

# Cheeky Monkey

AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR NOTES  
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Written by Andrew Daddo  
Illustrated by Emma Quay  
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## An author note from Andrew Daddo:

My wife Jac and I were laughing about all the names people call their kids—the way some are cute and some are cuddly and some are plain ridiculous. Then Jac suggested it'd be a good idea for a book, because we could put all the names we use for our own kids, and the names our friends use for theirs, into one collection.

SIMPLE – but then, the pain... the narrative... the logic... And how would the pictures work? What should they look like? Would they be of a boy or a girl? And would that be Mum or Dad with them – or both? And it went from being pretty simple to exhausting, especially for Emma. Having said that, the book is gorgeous, we're all really happy with it and we've slipped in our favourite names as well!

Visit Andrew Daddo's website at [www.andrewdaddo.com](http://www.andrewdaddo.com)

## Illustrator notes from Emma Quay:

I read an early draft of Andrew's text a year or so after *Good Night, Me* was published. As our first picture book together was about bed time and the time it takes for a child to fall asleep, it seemed very fitting that our second should be about a child waking in the morning and getting ready for his day. Although, having said that, despite the success of *Good Night, Me*, I was determined that this second book should have a very different feel. The text is again dialogue, but spoken by the parent rather than the child. It has a different voice—the language is more rough-and-tumble, more suitable for a morning wake-up, rather than a calming down for sleep.

Because the parent likens the child to various animals throughout the book, it was necessary for the characters to be human—animals pretending to be other animals just wouldn't have worked. As soon as I read the text, I thought of a father and child. The voice and language sound like a man's—basically, it sounds like Andrew talking. I added the child's mother, also getting ready for her day—towelling her hair after a shower, preparing some food at the kitchen bench—but *this* morning, it is Dad who gets the child ready. It was important to me that I show an ordinary dad caring for his child on an ordinary day, with no fanfare—no big “Dad looks after me too” banner. There is great affection in the relationship between the father and child, but it's not without friction and disharmony. There are some cross moments—not many children enjoy having their hair combed—but everyone is still loved and loving. The child's gender is

purposefully ambiguous—probably looking somewhat more like a boy to most eyes, but many readers talk as if it’s a little girl and I don’t correct them, because they’re not wrong.

The father likens his child to several animals throughout the book—amongst others, a bunny, a duck, a little worm and, of course, a cheeky monkey—and I have incorporated subtle references to these animals in my illustrations. I wanted to avoid being too heavy-handed with these references—I didn’t want them to overpower the flow of the fun getting-ready-in-the-morning narrative. Some will be noticed on first reading, but many may not be noticed until many reads later. This is the way I hope the pictorial story will unfold for its child readers—gradually. (However, for slightly more impatient readers or time-poor teachers, I have included a list below.)

### Illustrative references from *Cheeky Monkey*:

- COVER:     **Monkey** – swinging playfully; ‘tail’ formed from loose strap on overalls
- p01         **Monkey** – playing on the monkey/banana cliché
- p02-03     **Monkey** – swinging from letter to letter
- p04-05     **Sleepy head** – perhaps like a hibernating animal, covered in a blanket of leaves
- p06-07     **Rabbit (bunny)** – quilt forms rabbit ears; white sheet wrinkles up to form cotton-tail; rabbit-like teeth
- p08-09     **Chubby Chops** – An affectionate name for a child, but not quite as sweet when applied to animals (like sheep or pigs). I have concentrated on dad burying his nose in the child’s chubby cheek. Mum can’t resist kissing the child’s little toes—he is good enough to eat!
- p10-11     **Cow** – child is on all fours; grass-like green tufted bathmat; pink tongue poking out towards nose
- p12-13     **Billy goats** – shaving foam goatee beards; pyjamas top/singlet on heads form floppy ‘ears’; father’s hair standing up like horns.
- p14-15     **Duck** – child’s hair curls up at the back like a duck’s tail; child’s toes are spread out to suggest webbed feet; child’s arm bends at the elbow and juts out like a wing
- p16-17     **Rat** – child’s wet hair forms a rat-tail
- p18-19     **Mouse** – child’s damp hair forms ‘whiskers’ against his face; The towel is fluffy, like fur and subtly forms ear shapes and the suggestion of a tail
- p20-21     **Sweet pea** – a flower – the child lies on the ground, in the ‘grass’ like a seed ready to spring to life; the folds of the towel around his face suggest petals; the purple background colour is

reminiscent of sweet pea flowers

- p22-23     **Worm** – the child’s arm, as it pushes up through the sleeve, is wriggling like a worm; the background colour is earthworm-pink
- p24-25     **Grizzly bear** – the child is again on all fours; the child’s hair is shaggy and brown
- p26-27     **Pig** – the child’s hand pushes his nose up into a snout shape; the high chair strap curls into a pig’s tail at the back; the child is eating messily; the father is holding the child’s toes and chanting the “This Little Piggy” rhyme
- p28-29     **Monkey** – the child is leaping nimbly; as he jumps out of it, the strap from the high chair is stretching out behind him to form a ‘tail’
- p30-31     **Monkey** – the child hangs by his arms; his mouth forms an “ooo-ooo-ooo” shape
- p32         **Monkey** – playing on the monkey/banana cliché again—Mum has cut the banana from p01 into slices and made a heart shape for the child (she is cutting the banana up on p31)

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## Emma Quay’s Illustrative Technique:

*Black pencil line and chalk pastels, scanned and manipulated in layers on a PC using Photoshop*

In addition to the child’s gender being ambiguous, I didn’t want the family’s skin colour to be immediately obvious. I decided to use a warm, brown, coloured background for the illustrations, with loose black pencil outlines for the characters. The people would not need to be ‘coloured-in’, and therefore their skin colour could be interpreted by the reader. I added some subtle shading, to model their limbs, faces and bodies in three dimensions, but essentially they read as outline drawings. I used bright chalk pastel colours for their clothes, minimal props and non-representational backgrounds—sometimes symbolic in their colour (lime green for discord, sun-yellow for warmth), sometimes matched to the animal mentioned (worm-pink, sweet-pea-purple). I tried to keep a spontaneity to my line work and pastel colour—to keep them loose and alive. I worked smaller than print size with my pencil work, and blew my drawings up in Photoshop to accentuate the graininess and imperfections in the lines. I attempted to tell my part of the story in as few lines as possible, as I wanted the book to have a simple feel about it. The textural qualities of the chalk pastel suited a matte paper finish, and the paper stock was chosen accordingly. Varying sizes of yellow, blue, green, mauve and pink polka dots with spot UV varnish detailing on the cover add colour and tactile qualities to the book’s external surfaces. The designer, Georgie Wilson, the production department at ABC Books and the printers put in a lot of effort to get the book looking as we all hoped.

I built up the illustrations in several layers in Photoshop—the bottom layer for the brown ‘paper’, the next for one colour of chalk pastel, the next another colour, and so on for all the colours involved, until the topmost layer, which consisted of the pencil lines (enlarged and darkened in Photoshop). When I was happy with each illustration, I’d flatten the image down to one layer. The files were saved in tiff format for the printers. This method of working in layers in Photoshop very much reminds me of the way one builds up a picture using different screens or coloured plates in printmaking—for screen prints, etchings, lithographs, linocuts etc. I find I think in the same way, and plan the execution of an illustration using Photoshop, in a similar manner to the way I’d plan a print. As a trained printmaker, this suits me very well (although it is much less messy than printmaking, of course). However, I have not yet let go of some traditional drawing materials. So far I’ve found that nothing beats the drag of lead pencil on textured paper, the accidental crumbling of chalk pastels, or the beautifully-defined edges and granulation of a watercolour wash. I love the ‘happy accidents’ that can happen when one uses ‘real’ art materials. I’ve yet to find a computer program that can replicate the qualities of a simple hand-drawn line, so I tend to scan my hand-drawn images then manipulate them in Photoshop, rather than create them wholly on my computer. In Photoshop, I can leave in the accidents I like, and lose the ones I don’t. I can feel liberated when I draw, in the knowledge that if anything goes wrong, I can fix it!

Although I very much enjoy decorated endpapers which extend the visual narrative, and have used them myself in other picture books, I feel it is sometimes more fitting to use the endpapers as a foil to the internal illustrations. Some books suit a plain, well-chosen, flat colour. I felt this was the case with *Cheeky Monkey*—the illustrations (although simple) have a lot of texture, and to have busy endpapers sitting next to a matte brown page with loosely-sketched sweeps of chalk pastel would have been far too much. Instead I chose a flat 15% Cyan blue—the same colour I’d used for the child’s overalls and pyjama top—printed on matt stock. I feel it works well, and sings out, sitting against the brown paper pages. I have seen people stroke the endpapers when they first open the book.

Georgie Wilson, the designer for this project, has worked on a few of my other picture books: *Emily and Alfie*, *Bear and Chook by the Sea* and the paperback cover of *Reggie and Lu*. Her playful and creative, but not overpowering, typesetting of the internal text for *Cheeky Monkey* is a perfect companion to the loose and sketchy illustrations. I love the anarchy of the front cover type. There is such movement—it looks like the child on the tyre is swinging through the title and author names and sending them flying.

*Cheeky Monkey* is full of little moments from Andrew’s children’s, my daughters’, and Andrew’s and my own childhoods, as well as (I’m sure) many other families’ daily life. It is a celebration of the everyday. I hope you enjoy it!

*For insights into the illustrative process, and to see some of the work in progress for Cheeky Monkey, visit the [illustrating picture books](#) page on my website*

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