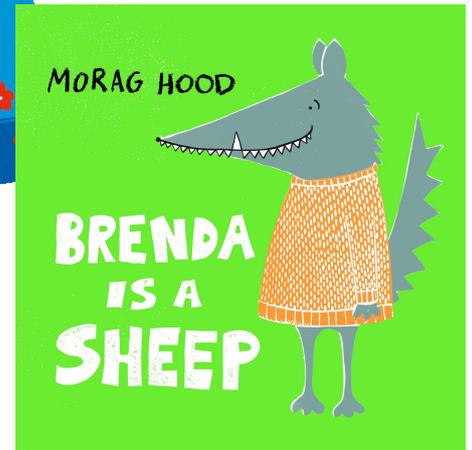
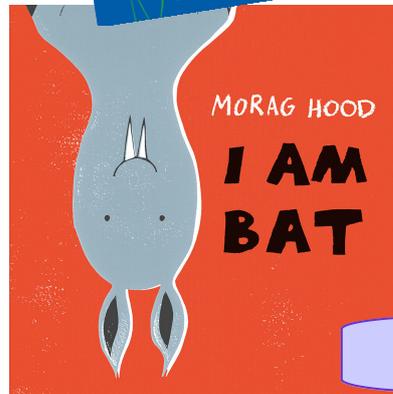
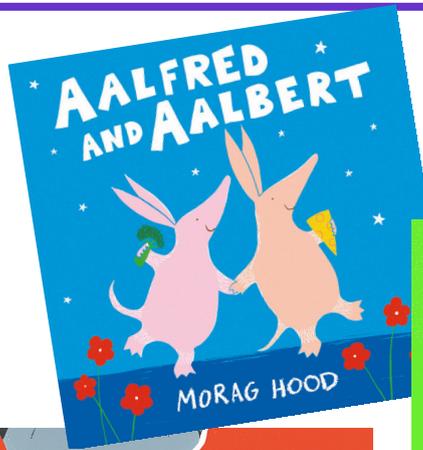


AUTHOR  
SPOTLIGHT

Morag Hood



Why bother to read?

I couldn't not read. Nothing else gives me the same sense of peace as being fully engaged with a story or world outside of my own surroundings. Reading is escapism, learning new things and a place to have fun. A good story is probably the most important thing to me; I love a strong plot and I like to read things which fill me with envy and inspire me to make more and better books.

What was your favourite childhood book?

I read a LOT as a child, but I think one of the picture books which really sticks with me is *Burglar Bill* by Janet and Alan Ahlberg. I loved the fun of the story and Burglar Bill saying "That's a nice tin of beans, I'll have that." I really enjoyed the slightly deadpan text and the illustrations as he is trying to get to grips with caring for the baby he accidentally steals. For a book about a criminal it is filled with a lot of gentle love! Re-reading it as an adult I can see the message, of learning that your actions affect others and perhaps being a baker would be a better thing to do than being a burglar, but it doesn't feel preachy at all. And I especially liked that Burglar Betty, despite not having chosen the most wholesome of professions to start with (!) was a career woman with a baby.

Which of your own books is your favourite?

I think *I AM BAT* is probably my favourite, partly because it is so much fun to read to children. Unusually, the words came very easily for this one and I found the specificity of Bat's character pretty much straight away. I wrote it very much for fun and was initially quite surprised that my agent and publisher loved it. I think it felt like such a silly story that it couldn't possibly be an actual book! I also love hearing stories of tiny children using Bat's melodramatic turns of phrase.

Morag Hood is an award-winning picture book author and illustrator from Edinburgh.