



TWO CRANKY BEARS

*Two bears, one hill.
Everything was fine until
they reached the top and that's when fine
turned quickly into . . . 'MINE!'
Can these cranky bears learn to share?*

We got the inside scoop from author/illustrator, Nick, on his brand-new release. Here's what he said.

Q&A with NICK BLAND

Can you tell us in your own words a little about what our beloved Bear and his old friend Polar Bear get up to when they meet again?

I think the opening line sums it up pretty well.

...Two bears, one hill, everything was fine... until...

When two bears each think they're the first to find a hill of snow, do they agree to share? Or do they take a longer, more adversarial path towards co-operation? A bit of each, it turns out.



Do you have a favourite spread in the book, and what is it you like about it?

I particularly like the very simple page where the two bears are standing back-to-back after the sun has gone down and the moon is yet to rise. Polar Bear is looking up, perhaps waiting for the moon to arrive

and Bear is looking down wondering what is lurking in the water below. I like how much this page says with such simple variations on the similar page at the beginning of the book. There's the tension of two adversaries suddenly being so close, and their separate anxieties about outside forces that are about to change everything on the next page.

What medium and what process did you use to create the illustrations?

The illustrations are 100% acrylic. Unlike most of my books, I actually painted this one from the first page to the last. The process is very simple, I draw the page in pencil onto watercolour paper and paint over it.

Two Cranky Bears is the ninth book in the Very Cranky Bear series, with over 4 million in print. What do you think makes it so popular with parents and young children?

I honestly think it's because a bear looks like a person in a bear suit. But there's no doubt that a well-executed rhyming structure sticks in the mind and encourages multiple reads.

Do you have a favourite character in the series?

As a Northern Territorian, I particularly liked Boris Buffalo as a character. But I've also returned to Polar Bear because I like drawing him.

When you are not working on your books, what keeps you busy in your spare time?

To be honest, I'm always working on books. When I'm procrastinating, I listen to podcasts, play chess with grumpy old men, potter around the block and improve my studio.



NICK BLAND

is an internationally best-selling, award-winning author and illustrator.

Nick was born on a farm in Victoria's

Yarra Valley, the son of two school teachers. When he moved to the bush at the age of 6, he discovered a wonderful new world, and his creativity bloomed. Nick always wanted to be a cartoonist and a writer, but it wasn't until he got a job at a bookshop in his 20s that he finally found a way to bring those two loves together. Untrained, he spent the next couple of years reading every picture book that hit the shelves and began discovering his style as a storyteller and illustrator. He now lives in tropical Darwin, where he works full time as an author and illustrator.



See the back cover for this and other fun new picture books!

