



# Not Now, Bernard

*David McKee*

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Bernard's got a problem. He's found a monster in the back garden, but his mom and dad are just too busy to notice. So Bernard tries to befriend the monster. . . and that doesn't go quite to plan.

## Not Now, Bernard Details

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Author : David McKee

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# From Reader Review Not Now, Bernard for online ebook

## Paul Browne says

A thought provoking picture book that raises more questions than it answers. The ending is quite a surprise.

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## Jess Peck says

After hearing this book in a seminar it's really made me think of how this could be incorporated into many cross curricular aspects in school.

The book is about a boy called Bernard who discovers a monster in the garden. Although it took me until the end of this book to realise this, as at first I thought Bernard had been eaten by a monster. It was actually in fact Bernard expressing his anger towards his parents who never made time to listen to him instead would just repeat "NOT NOW BERNARD"

In the future I would really like to incorporate this book into talk and drama. I would like to create a conscience alley whereby half the class could be expressing why the parents haven't made time for him and the other half conveying why Bernard's feelings.

I would also like to integrate hot seating, where the children could use talking partners to come up with some key questions to ask the parents and also Bernard. In turn allowing the children to understand the potential underlying reasons for the strong emotions in the book.

Other than Drama:

- children could write a story which might explain where the monster came from
  - using ICT the children might design their own monster and give him/ her a story using the paint programme
  - in PSHCE the children could have a group discussion on how it feels to be ignored, whilst the teacher magpies the ideas on the board.
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## Laura Cope says

This short, simple story tackles the issue of a young boy who tries to get the attention of his mum and dad, and yet every attempt is met with a "Not now, Bernard". Bernard is so fed up, that he goes into the garden, gets eaten by a monster, and his mum and dad still don't notice! In fact, the monster ends up tucked up nicely in Bernard's bed!

To me, this book was quite sad as Bernard is left vying for his parents' attention, but to no avail. It is not clear whether the monster is real, or a figment of Bernard's imagination in his attempt to amuse himself and also in a stretch to get through to his parents. Although the illustrations throughout are lively and vibrant, the story ends rather unfortunately, and to me, does not display much hope for any children who could be suffering from a lack of attention at home.

The book could be suitable for children with special educational needs due to its repetitive nature and simple, yet effective, imagery. For young children, however, (who the book is aimed at due to its simplistic nature) I feel that the book could be quite upsetting if understood, especially for children in a similar situation.

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## **Zoe says**

This text repeats the phrase 'not now, Bernard' throughout the book which as a reader made me feel sorry for Bernard because he wasn't being listened to by his parents. During the story Bernard comes across a monster in his garden and goes in to tell his mother who responds with 'not now, Bernard', as the story carries on Bernard gets eaten up by the monster. At first I was shocked because I thought how can the story carry on from this, however, after reading on I realised that the monster was resembling Bernard's inner anger and the reason why his parents kept on saying to the 'monster' 'not now, Bernard' was because deep down it still was Bernard. This story could be explored and taught in a variety of contexts, firstly the teacher could read the text to the children to enable them to get to know the characters and the plot. Then once the children have an understanding of the text, the teacher could transform the classroom into a TV show (have an image of the TV show name on the whiteboard and set up three chairs at the front of the classroom). The teacher could pretend to be the TV presenter and set the scene, three children could act as the mum, dad and Bernard. The rest of the class as the audience could think of questions to ask each character, whilst the children ask questions the teacher could scribe key phrases and responses on the whiteboard. This activity would be an effective way for the children to get to know a text and a great way of incorporating dialogic talk into the classroom.

I found a website with a range of cross curricular teaching ideas around the book Not now, Bernard-  
<https://www.teachingideas.co.uk/libra...>

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## **Francesca Lee says**

I think this story has a very powerful message. At first I thought it was about a monster eating Bernard but it turned out that Bernard was the monster because of him getting angry from constantly getting ignored from his parents. It was an interesting story, not a typical picture book to read.

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## **Becky Sparkes says**

This book is all about a boy called Bernard who is very neglected and never gets attention from his parents. This is a good book about teaching children the importance of inclusion and not ignoring each other. As a result of being ignored from his parents Bernard was eaten by a monster.

Drama activity: Jeremy Kyle style show- have Bernard and his mum and dad and get the audience to ask them questions.

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## **Shoeb Narot says**

‘Not Now, Bernard’ By David McKee

A great little book from my primary school years. I couldn't help myself when I saw this on the shelf at my local library, I took it out straight away.

I can remember my year 2 teacher reading this book to us and I clearly remember relating to Bernard's experience in the story.

The story is about a young boy called Bernard who is trying to seek his parent's attention. His parents are reluctant to give him that attention and as a result, the monster eats up Bernard... His parents don't even realize they are talking to a monster and not Bernard, even the monster is puzzled by this!

The story portrays a classic scenario of parents not giving their children the time of day. The story has a great punch line that the children love to shout out each time the parents say 'Not Now, Bernard'. A book with lots of humor, and a strong message for parents telling them to listen to their young ones even if they are busy. It may be something really important as the case of poor Bernard!

I would recommend this book to young children in KS1 and it would make a great read aloud book for EYFS children, they can be encouraged to call out the punch line in the book 'Not Now, Bernard'.

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### **Rana Heshmati says**

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### **Jasmine Longworth says**

I really enjoyed reading this book and I think children would really enjoy it and find it humorous. After discussing it and looking into the deeper meaning it provides an interesting insight into children experiencing neglect.

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### **????? ?????? says**

Terrifying.

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### **Jess Hancock says**

I liked this book as a child and obviously didn't read any more into it, than a monster eating Bernard. As an adult and parent, this book gives a very strong message indeed. Spending time with our children, listening to them and acknowledging their existence. We are always so very 'busy', but what are we actually doing? It can probably wait. I should read this more often to remind myself of my own parent-child relationship.

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### **Mark says**

Bernard's got a problem because he's found a monster in the back garden but his parents are too preoccupied to notice him let alone heed his warnings. If he's eaten, will they even notice? Beautifully written and illustrated - David McKee also created the wonderful Mr Benn - this works really well as a picture book (the monster is quite thrilling and scary to kids) but I found it incredibly sad, as an adult, to read. With his dad barely there (he's only in two parts) and his mum only offering practical support - making him dinner, making him go to bed - Bernard is pretty much on his own, nobody eats with him and he's expected to take himself to bed. Sad but recommended.

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### **Amir Hossein says**

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### **Tamsin says**

I'm not sure what to make of this book... on the one hand, it is a story with a strong reminder/message to parents to listen and engage with their children. But on the other hand, I did enjoy the silliness of the story, with the illustrations of the monster adapting to Bernard's life and the repetition of 'Not now, Bernard.'

A book for both adults and children.

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### **Hugh Stuart says**

This is a classic that I somehow missed as a child but it was well worth the wait. It's a very simple story for the very young and I think would be ideal for reading aloud to a reception or KS1 class. It concerns the systematic neglect of the eponymous Bernard and his subsequent demise at the hands of a monster he meets in his garden. The monster engages in some very upsetting and destructive behaviour but is also ignored and is ultimately punished by taking Bernard's role in the household and being put to bed with a glass of milk. My favourite bit is the look on the monster's face when he realises he has doomed himself to a life of suburban maltreatment.

On a deeper reading perhaps Bernard is the monster? Perhaps, indeed, we all have a monster inside of us. But probably not.

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