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*Margaret Wild , Freya Blackwood*

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When Harry's beloved dog Hopper dies, he has a hard time letting go, as Harry sees Hopper still in his life. Are Hopper's visits to Harry the boy's imagination, or is the dog truly leaving Harry gradually, once he makes sure his boy will be all right? Eyes will not stay dry as readers experience this beautifully written, gently illustrated story about losing a dear pet.

## Harry & Hopper Details

Date : Published February 2009 by Omnibus Books for Scholastic Australia (first published January 1st 2009)

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Author : Margaret Wild , Freya Blackwood

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# From Reader Review *Harry & Hopper* for online ebook

## John says

I need to discuss this book with someone.

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## Elisabeth says

I had no idea what this book was about, so tears welling up was a big surprise. It's a nice little story about loss and grief, I just wish I'd known what I was picking up before I began reading it to my kids!

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## Vicki Kier says

2010 Kate Greenaway Medal winner for Freya Blackwood's illustrations, *Harry & Hopper* sensitively broaches childhood loss and grief with dignity and respect. Wild's third-person rendering of young Harry's loss of his best friend and pet Hopper is appropriate for drawing in children who might feel misunderstood or alone in their own loss. The prose is filled with references to touch, scent, and smell. Blackwood's genius is on display throughout the book, including the page on which Harry's dad tells him Hopper has died: She respectfully turns their backs to the reader, as if to say: *This moment is personal*.

A must-have for any public or school library, as well as a first-choice for any parent looking for a book to share with a young one who has lost a beloved pet. Recommended for 4+.

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## Louise (A Strong Belief in Wicker) says

A heartbreakingly sad tale of a young boy and his love for his dog. Of course the dog dies, and we watch the young boy, Harry in his grief. Beautiful illustrations as always from Freya Blackwood, who conveys Harry's deep love for and then grief for Hopper very well, rather atmospheric.

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## Franki Sibberson says

A good story about grief, death of a pet.

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## Michelle Harrison says

A wonderful book of love and loss, but oh, so sad! I'm glad I read it before sharing with my almost four year old - I will save it until he's a bit older, as I'm sitting here with tears dripping off my chin. The illustrations are beautiful and lively, perfectly capturing an excitable dog.

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### **Alyson (Kid Lit Frenzy) says**

A young boy grieves the loss of his pet dog. Would be good read together with an adult. The dream sequence may confuse younger children but it is an interesting approach. Beautiful illustrations support the text.

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### **Edward Sullivan says**

A tearjerker for sure but a comforting story to share with a child who has lost a beloved pet.

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### **Linda says**

This is a sumptuous picture book about the death of a dear pet, about joy in having a pet and figuring out when to finish saying goodbye. I read the review a few weeks ago and wanted to find a copy-lucky that I did at my library, yet I might want a copy of this. Harry's dog dies in an accident so there is no chance to say goodbye at the end. In the morning Hopper was there and when Harry came home from school, he was not. Through showing the slow stages of grief in dreams that Harry has, and in the illustrations, the book offers hope that someday the feelings will be better. The illustrations are pen and ink sketches with what seems to be colored pencil added. Freya Blackwood shows Hopper fading as the story moves along. It's a poignant and sensitively told story.

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### **Josiah says**

What have you done to me, Margaret Wild? It's been nearly four months since I first read *Harry & Hopper*, four months since that unforgettable day I turned the pages on what may be the most powerful work of literature I've ever known, sobbing so long and hard that I thought my family would hear me in my bedroom even from downstairs, even with my door closed and the fan running on high. It's been one-third of a year since the story of Harry and his excitable, loving dog, Hopper, shattered my heart into a thousand pieces, yet when I leafed back through the book just now to briefly reacquaint myself with it before writing this review, I found myself again racked with uncontrollable sobs, crying so hard it felt like I was losing my soul. Margaret Wild, what have you done to me, destroying my heart again with this most enormously powerful of all picture books I have ever read, possibly the most powerful book of any kind I've experienced in my entire life? I've read torturously poignant stories before, ones that left me weeping for a long while, but nothing quite like *Harry & Hopper*, which won't let go of me all these months later. How does such unimaginable beauty as this exist in a world capable of producing the haunting heartache felt by a boy who loses his best friend? How can grief's heartsong be so universal, possessed of such inescapable gravitational pull upon the reader's heart? There is a world of books out there, and then there's *Harry & Hopper*; I couldn't be more serious about the legitimacy of drawing that distinction. And I still just don't know what to do with this book.

A puppy with legs springy as a grasshopper's practically begs for the name "Hopper", and that's the handle attached to him by his new boy, Harry, when the two first meet. Hopper isn't just a four-legged alleviation of boredom to Harry; the two are soul mates, forever companions, assisting each other in every area of life,

fully aware of the mutual love they feel. Hopper is Harry's best friend, able comforter, partner in mild mischief, everything a puppy could be for his young master. Hopper isn't above bending the rules from time to time, sneaking past Harry's paternal sentry to cozy up beside his boy in bed at night, a duo of friends reunited for the long voyage into dreamland. When your closest friend sleeps under the same roof, who wouldn't want him in bed beside you? If only the lovely glow of best-friendship could last into eternity without interruption. If only companions meant for evermore were never separated by a foe as merciless as mortality. If only.

What a desperate loneliness silence can be, when it signifies that a routine greeting is no more. Hopper is gone, and it doesn't matter why. It doesn't matter what condolences are expressed or apologies given. It doesn't matter if an endless row of sympathetic ears hover by to listen and comfort. What matters is the death of love, and a small heart splintering under the weight of pain. For Harry, it means telling no one at school about the life-changing event that has hit his life like a super-storm. He won't even admit it to himself. There's no way this can be true, because if it is, then what is left of Harry's life? How can he distinguish his own life from what he shares with Hopper? Every part of Harry's existence is tinged with the color Hopper brought to it, relentless reminders of what there is to mourn. Harry doesn't even want to sleep in his own bed anymore, where Hopper would joyfully curl up beside him so the two best friends could doze the night away in the quietness of contentment. It's too much for a boy to handle, far too much.

But at night's hushful beckoning, beneath the luminous net cast by alabaster starlight, love's quintessence is discovered anew as Hopper comes to Harry in his hour of desperate need, eagerly licking his boy's face, jumping around like the puppy he once was. Hopper would never really leave Harry forever, would he? Jubilant pup and overjoyed kid frolic under the sacred night sky for hours, the beauty of friendship whole again, a sight for sore hearts to hold onto and never let go. Harry awakens in the morning wondering if his outing with Hopper was a dream, but returns to his bedroom window the next night to look for his dog, and sure enough, Hopper is happily waiting outside for his boy again. Only, Hopper's physical form isn't as solid as last night. He isn't as warm or lively. The following night, Hopper doesn't come to Harry's window at all. Harry sets off to look for his faithful friend, worried that their miraculous reunions may not last, and finds Hopper lying outside the window in the still, gentle night, wispy and ephemeral, the fading ghost of a happy, warm dog who had once given his all to make his boy happy, and continued to do so even after death. With a sorrow as crushing as losing the best friend you'll ever have, who else can possibly help you through it but the friend you lost? Such love could never simply end, fizzling out in the darkness of a mysterious universe as if it never existed in the first place. Love always returns to guard over one so precious. Always. Now it's Harry's turn to take care of Hopper, tenderly retrieving his friend in his arms to bring him to bed, to spend one last night cuddled beside each other before his beloved pet vanishes into the realm beyond human understanding. One last chance to gaze into those eyes "glimmering with mischief and delight", as they did every night they had together. "Good-bye, Hopper," said Harry softly."

How can a story of such whimsical hope and happiness be so utterly devastating? *Harry & Hopper* is a wonderful, beautiful book, yet its sadness is so deep I can't come anywhere near reaching the bottom. Relationships like Harry and Hopper's are so rare, most people get only one like it their entire lives, *if* they get that. When you've found your Hopper, you've got to hold on real tight, because you won't want to let him or her go for anything in the world. Truly no trade for anything could ever approximate the value of such a companion. The representation of losing that extraordinary love, even just the *representation* of the loss, is so awful that it's difficult to bear even for the time it takes to read this slim picture book to its end. The loss is so gravely injurious, I couldn't write this review without crying the entire time. I just couldn't. The departure of a Hopper is sadness too heavy to bear...but the temporary return of the adoring puppy to his loving master's side is emotional overload ten times as acute as the passing itself. The poignancy of love regained for a moment, but destined to evaporate again like the mists on a foggy morning, lifts the enduring

friendship of Harry and Hopper to become the stuff of legend. Maybe friendship *can* last forever, in the souls and minds of readers everywhere who will hold Harry and Hopper—and *Harry & Hopper*—in their hearts for all time, generation after generation without end.

I just...I don't know what to do with this book. I think I'm ready to say it may be on level with E.B. White's *Charlotte's Web* as the two greatest books among all the thousands I've read in my lifetime. Yes, it's that powerful. I've said before that if ever a perfect book in English existed, I believe *Charlotte's Web* is that book, but *Harry & Hopper* is just as legitimate a suitor to perfection, in my opinion. The emotions of this story are so intense that it has likely short-circuited the power source of my own writing, rendering this review unworthy of the book it seeks to commend. I understand and accept that, for none could write better than Margaret Wild has in *Harry & Hopper*, and no illustrator could have turned in a finer performance than Freya Blackwood, whose faint, dreamlike renderings of a boy and his dog in their dwindling hours of togetherness are flawlessly suited to the text. I am in awe of this impossibly moving book, and there isn't enough I can say to let you know how much it means to me. I don't believe I will read a book greater than *Harry & Hopper* no matter how long I live, and that's okay. I've got *Harry & Hopper*. And in these pages, their friendship will live on forever, as joyful and inspiring as the day we first met.

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### **Margie says**

When it comes to a sudden loss of a family member or a beloved pet nothing is much harder to understand. The combined talents of Australian author, Margaret Wild and Australian illustrator, Freya Blackwood, accomplish it beautifully in this story.

Will you cry when you read it? Yes but the art of letting go with love gradually conveyed so well in this title will be the warm blanket that comforts you.

My full review at:

<http://librariansquest.blogspot.com/2...>

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### **Tasha says**

Harry got Hopper when he was a jumpy puppy. He taught him to sit, stay and play ball. The two of them were inseparable. Hopper even slept with Harry, moving from the bottom of the bed to the top over the course of the night. But then Harry came home from school and Hopper wasn't there. His father broke the news of the accident gently to Harry, explaining that Hopper had died. Harry couldn't sleep in the bed he shared with Hopper, so he started sleeping on the couch instead. At school, Harry couldn't tell anyone about what had happened. That night, Harry was awoken from sleeping on the couch by a dog leaping by the window. It was Hopper! The two of them spent the night together playing. The same thing happened night after night, but Hopper was getting less solid and less warm. Eventually, Harry had to say goodbye to Hopper.

This book should come with a box of tissues. Sniffle. Wild depicts the bond between boy and dog with a clarity that makes it very tangible and real. The loss comes quickly and without prelude, jarring the reader. As Harry moves through his grief, the return of Hopper brings that process into a similarly tangible state. The slow disappearance of Hopper over the nights, depicts the acceptance of loss. Harry's grief never comes to full resolution, something that is particularly beautiful about this book and its writing.

This book won the Kate Greenaway medal for its illustrations, and rightly so! Blackwood's illustrations are done in laser print on watercolor paper with watercolor, gouache and charcoal. They have a charm to them that is emphasized by the use of lines to slow motion. Additionally, the shadows that appear with the grief add to the darker feeling of that section of the book. Through it all, there is a warm light in the darkness, often provided by Harry and Hopper themselves.

A beautiful book of loss and grief, this book deserves a spot in libraries where it is sure to find an audience. Perhaps offer a Kleenex as a bookmark upon check out. Appropriate for ages 4-6.

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### **Janet says**

Sad face :'-(  

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### **Mischenko says**

To see this review and to learn more about Margaret Wild please visit [www.readrantrockandroll.com](http://www.readrantrockandroll.com)

*Harry & Hopper* by Margaret Wild is a book about a boy coping with the loss of his dog Hopper.

This is a very emotional story that had me tearing up fairly quickly. I haven't read a book this emotional since *Ida, Always*.

I love the sketched illustrations and the way the story unfolds. Even though it's a gently told story, it's extremely sad.

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### **Stacie says**

Sadly wonderful book about the loss of a beloved pet. Hopper visits Harry after the passing - just like Millie visited me after hers. Oh my tears. The story is well written and the pictures lovely.

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