



# Walker Books Classroom Ideas



## Madame Badobedah

Sophie Dahl  
Lauren O'Hara  
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\*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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## Outline:

Mabel lives with her parents in The Mermaid Hotel, by the sea. Mabel likes to keep an eye on the comings and goings of all the guests. Then one day a particularly in-ter-est-ing old lady comes to stay. There is something very suspicious about her, with her growly voice and her heavy trunks and her beady-eyed tortoise. And why does no one know her REAL name? There can only be one answer, Mabel decides ... this guest is a SUPERVILLAIN.

But even supervillains have a soft side, and as an unlikely friendship grows between the pair, their fantastical exploits take them well beyond the corridors of their seaside home.

## Author/Illustrator Information:

Sophie Dahl began her working life as a teenage fashion model, but books and words were her first love. In 2003 she wrote Sunday Times bestseller *The Man with the Dancing Eyes*, an illustrated novella, which she followed in 2007 with her first novel, *Playing with the Grown-ups*. A devoted home-cook, Dahl has written two cookery books, *From Season to Season* and Sunday Times bestseller *Miss Dahl's Voluptuous Delights*, in addition to writing and presenting two BBC prime time shows about food. She is a contributing editor at *Conde Nast Traveller* and was a long-time contributing editor at *British Vogue*, and she has written non-fiction essays for *US Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Observer*, *Guardian* and *The Times*. Sophie lives in the countryside with her husband, daughters, rescue dog, cat and tortoise. *Madame Badobedah* is her first book for children.

Lauren O'Hara is an illustrator from the north of England. As a child she loved reading fairy tales, painting insects and listening to her grandmother's stories. She studied art and illustration at Kingston University and then designed window displays and props for films. Lauren's career as an illustrator began when she and her sister, Natalia worked together on a picture book, *Hortense and the Shadow*. This was published in 2017 and followed in 2018 by *The Bandit Queen*. Lauren lives in a converted church in Dublin, Ireland with her partner, their cat Ida and assorted ghosts.

## How to Use These Notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

### These notes are for:

- Ages 5-8
- Years F-2

### Key Learning Areas:

- English

### Example of:

- Picture Book

### Themes/Ideas:

- Loneliness
- Friendship
- Imaginative Play
- Empathy



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## Discussion Questions and Activities:

### Exploring the text

Do a character study on Mabel by answering the below questions and either drawing or finding photos/images in magazines that relate to her.

- Where does she live?
- What are her likes?
- What are her dislikes?
- What skills does she have?

Sophie Dahl uses interesting vocabulary in *Madame Badobedah*. Find the meaning of the following words by either inferring meaning from the text or finding the meaning in a dictionary. You can add extra words to the list that you either don't know the meaning or find interesting:

- Clustered (p12)
- Villain (p15)
- Trinkets (p15)
- Varied (p18)
- Observing (p19)
- Theory (p20)
- Evidence (p22)
- Fugitive (p22)
- Menace (p25)

"A room can be a lot like a person: it sees stories and parties and bored days and birthday cakes. And sometimes it sees sad things too." (p15)

Choose an old room that you know, it could be in your home, a relative or friend's home, in your school, a local library, etc. Think about what that room could have seen in its time. Who lived/visited/played there? Why were they there? What happened in the room? Write a story about something that happened in the room and how the room holds this memory.

Mabel collects evidence about Madame Badobedah and creates a story based on it. Make a list of the evidence that Mabel collects. Do you think Mabel's story is the true story of Madame Badobedah's life? Why or why not? Create your own story based on the evidence; you can either try to make your story realistic or fantastical.

As a class, discuss the phrase "don't judge a book by its cover" and how it applies to what Mabel and her parents think of Madame Badobedah. Do you think judging someone based on their appearance is ok?

Compare Mabel's first impressions of Madame Badobedah to how their relationship has developed by the end of the story. How has it changed? What have they learned from each other?

Loneliness is a key theme in the book. Discuss how Mabel and Madame Badobedah both feel lonely in their own ways. How does their relationship help this?

Discuss the scenes where Mabel and Madame Badobedah sail the pirate ship and visit the mermaids. Why are these significant scenes in the story and key moments in the development of their relationship?

Why does Madame Badobedah give Mabel the pearl? Why does she later tell Mabel her real name?

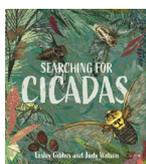
### Visual Arts

The illustrations on some spreads take up the entire page, while illustrations on other spreads only take up a small area and are surrounded by white space. There are also illustrations that are surrounded by a border, and some that aren't. Find examples of these and discuss why you think they were illustrated in this way.

Choose a spread from *Madame Badobedah* and discuss how colour is used to convey mood, setting, character and time. Look at different types of colours. How is colour used to convey meaning?

Find a colour ad in a magazine or newspaper. Discuss how colour is used. Re-create the ad using a different colour scheme and discuss how the meaning of the ad changes.

## Other Great Titles From Walker Books:



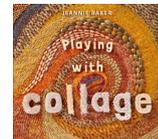
**Searching for Cicadas**  
Lesley Gibbes  
Judy Watson  
9781922244420 HB  
Classroom ideas available



**Horatio Squeak**  
Karen Foxlee  
Evie Barrow  
9781760650476 HB  
Classroom ideas available



**One Careless Night**  
Christina Booth  
9781925381856 HB  
Classroom ideas available



**Playing With Collage**  
Jeannie Baker  
9781406378665 HB  
Classroom ideas available