

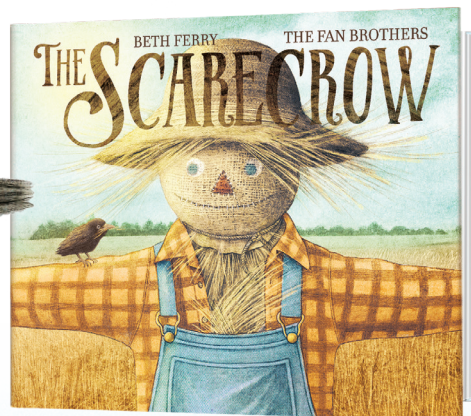
EDUCATORS' GUIDE

THE SCARECROW

written by BETH FERRY illustrated by THE FAN BROTHERS

ABOUT THE BOOK

Scarecrow stands alone, day after day, season after season, until one day, when a baby crow drops out of a tree. Scarecrow rescues him and the two become instant friends. When the crow is old enough to fly away, Scarecrow is again left to his loneliness. But as time passes and seasons change, Scarecrow learns that friendship endures. Told through lyrical, rhyming text, this story will have children cheering for this kind, compassionate Scarecrow.



Interest Level: K-3 • Guided Reading Level: M • Themes: Friendship, seasons, farm/rural setting

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

BETH FERRY is a *New York Times*-bestselling picture book author who lives with her family in New Jersey where she enjoys all (well, at least three) of the four seasons. Although summer is Beth's favorite season, autumn always seems to come at exactly the right time. Like *summer*, most of Beth's favorite words begin with the letter S including: *sunshine*, *sand*, *salt*, and, of course, *scarecrow*. Since she plants only pumpkins in her garden, Beth has found that she really doesn't need a scarecrow, but she would welcome one with open arms. You can learn more at www.bethferry.com.



Photo by Theresa Ariga

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATORS

TERRY & ERIC FAN are brothers who made their debut with the acclaimed picture book, *The Night Gardener*, which they wrote and illustrated together. As children they spent one lazy summer on a farm, stargazing at night, chasing fireflies, loading hay bales, and watching the season slowly give way to the brilliant colors of fall. They now reside in Toronto, where they still gaze at the night sky and look for those rare falling stars to wish upon. Visit them online at www.thefanbrothers.com.



Photo by Michelle Quare

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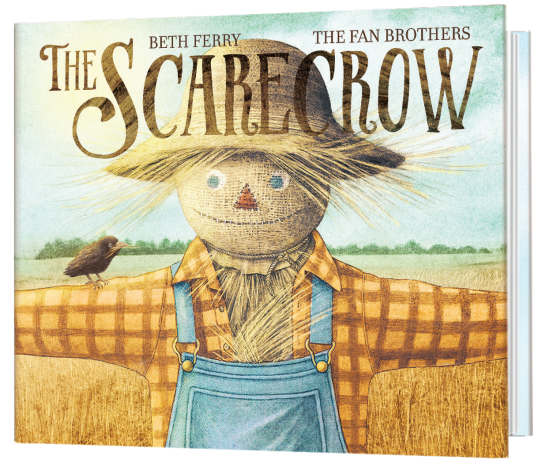
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Teaching guide prepared by Sue Ornstein, a first-grade teacher in the
Byram Hills School District in Armonk, New York.

www.harperstacks.com

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

IN SEASON. As you read the story, ask the students to notice how the setting changes along with the seasons. Discuss how the trees and fields look different, depending on the season. Then have each student divide a piece of drawing paper into four boxes. Have the students label each box with a season's name at the top. Then ask the students to draw a tree in each box, making sure that the tree's appearance reflects each season.



WRITTEN IN THE STARS. Reread the page on which Scarecrow and the baby crow “laugh and wish on stars” Ask the students to describe what they see when they look up at the starry sky. Discuss what a constellation is and introduce the students to some simple constellations using books or the Internet. Then have the students create their own star chart by drawing and labeling some of the constellations. Younger students can trace or color a printed star chart instead of creating it themselves.



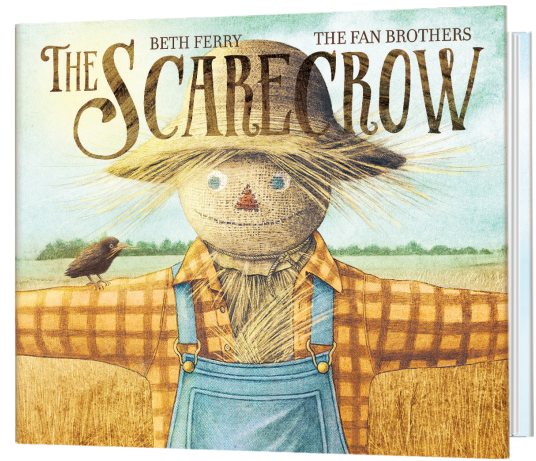
A FABULOUS FARM. Ask the students to examine the illustrations and make a list of all the things they see that are part of the farm. Then give pairs or small groups of students a large piece of paper. Have each group make a mural of the farm using different types of media. When the murals are completed, have the students present their murals to the rest of the class.

LEAF PEEPERS. Discuss the types of leaves pictured throughout the book. Then, if possible, take the students outside to collect leaves. Bring the leaves inside and use books and Internet resources to identify the leaves. Have the students make leaf rubbings, leaf prints, or leaf drawings, and have them label the types of leaves in their project. Display these in the classroom.

A BIRD'S LIFE. This story describes the life cycle of a crow. Discuss the stages of the baby crow's life as you read the story. Then have the students create a life cycle chart or timeline which shows the crow's development. As an extension, have the students learn about another bird's life cycle and compare the two. How are they the same? How do they differ?



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



- What is a scarecrow? Where would you find one?
What is its purpose?
- Read the first page. Ask: Where does this story take place?
How can you tell?
- Read the next page, “No one enters. No one dares.”
What animals stay away? Why?
- What does the author mean when she writes, “Winter whispers”?
- Read the page that says, “Then something drops from midair. A small, scared crow lying there.”
Pause and ask: What do you think might have happened to the crow? Then read the rest of the page, “Broken nest? Broken wing?” and compare with the students’ ideas.
- Why is it surprising that Scarecrow rescues the baby crow?
- What does the author mean when she writes, “And they will laugh and wish on stars, forgetting who they really are”?
- Read the next page that begins with, “for crows are birds and birds must fly.”
Ask the children to describe all of Scarecrow’s feelings as he watches the crow fly.
- When the crow returns, what season is it?
How can you tell?
- Where do the crows make their nest? How does that make Scarecrow feel?
- Look at the last page of the story. How have things changed from the first page?



BUILD A SCARECROW

INSTRUCTIONS: Instruct the children to cut out the Scarecrow's parts, glue or tape them together to create the scarecrow, and then add color to bring him to life.

