

## **CLOUD TEA MONKEYS**

**Written by Mal Peet and Elspeth Graham and Illustrated by Juan Wijngaard  
ISBN 978-1-4063-0092-5**

*Use the two facing pages depicting the tea plantation and the mountains on the right and the Overseer on the left hand page.*

Working in pairs, encourage children to explore the picture discussing their responses and working together to make meaning of what they see. Ask them to jot down words and phrases, which reflect their responses to looking.

### **The aims of this activity are:**

- to increase the interaction with and enjoyment of picture books for children of all ages
- to develop children's confidence and vocabulary to respond to what they see – to observe and describe
- to encourage them to build on their previous experience, imagination and understanding to make sense of visual information – to interpret
- to consider a variety of graphic forms and their interaction with a text in order to convey layers of meaning – to appreciate
- to recognise different styles and techniques used and developed by a variety of illustrators – to analyse
- to begin to recognise and appreciate visual metaphor, irony, puns and jokes etc. – to participate

The following questions have been designed to help children to look more closely at the illustrative work of Juan Wijngaard moving from the whole picture to the smallest part and to search for and use all available clues given by the artist to make meaning. Please select and adapt the questions to make them appropriate for your setting.

### **TELL ME ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATION...**

As you scan the two pages where do your eyes come to rest?

What is the function of the frame on the right hand page?

What is the most striking colour on this page?

How would you describe the green?

What do you notice about the tones of blue used for the mountains and the clothes on the girl in the foreground? Why do you think the illustrator has chosen to use the same colours?

What about the time of day? What clues in the illustration are there to help you make your decision? For example, where can you see the sunlight?

As your eyes follow on in front of the women down the path, where is the illustrator leading you?

Why do you think the illustrator wants to take you down into the valley and up into the mountain?

How would you describe the clouds that hang over the mountains?

Where do you think this story is taking place?

How would you describe the work that these women have to do? Look at their baskets, why do you think their baskets are empty?

How many hours do you think they would have to work to fill their baskets with tea leaves?

How would you imagine the women's faces as they are coming back up the hill?

How has the illustrator given emphasis to the hardness of their daily toil?

Look at the tracks they have made. What sense of distance has the illustrator created and how has he done that?

How are you looking at this picture? Are you an outside observer, or are you involved in the story?

What is the function of the girl, what is she looking at? Follow her gaze and what do you see?

How do you think the girl is feeling?

At what point do you notice the man? Describe his position on the page.

How has the illustrator created the sense of power and authority held by the Overseer?

How would you describe his attitude towards the women?

How would you describe his stature? Notice the way his hands clutch at his fat belly, the pressure of which pushes the words on the page out of his way. How does this impact on your interpretation of his character?

How has the Overseer been drawn?

How does the pen and ink line drawing contrast with the rich colours of the tea plantation?

We can't see the faces of the women or the girl but the Overseer's face is drawn in detail. Read the opening paragraph on this page, how has the illustrator reflected the text in his illustration?

In what ways does the illustration tell you more about the man's character than the words?

If you were able to use your senses of smell and hearing on these two pages how would they compare?

### **WRITE IT DOWN**

Harvest children's responses and record their descriptions and comments on a flip chart. Are there any aspects of the picture that they find particularly interesting or puzzling? How do these pictures interact and work with the rest of the book?