



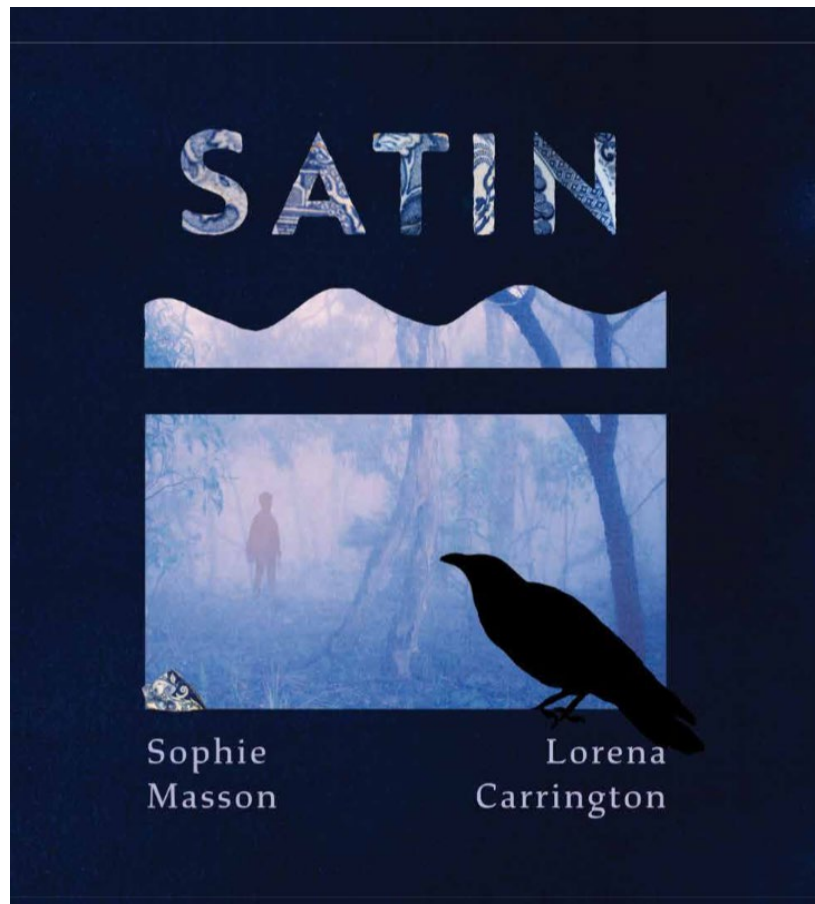
Teachers' Notes

Satin

By Sophie Masson and Lorena Carrington

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About the book:

Satin

Written by Sophie Masson

Illustrated by Lorena Carrington

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Every morning early, when no-one's about, Satin slips out of the forest and walks along the sleepy sunrise streets, looking for blue...

He's collected all kinds of blues, from all kinds of places. He's making something beautiful, with all those blues. But something's missing, and he doesn't know what it is. And then, one day, he comes to a street he's never been in before. And what he finds there will change his lonely life forever.

A beautiful, haunting fable by award-winning writer Sophie Masson and acclaimed illustrator Lorena Carrington.

About the author:

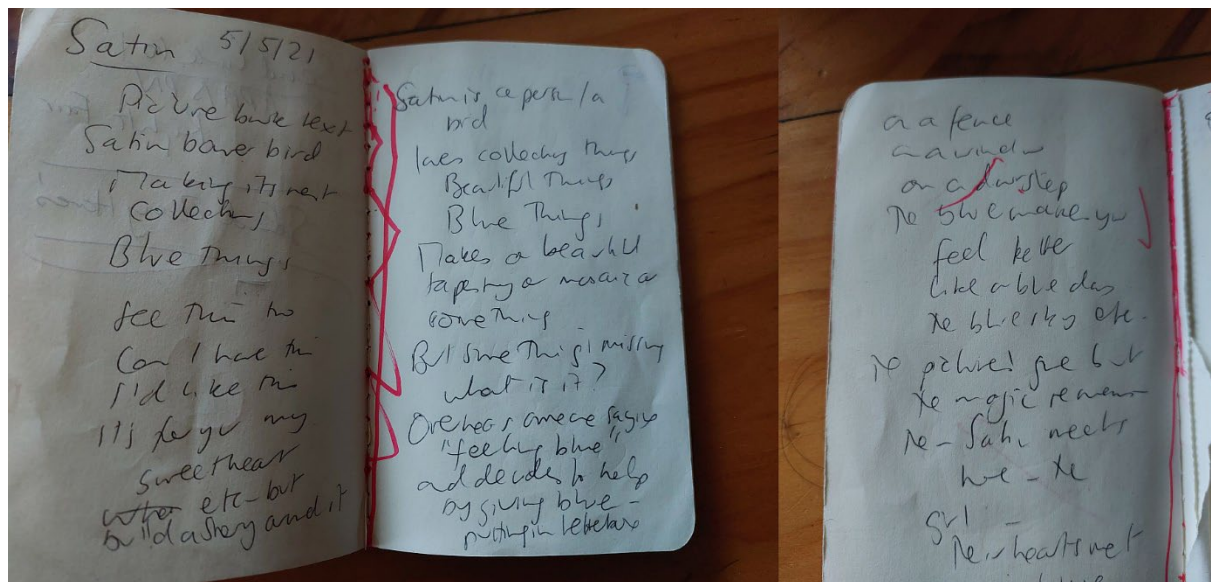
Born in Indonesia of French parents, who are themselves of mixed ethnicity: Basque, Spanish, Portuguese and French-Canadian as well as French, Sophie Masson AM was brought up in France and Australia and now lives in regional NSW. Sophie is the multi-award-winning author of over 70 books, for children, young adults and adults, many of which have been published internationally. Her previous book with MidnightSun Publishing, YA novel *The Ghost Squad*, was published in 2021. Sophie holds a PhD in Creative Practice from the University of New England and in 2019 she received an AM award in the Order of Australia honours list for her significant service to literature. Her author website is at www.sophiemasson.org and she blogs at www.firebirdfeathers.com.



Something from the author

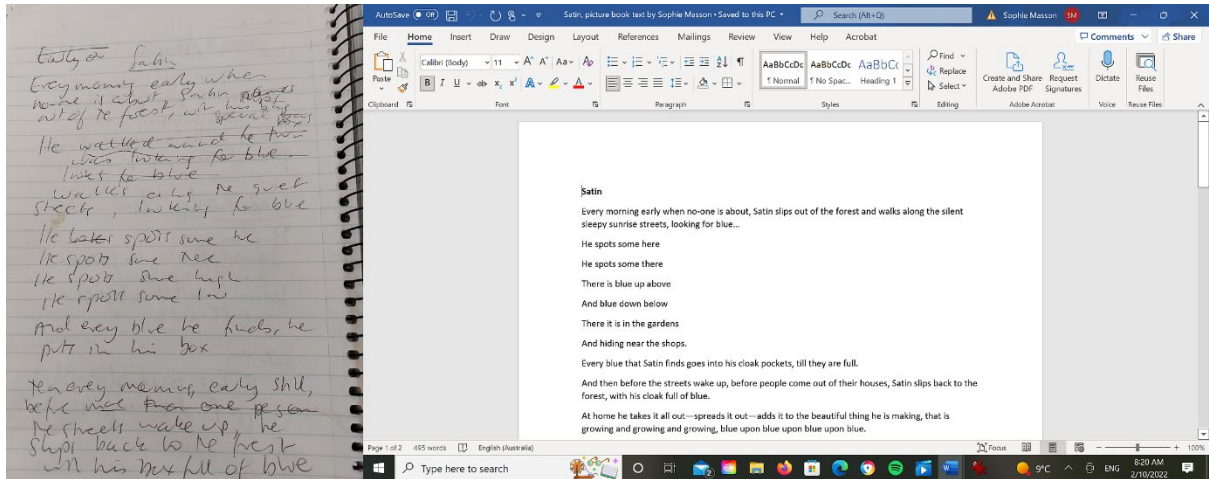
Satin started in a really magical way. In May 2021, my husband David and I were travelling from our home in northern NSW on our way to attend the Bendigo Writers' Festival in Victoria. It was somewhere on the road before we reached the town of West Wyalong that I suddenly glimpsed, on the side of the road, a bird with satiny, very dark blue plumage. Though I saw it for just an instant as we flashed past, I knew at once what it was—a male satin bowerbird. But what was it doing there, all by itself? Satin bowerbirds are shy, it's not easy to see them, and they certainly don't make a habit of hanging around near roads! I knew they like to collect blue things to decorate their nests: so had it spotted a special blue there?

In that moment, something else flashed into my mind, a title: *Satin*. I could see a character: a lonely young man, or was he a bird? Or both? Words began to flow onto my small travel notebook (I wasn't driving of course!) By the time we reached West Wyalong where we were to stay overnight, I already had the glimmer of an idea for a special picture book text, and by the time we got to Bendigo the next day, that idea had firmed up.



When I met up with my friend there in Bendigo, the wonderful illustrator Lorena Carrington, I told her about it. We'd already worked on two books together, retellings of French fairy tales and legends, and that had been a wonderful experience. I was very much hoping she might be interested in the idea of *Satin*—and to my delight, she was, at once! We started talking about how it might work: usually for a picture book you don't have writer and illustrator together at the start, usually the writer sends in a text and the publisher then chooses the illustrator. But we just knew this book *had* to be with the two of us. And I had an idea who perhaps might be interested in such an unusual book...

After getting back home, I worked on the story, first in my bigger usual notebook, and then on the computer.



I then sent it to Lorena, who created some gorgeous sample illustrations. And then I contacted the wonderful Anna Solding at MidnightSun Publishing and told her about the book. She loved the idea and immediately wanted to see what we'd done. So we sent the text and the samples—and within a week, she got in touch. The MidnightSun Publishing team loved it and wanted to publish it. So exciting! And as we worked on edits with MidnightSun, and Satin's world came to brilliant life in Lorena's spellbindingly beautiful illustrations, I kept thinking of that moment when I unexpectedly glimpsed a shy blue-loving satiny bird by the side of the road. Pure magic, that's what it felt like: and pure magic to see it developing into such a beautiful, very special book.

About the illustrator

Lorena Carrington is a photographic artist and illustrator based in regional Victoria. Her work is created through photographic montage: working with found objects, and the people and world around her. She has worked with publishers to create illustrated books and covers in Australia, USA, Ireland and Poland. She also exhibits regularly in art galleries around Australia, presents at literary and arts festivals, and visits schools and libraries to give talks and hold workshops on illustration, books and story. In 2022, Lorena established Pardalote Press with Sophie Masson, where they publish small surprising things.

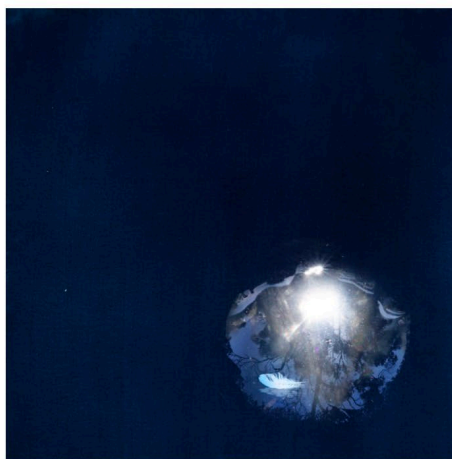
She is the recipient of the 2020 Australian Fairy Tale Society award, for her “outstanding contribution to the field of Australian Fairy Tales” and a May Gibbs Creative Time Fellowship for 2023. Her website is www.lorenacarrington.com



Something from the illustrator

When Sophie asked if I was interested in working on *Satin* with her, she had barely finished her sentence before I said yes! I love working with her, and the story sounded so beautiful and intriguing. I also immediately had wonderful visions of all that blue... And it perfectly combined two things I'd worked with before. Some of my earliest montage work included shards of willow pattern plates, and I had also been doing a lot of work with cyanotypes, an early photographic process that has the most glorious blue emulsion. And the fact that *Satin* gathers objects to create his beautiful thing is exactly how I work too! It was perfect.

These are the first sample images I made for *Satin*, and they remain essentially unchanged in the final book. As you can see, they are built up with layers of photographic images: the buildings, the silhouetted foreground landscape and figure, the bird, distant trees and the full moon against the misty sky... The pair underneath are more painterly. The elements are still photographic, but they are layered over a rich wash of painted cyanotype, giving a textured deep blue.



Classroom research and discussion activities

1. Author Sophie Masson says that the first idea for *Satin* came when she unexpectedly glimpsed a satin bower bird by the side of the road. Find out more about these amazing birds: where they live, what they eat, and why they like blue!
2. In the book, Satin goes around collecting lots of blue things: see if you can spot them all. And look up all the different shades of blues he could find: how many can you discover?
3. What do you think Satin was making with all the things he was collecting? And what happened to it at the end? (Clue: look at the endpapers).
4. We are never told why Satin loves blue so much. Why do you think he does?
5. Colour can be very important to show hidden meanings in a story. Blue can show sadness, red can show anger, yellow can feel happy and black can feel threatening. Can you find other illustrated books that use colour to help tell a story?

Classroom creative activities

1. What happens next? Write a short story about what Satin creates now he's no longer alone.
2. Satin goes all over the town to look for blue, and some of the things he finds are from broken plates with blue patterns. Imagine you are a reporter from the local newspaper, interviewing Satin about what he does, and write a short article about where he found the plates and why they were broken.
3. The illustrations start out being all blue, then colour starts to appear as Satin reaches out and finds friends. Draw the same picture twice, then use different colours in each. For example, mostly blues and greens in one, and red and yellows in the other. Do they show a different mood? Tell a different story?

Or make a comic strip without words. Can you tell the story with just drawn lines and colour? How will you show what your character is feeling?
4. Satin makes his beautiful thing out of objects he collects. Can you make something wonderful out of found objects? Collect leaves and twigs and even bits of rubbish, and make a montage picture. It could be an animal, an imaginary creature or a landscape scene. Or a self-portrait!