A Walk in the Park | Willy the Wimp

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Book

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It is good to have sturdy paperback editions of two of the finest books from one of our more imaginative picture book artists.

A Walk in the Park is vintage Browne: funny, quirky, wry and moving. Straight and unproblematic text tells the story of the two families who take a trip with their dogs to the park. The adults don't relate; only the children try to communicate. As well as reading the story, the young look at the surreal pictures, taking time over the diversity. I hope that this edition means that more children and teachers will read it together and talk about it.

The text tells a similarly straight' story in Willy the Wimp. Again, the untold stories are in the pictures: shady, menacing, yet always humane. I warm to Willy, who tries to obtain machismo but doesn't quite make it. Like all of Browne's work, I believe it has to be read collaboratively with those much younger than me (here, around eight or nine). They teach us how they turn the pictures they see into stories they read. This one works best when they draw upon their television experiences of storytelling. Why not use these both to have a Browne fortnight in the classroom? All ages.

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