high. They looked down low. But as the ground became thick with snow it became harder to find a place to hibernate. Then they came across Belle's cave. None of them had ever spoken to Belle, nor smiled or laughed with her, but it was their only chance. They wondered up the the cave's entrance ...


They peaked their heads into the entrance of the cave. "Anyone in?" shouted sparrow. The sound echoed loudly. After a few moments the creatures heard rustling and then a friendly "come on in" came from deep within the cave. The creatures were unsure, but crawled inside.



Inside was Belle. The creatures of the forest were a little scared. They thought she was a grumpy cold bear, but to their surprise. She was stood with a warm smile. "What can I do for you" beamed Belle.

A brown bear stands in the center of a cave, looking towards the left. To its left, a fox, a small bird, and a mouse are perched on a rock. The cave walls are dark and textured with large, grey rock formations.

None of the creatures wanted to speak, but Squirrel was brave and said "Well, we forgot it was hibernation. We have no food, nor a place to stay". "Well you're in luck" said Belle, "I've plenty to go around. Follow me!"



Inside Belle's cave it was warm and cosy. It was beautifully decorated with flowers from the neighbouring forests which made it feel very homely. "Oh this is lovely!" cried sparrow. "We thought you lived in the cold and the damp". "Oh no", said Belle "Make yourselves comfortable ... there is plenty of straw to go around and I'm always up for a bear hug if we run out!"

"If you all want to stay, then we better divide up the food" said Belle. Belle had gathered plenty of food to last the hibernation period; berries, nuts and roots. "Lets make a feast" cried sparrow "if we all work together we can make a beautiful picnic to see us through the winter!" The animals agreed and got to work. They chopped and mashed and peeled and stirred. The feast was ready and the animals tucked in.



The animals snuggled down before their long sleep ahead. "Thank you for helping us Belle, before we met you we thought you were a grumpy bear who had no babies because she had no heart, but we now know you are the kindest of all bears" said sparrow. Belle smiled a soft smile "I have no babies because being a mummy is not for me. But I can still love, and be kind".



As spring broke the creatures of the forest woke up from their sleep. They peeped their heads out of the cave to find fresh grass and blue skies.



From that day on the creatures of Blackberry forest were best of friends. They visited Belle's cave and Belle visited the forest. Belle forgave the animals for their thoughts as they now saw her for who she was; a kind and loving bear.



The
End



Understanding the message...



Today, childfree by choice women face family judgement and societal criticism. Belle the bear represents this group of women who are represented and understood by contemporary culture as evil, calculated, selfish and all-around bad people. As the creatures of Blackberry forest realise their misjudgment we hope the little readers of this book will too understand childfree by choice women who can, like mummies, be kind people who are deserving of love.





Chatting to children...

We encourage readers to engage with the following questions in order to fully explore and understand the themes and messages of the narrative.

 **Why do you think the creatures of Blackberry forest were at first nasty to Belle?**

 **How do you think that made Belle feel?**

 **Why do you think Belle didn't want to have babies?**

 **How do you feel when someone tells you to do something you don't want to do?**



Find our other material

<https://linktr.ee/mummysnotforme>



Mummy's Not For Me

Belle the bear has no babies. She doesn't want to. But the creatures of blackberry forest assume that she must be grumpy and heartless because of this. It is not until hibernation looms that the forest creatures realise she isn't the big bad bear everyone thinks she is.

Mummy's Not For Me is a social led campaign aimed at children and mothers that aims to educate and transform the negative stereotypes and assumptions surrounding women who choose not to have children.

