

Are ant bears real?

Written by Lesley Beake | Illustrated by Tamsin Hinrichsen

School is finished. It is time to go home.

Samuel and Maryanne are walking along,
walking along.

“Are ant bears real?” Samuel asked Maryanne.

“Yes.”

“Are they ants?”

“No.”

“Are they bears?”

“No.”

The children are walking along, walking along.

“Are ant bears big?”

“Yes.”

“Are they strong?”

“Yes.”

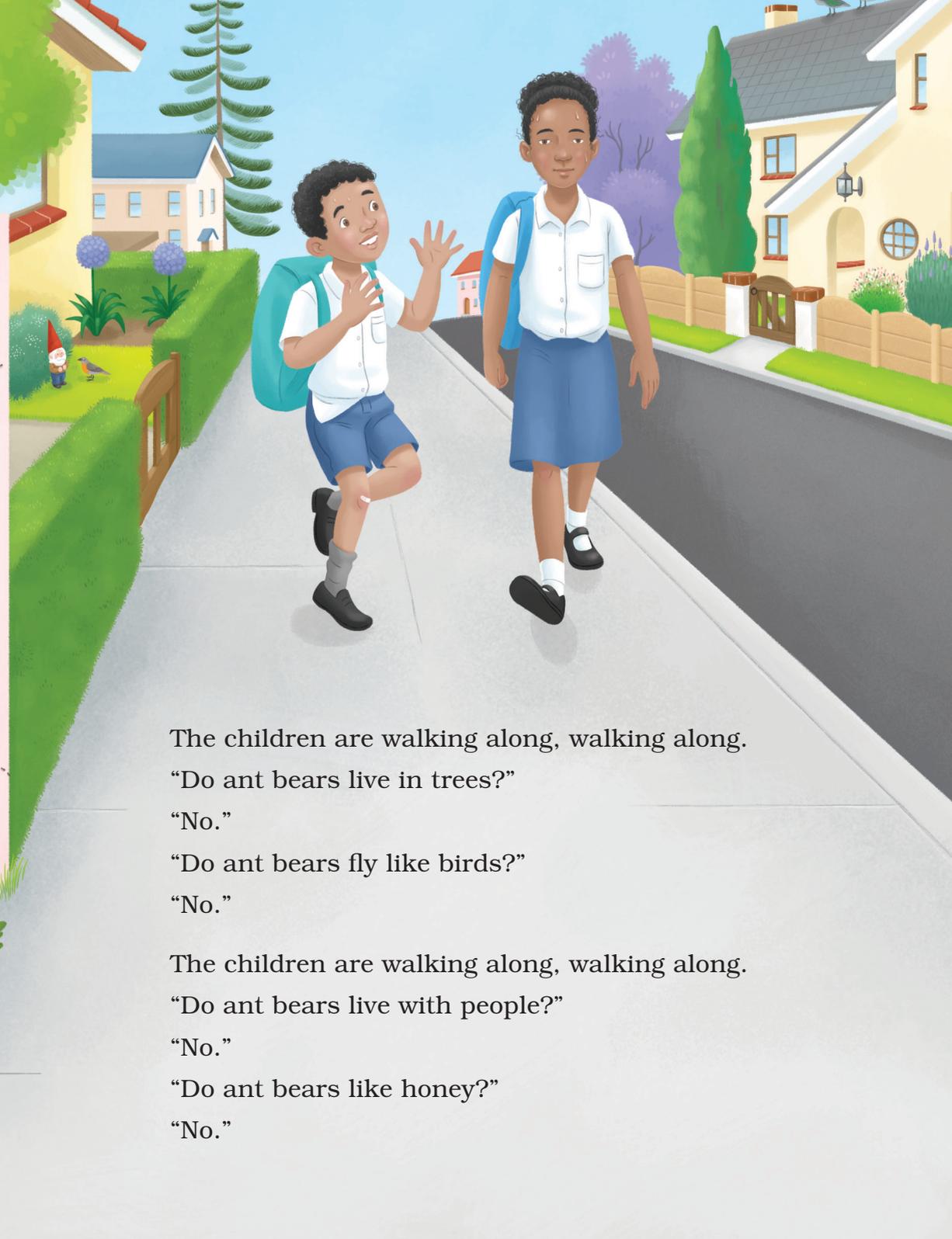
The children are walking along, walking along.

“Will they eat us?”

“No.”

“What do they eat?”

“Ants.”



The children are walking along, walking along.

“Do ant bears live in trees?”

“No.”

“Do ant bears fly like birds?”

“No.”

The children are walking along, walking along.

“Do ant bears live with people?”

“No.”

“Do ant bears like honey?”

“No.”

Maryanne stops walking. Samuel stops walking, but not fast enough. He walks into Maryanne. She looks cross.

“Do ant bears ...”

Maryanne holds up her hand.

“STOP ASKING QUESTIONS!”

“But ...”

“STOP!”

Maryanne shows Samuel a small building. There is a sign on the building.

LIBRARY.

Samuel looks at Maryanne.

“Do they know about ant bears in there?”

“Yes.”

Samuel looks at the library.

“Must I go in?”

“Yes.”

Samuel goes in. The library is full of books. There are hundreds of books. Maybe there are thousands of books. How will Samuel find a book about ant bears?

“Yes?” says a kind man.

“Do you have a book about ant bears?”

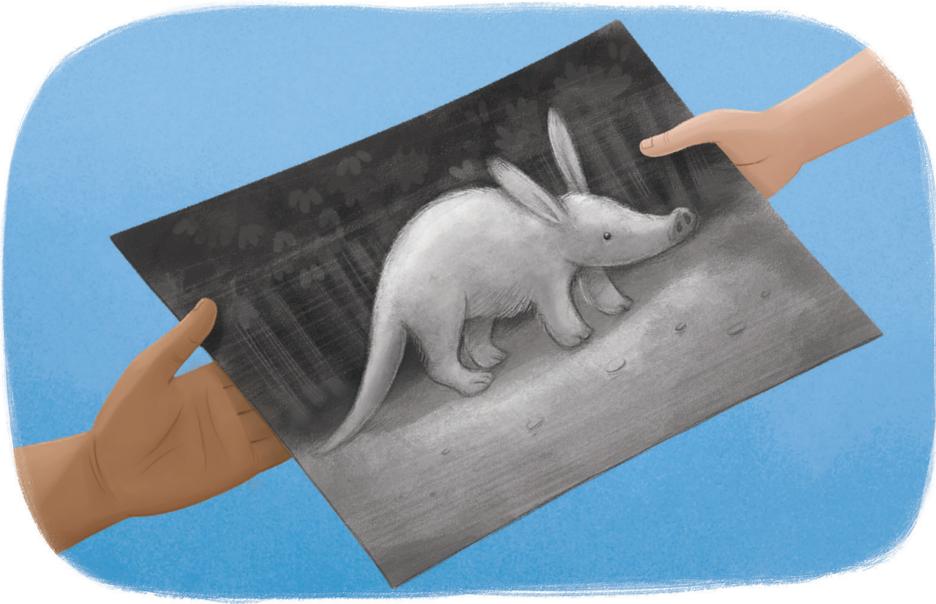
The librarian smiles.

“Yes.”



The kind man brings a book. Samuel sits at a table to look at it.

- Ant bears are big – bigger than most dogs.
- Ant bears eat ants and other insects.
- Ant bears make their homes under the ground.
- Ant bears are good at digging.
- Ant bears live in the grasslands of Africa.
- Ant bears have no teeth.
- Ant bears are also called aardvarks (which means earth-pigs).
- Ant bears only come out at night.



Samuel is thinking. The kind man makes a photocopy of a picture of an ant bear. He gives it to Samuel. Samuel is still thinking.

“Ant bears only come out at night,” Samuel says.

“Yes.”

“So how do we know about them?”

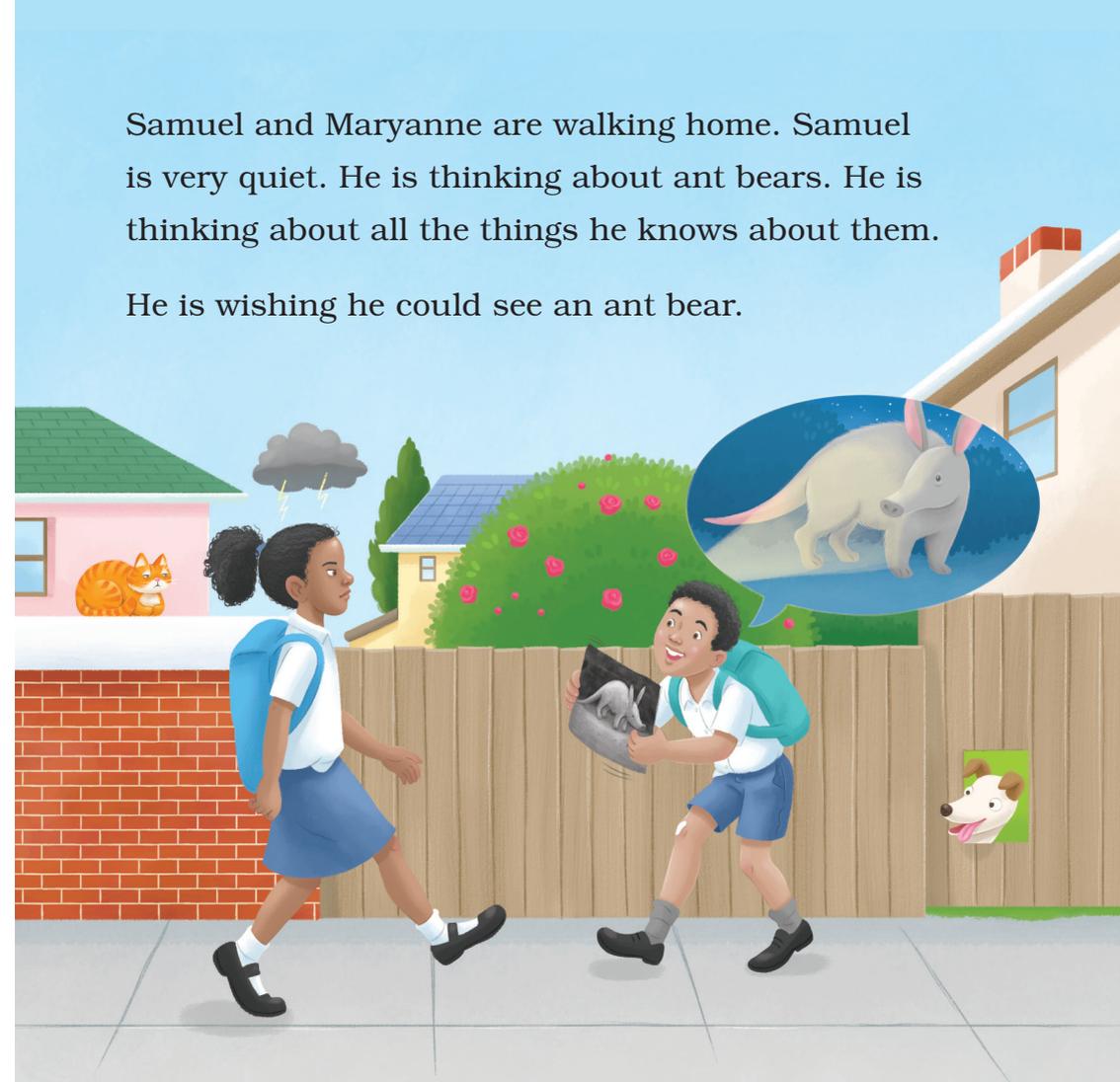
The kind man smiles.

“Researchers watch them very carefully. People set up cameras to take pictures of them at night. People write books that tell us all about them.”

Samuel thinks about that.

“But how do *children* know about ant bears?”

“They ask questions!”



Samuel and Maryanne are walking home. Samuel is very quiet. He is thinking about ant bears. He is thinking about all the things he knows about them.

He is wishing he could see an ant bear.

“Maryanne?” he says.

“Yes?”

“Can we stay up late and look for ant bears? Can we take a torch and go and see if there are any ant bears around here? Can we find out if there are any ant bear holes where they live? Can we? Can we?”

“No.”

Are ant bears real?

Written by Lesley Beake • Illustrated by Tamsin Hinrichsen

Ideas to talk about

Samuel was looking for a book about ant bears. What kind of books do you like to read?

How else could Samuel have found out about ant bears? How do you usually find information?



Visual

Samuel was very interested in antbears. What is your favourite wild animal? Draw a picture of it. Write the name of the animal under the picture or ask someone to help you to do this.



Reading

Can you use the information in the story to write a "true" and "false" list about antbears?



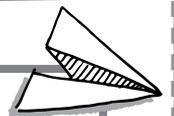
Writing

Samuel asked a lot of questions about antbears because he was interested in finding out about them. Write a list of eight to ten questions that you are interested in finding answers to.



Craft

Use clay or playdough to make an antbear.



Performance

Act out the conversation between Samuel and Maryanne in the part of the story before they get to the library.

