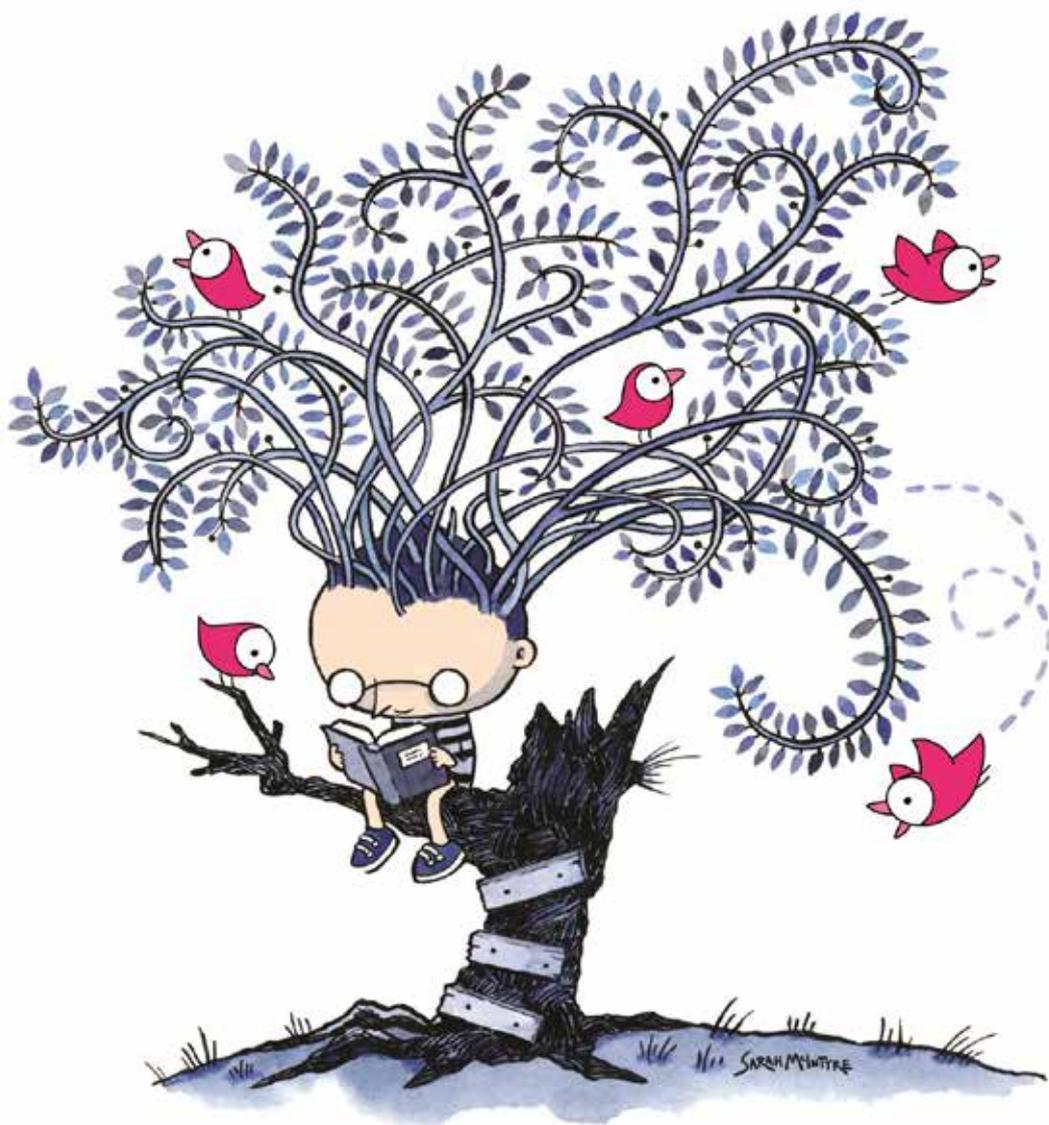


Just Imagine Book Guide

Flood

Written & Illustrated by Alvaro F. Villa



Just Imagine...

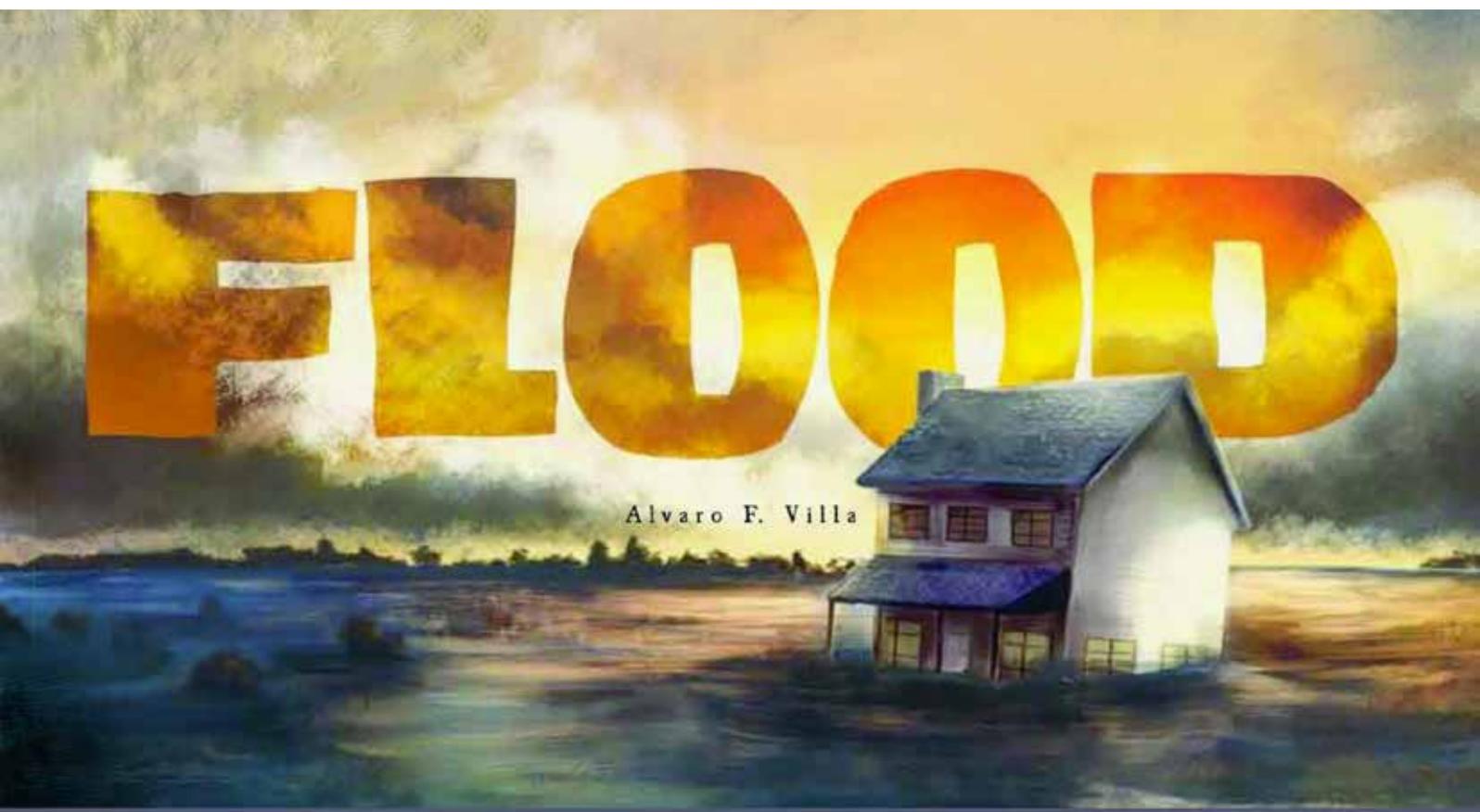
About the Author

Alvaro F. Villa

Alvaro Fernandez Villa lives in Buenos Aires, Argentina and has a degree in fine art. He became interested in art as a very young child, and has developed skills in both digital and traditional art forms.

About the Book

This is a beautiful wordless picture book about the effects of a flood on a family and their home. The narrative is straightforward with no distracting sub-plots which allows the reader to focus on the impact of the flood on each of the family members and provides lots of scope for discussion about this topical issue.





Before Reading

Great Britain and Ireland have been affected by frequent flooding in recent years with some areas suffering great devastation. The 2012 flood were particularly traumatic. A drought at the beginning of the year followed by a heatwave in March and then the wettest April in 100 years with rain continuing into May and followed by heavy rain and thunderstorms in June put many areas on flood alert. Homes were flooded, roads were blocked and there were landslides in some areas due to saturated slopes. Sometimes a flash flood will arise quickly but it is more usual for weather warnings to be given in advance by the Met Office. Floods, though they can be caused by weather conditions, are not weather and it is the Environment Agency which issues flood warnings. A system of Flood Alert (be prepared), Flood Warning (take immediate action) and Severe Flood Warning (danger) is used. The government issues advice on preparing for flooding and what action to take in the event of a flood. For children in some parts of Britain evacuation of homes, flooded towns and villages will be a reality. Others will have seen news coverage.

Open up the cover to reveal the landscape. Invite the children to suggest words that they would use to describe what they see. What colours has the artist used? What mood do the colours create?

Briefly discuss the title and ask how a flood might have arisen.

Have the children heard or seen anything about floods, either from experience, or on the news? They may want to discuss other flood experiences such as burst pipes, overflowing baths etc.

During Reading

Invite the children to talk about what they notice and what interests them. To deepen the response, you may offer some of the following prompts, but avoid asking too many questions in quick succession.

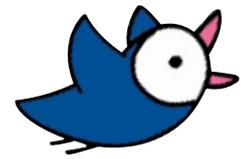
Possible prompts:

First Spread: Just another day

- Are the colours used in this picture different to the colours used for the cover?
- What mood do the colours create?
- What time of year do you think it is? What clues can you find in the picture to support your idea?
- Which characters do we meet on these pages? How would you describe what they are doing and how they are feeling?
- Is there anything in this picture that might cause a flood? What reasons might people have for choosing to live close to rivers? (Historical and contemporary reasons could be talked about).

Second Spread: Home

- What is happening in this spread? What are the different characters doing? (What do they think the man is doing by the window?)
- What colour is the sky? Can the sky be that colour? When would you be likely to see a sky this colour?
- Talk about the different things that they can see in the family home.



Third Spread: Storm clouds

- What is happening in this picture?
- How would you describe the clouds? Look closely to see if you can work out how the artist made the picture. Are there different types of clouds?
- What do you think will happen next?

Fourth Spread: Weather forecast

- What are the family doing? Would you usually all sit down to watch the weather forecast together? Why might they be doing that? What expressions are on the people's faces? Can we tell what they are thinking?

Bedtime

- What do you notice about the body language of the parents sitting at the table?

Fifth Spread: Flood defences

- What has happened to the river?
- What is being unloaded from the lorry? What are the people doing?

Sixth spread: Evacuation

- What are the people doing now? Introduce the word 'evacuation', if the children don't already know it. Perhaps they have heard it in a different context.
- If you had to leave your home, what would you take and why? What can be replaced and what is irreplaceable?
- Look back at the second spread. What do you think the family should take with them?
- What do you think the man is doing? How would you describe his expression?

Seventh spread: Waving goodbye

- Where do you think the family are going?
- What would be going through your mind if you had to leave your house under similar circumstances?
- What has changed about the house? (Compare it to the picture of the house in the first spread).

Eighth spread: Safe as houses?

- How has the artist chosen to merge the pictures of the house and the family? Why do you think he might have created the picture in this way?
- What do you think the man might be thinking?

Ninth spread: Flood defences breached

- Is there anything surprising in this picture? (the flood waters are turbulent and destructive. There isn't a gentle raising of the water level). This is one of the reasons people should listen to flood warnings rather than hang on until the last minute when a risk becomes severe.
- Are there any words you could use to describe the movement of the water (churning, crashing, overwhelming, turbulent etc). Do you think the artist has been able to successfully show the power of the flood water?

Tenth spread: The storm passes

- What has been damaged? Is it surprising that a tree can be uprooted by the flood? The soil in heavily saturated ground can become destabilised. It's not only water that can lead to danger but also natural and man-made debris.
- Why do you think the sandbags didn't protect the house?



Eleventh spread: The bird returns

- Where do you think the bird went to during the storm? Why do you think the artist has chosen to paint the bird in this scene? (symbol of things returning)
- How have the colours in this picture changed from the previous spread. What mood does this create?

Twelfth and thirteenth spreads: The family returns.

- How do you think the family will react to what they see?

Fourteenth spread: Rebuilding

- Who can you see in this picture? Apart from the family, who do you think the other people might be? Why are they helping rebuild the house?
- Why might they be planting trees? (Research shows that tree planting reduces the level of flood water on flood plains).

Final Spread

- What mood is created in this picture?
- Could another flood happen? Do you think the family might do anything differently next time?
- What do you think will happen to the house now?

After reading

Narrating the story: ask the children to narrate the story from the point of view of one of the family members.

Identify the different plot phases in the story (exposition, inciting moment, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution). Write a version of the story from the point of view of one of the family members.

Research flood preparation and flood defences. Discuss ways we can minimise flood threats and actions that can be taken to minimise damage.

Poetry connections: ‘*Wind*’ by Ted Hughes is a good comparative text. The poem is full of visual and auditory imagery, and Villa’s paintings in *Flood* evoke a poetic response.

Music connections: listen to two contrasting pieces of music that represent the different moods in this book such as Benjamin Britten’s *Peter Grimes* (On the Beach, Storm). Create your own soundtrack for the book using percussion instruments.

If you liked this book, you might enjoy...

David Wiesner *Tuesday*

David Wiesner *Hurricane*

