



Beatrice More Moves In

Alison Hughes

Illustrated by Helen Flook

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About the Book

Beatrice More is no average third-grader. She is a list-making, hyper-organized perfectionist whose laid-back parents and messy little sister consistently frustrate her high standards. And when a new house, a new neighborhood and new friends are thrown into the mix, Beatrice sends the family into a comic tailspin, all in the name of “professionalism.” Despite her most feverish organizational efforts, Beatrice ultimately discovers that some of the best experiences are the ones you can’t control.

About the Author

Alison Hughes is an award-winning writer who understands tidy, organized people well, not because she is one herself, but because she lives with two of them and grew up with another. She lives with her family in Edmonton, Alberta, in a happy, slightly messy house where dog drool is a fact of life.

About the Writing

Alison has always been intrigued by people who have very different approaches to things. Not being a details person herself, she finds it hard to understand people who are obsessed with details. Their frustration with mess and disorganization in particular has always amazed her. So she thought it would be interesting to put a hyper-organized child into a messy, slacker family and see what happens. Turns out, a lot of comedic potential, a whole lot of lists, and a few gentle lessons about appreciating people for who they are and not sweating the small stuff.

Teaching Ideas—Curriculum Connections

Prereading Ideas

- New beginnings can be stressful. Starting a new school year, moving house, getting a pet, changing schools, making new friends, being on a new team or having a new baby brother or sister are all exciting things that can also bring their own challenges. And different people, even people within the same family, react differently to change. What are some of the changes you've experienced in your life? How did you cope with them? What sorts of tools and techniques can help people who have difficulty coping with change?
- Are you neat and tidy, or are you a bit messy? How about your family? Your class? When very neat and very messy people live in the same house, or work together at school, it can create problems. How can you find compromise and balance when you live and work with people who are different than you are? Is there a bigger picture—like happiness, harmony, respect, family and community—that helps to put neatness and mess in perspective?
- Some pressures we feel we put on ourselves. Beatrice puts a lot of pressure on herself because she cares a lot about how other people perceive her. She wants to be (and be seen to be) “professional” and “successful.” We all care to some extent how other people see us, but should this dictate what we do, how we plan or who we're friends with?

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. Being organized does tend to help things run smoothly. What are some tools you can use to help you organize things like your backpack, your desk, your cubby/locker, your homework, your ideas and your writing? How about your classroom? Your school? Your home?
2. If you had a friend who judged you because of what your house looks like (or because of what your family is like), is that person a real friend? How much should it matter what other people think of you? Do you judge your family more quickly than you would judge a friend?
3. Is it more important to have goals for the future, or to focus on what you can do today?
4. Is perfection possible? Should perfection be the aim of everything you do?
5. When you're angry or frustrated, is it better to bottle it up or to talk about it? What are respectful and constructive ways of letting others know that you disagree with them, or are upset with what they're doing?

Suggested Activities

- Writing Lists Like Bea: Have each child select the title of one of Beatrice's lists (e.g. *Things I Cannot Control (But Wish I Could)*, *Things That are Frustrating*, etc.) or come up with a title of their own, think about it in terms of their own life, and write out a list of things that apply to them.

- **Greatness can be Messy:** Beatrice confuses perfection with greatness. But many great and famous painters, for example, have produced messy, imperfect masterpieces. Look at some impressionistic (e.g. Monet) or modern (e.g. Pollock) painters, and show how their aim wasn't perfect representation, but rather to create a mood, reflect an emotion or capture a fleeting moment in time. Imperfection sometimes celebrates uniqueness.
- **Stress Reduction:** Judging from Beatrice's growling, twitching eye and panic attacks, she has problems with stress. Lots of children do. Sometimes you're born that way, sometimes you become too involved in too many things, and sometimes there's just not time to relax. Do a group brainstorming activity about stress in our lives and ways to reduce/control/manage stress.
- **Goal-Orienting:** It's great to have big goals. Beatrice has many of them. But to attain goals we often have to take many small and practical steps. Pick three goals, take three pieces of paper, write a goal in the middle of each piece of paper, and for each goal, create a "web" of practical strategies arrowing back to the goal. So, for example, if my goal is to write more, I could use the following practical strategies to achieve this goal: get up earlier, limit distractions, set aside specific times of the day to write, use earplugs to block noise, plan to do chores outside of working hours, and set targets for the number of words (or pages) for each day.
- **Act it Out:** Chapter 6 ("The Time") is a fun chapter for students to act out, because of its humor, urgency and movement.

Other Titles & Websites of Interest

Nonfiction

Planting Seeds: Practicing Mindfulness with Children by Thich Nhat Hanh and Wietske Vriezen

Sitting Still Like a Frog: Mindfulness Exercises for Kids (and Their Parents) by Eline Snel

Websites

<http://kidsrelaxation.com>

Perfectionism in children:

www.education.com/magazine/article/perfectionism

Resolving conflict for kids:

www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetailsKids.aspx?p=335&np=287&id=1521

Other Books by the Author from Orca Book Publishers

Lost in the Backyard (Middle Grade)

On a Scale from Idiot to Complete Jerk (Middle Grade)

Poser (Middle Grade)

Spare Dog Parts (Picture Book)

Reviews

“Beatrice’s parents scramble to make their home presentable while, at the same time, teaching Beatrice that perfection isn’t possible...[She] realizes that sometimes being on a schedule is no fun and you don’t have to be in a hurry all the time. Recommended.”

—*CM Magazine*

“Readers may enjoy watching [Beatrice] assume the adult role to her parents’ childishness...Frequent, equally exaggerated illustrations add to the fun...[An] amusing tale.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

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