



**'You and Me: Our Place' published by Working Title Press, 2007
Leonie Norrington (author), Dee Huxley (illustrator)**

In this picture book, old Uncle Tobias goes fishing every morning, helped by two young boys aged around seven or eight years of age. Using traditional Aboriginal techniques, they catch a range of sea creatures, including skinnyfish and stingrays. When it rains, they take shelter under a bridge with a group of Indigenous 'long-grass' people, who sleep out on the foreshore reserves on Darwin's urban fringe. The boys listen to Uncle Tobias' stories of times past and later join a culturally diverse crowd on the beach. While the two boys are happy to move between the two worlds, Uncle Tobias stays away.

Each spread features one-two sentences of lyrical text that evoke the colours, feel and smell of the landscape. The vibrant illustrations are alive with movement and human interaction. Author Leonie Norrington grew up in the Barunga Aboriginal community, south of Katherine in the Northern Territory. Dee Huxley is a well-known children's picture book illustrator based in Sydney.

Online teacher resources

https://www.ncacl.org.au/atsi_resource/you-and-me-our-place/

https://www.petaa.edu.au/Common/Uploaded%20files/Global-Words/4GlobalWords_Indigenous_JPY34print.pdf

<http://www.scool.scholastic.com.au/schoolzone/toolkit/assets/pdfs/You%20and%20Me%20Our%20Place.pdf>

The National Centre for Australian Children's Literature (NCACL) has over 55 000 Australian children's books in its collection including some 5,600 in 68 different languages. It continues to grow each year. Many authors and illustrators have donated their original artworks as well as manuscripts, drafts, preliminary sketches and more so that the creative process

behind these books can be kept safely at NCACL in Canberra. Here the NCACL [Artwork Frameworks](#) describes the items in the artwork collection. Artworks are exhibited and loaned when opportunities arise. The NCACL also holds wide-ranging material about Australian children's book creators called '[Author and Illustrator Research Files](#)'. These provide a wealth of background material.

<https://www.ncacl.org.au>

'You and Me: Our Place' – Dee Huxley Exhibition

NCACL holds some of the original artworks as well as preliminary drawings from 'You and Me: Our Place'. The gallery exhibition shows slides of some of these original art works, preliminary works as well as comments between the author and illustrator as they worked on this book. Below are some questions and activities to consider as you view these slides. (Leonie Norrington, Dee Huxley and the publishers have given permission for these images to be used)

<https://www.ncacl.org.au/gallery-exhibitions/dee-huxley-exhibition-you-and-me-our-place/>

Slide 1 – Cover

Dee Huxley, the illustrator, uses pastel and coloured pencil on coloured paper for the illustrations in this book. Opposite the page where Uncle Tobias goes fishing is the page which includes the author's dedication and other information about the book. Also included is a paragraph about the sea creatures in the book, look out for all these creatures as you read the book.

Open out the book and look at the cover which is one long landscape. Some books don't use the back and front of the book as one picture. This landscape shows a Darwin beach, look for Darwin on a map of Australia.

Slides 2, 3 and 4 - Every morning Uncle Tobias rides his bicycle to the beach.

Look at the preliminary artworks and compare with the published piece. What differences do you see? In slide 2 the top sketch shows Uncle Tobias on his bicycle. Of the two preliminary (or draft) sketches which one was drawn first? Why do you think that? The text is also different? Why do you think the author decided to use 'Every morning' instead of 'Every day'?

Slides 5 and 6 - Uncle Tobias rummages in his basket.

Compare the two images, what has the illustrator changed from the preliminary drawing to the published version? What is meant by 'His basket smells of salt and darkness'? What else does a beach smell of?

Slides 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 – show various preliminary pencil sketches.

Are they all in the book? Where and how are they used? (Consider why some may not have been used or have been changed?)

Down the bottom of slide 10 is a written comment, 'Do you prefer 2nd version Jane?' Who might Jane be?

Which version of the fishing net do you prefer?

Slides 11 and 12 – Uncle Tobias and the boy with the prawn net.

Why do you think the prawns are called ‘flicky prawns’?

The angle of the net in these two pictures is different, why do you think that could be?

Slide 13 – Two boys dance on the beach (preliminary artwork)

Slide 14 – Preliminary artwork – Here are two drawings. The top picture shows Uncle Tobias telling stories of the olden days. What family stories do you tell when you have family around?

The bottom picture shows Uncle Tobias standing and sitting. The one of Uncle Tobias sitting was chosen for the book, why do you think the illustrator made that decision? Do you think Uncle Tobias should be standing or sitting? Why?

Slide 15 – Published illustration Uncle Tobias can’t see the boys

What can he see? What is happening on this page?

Slides 16 and 17 - Preliminary artwork in pencil and published illustration

Dee Huxley drew lots of preliminary pencil sketches including different people that were used in the published beach scene. Can you spot them in the published picture? How have they changed? What are some of the activities the people are doing? What do you do at the beach?