

About the Book

Sonny tells the story of a 12-year-old boy who has been adopted and is learning to find his place in the world. Struggling with attachment issues, Sonny often feels uncertain about who he can trust and where he truly belongs. These challenges affect his friendships, his experiences at school and his sense of identity.

But through the steady, unconditional care of the adults around him and a couple of new friendships which unexpectedly begin to develop, Sonny slowly begins to grow more confident in his identity.

Set against the backdrop of a cyberattack having destroyed the infrastructure of the country, Sonny and his friends reminisce about the digital age, a world they have never known.

Age range

10-13 years

Themes

Identity, friendship, technology, parenthood, coming-of-age



Why this story matters

Many children experience moments of insecurity or emotional distance, even if their experience differs from Sonny's. This story helps young readers:

- See that healing and connection are possible
- Recognise the power of unconditional love
- Explore what a real friendship looks like
- Realise that two-way communication is helpful to establish relationships
- Understand that identity takes time to form and that every journey is unique

For parents and caregivers, *Sonny* opens gentle opportunities to talk about identity, friendship, adoption and attachment in an age-appropriate way.

In a digitally driven age, *Sonny* also offers interesting opportunities to discuss with children the advantages of technology but also the challenges, particularly in the area of friendships.



Talking about *Sonny*

Stories offer a powerful tool to spark reflection and connection in a non-threatening way. Here are some example questions that could be discussion starters:

- Which is your favourite character and why?
- What do you think Mouse represents to Sonny?
- How do the people around Sonny show care and acceptance?
- What qualities do Sam and Kannan demonstrate to Sonny? What do you think makes a good friend?
- Think about another character. What do you think Jack's backstory is, for example?
- Is it possible to have a depth of friendship online?
- How does technology shape the way we connect with others?
- What would your life look like without technology?
- Why do you think Sonny ran away after his time at Kannan's house 'goes wrong'? What other responses could he have made?
- Can you relate to Sonny in any way?
- Sonny's father, in particular, demonstrates a depth of understanding of his son. What do you think he does particularly well?
- What does hope look like in Sonny's story?
- In your world, who does the father represent to you?

Sonny beyond the page

There may be opportunities for creative reflections.

Here are some ideas:

- Create a 'who am I?' collage using photos, drawings and/or cuttings etc. to represent different parts of your identity
- Letter writing is a dying art: encourage a short letter, perhaps to say thank you for a gift, or a newsletter informing a relative or friend of your news
- Choose songs to make a soundtrack that match Sonny's emotions at key points in the story
- Plan a tech free day
- Create a friendship web of strings that connect participants (family members/friends) who share common experiences or values

About the author

Lucy Shepherd is a mum, foster parent and educator, passionate about seeing children and young people flourish. This is her debut novel.

You can connect with her on:

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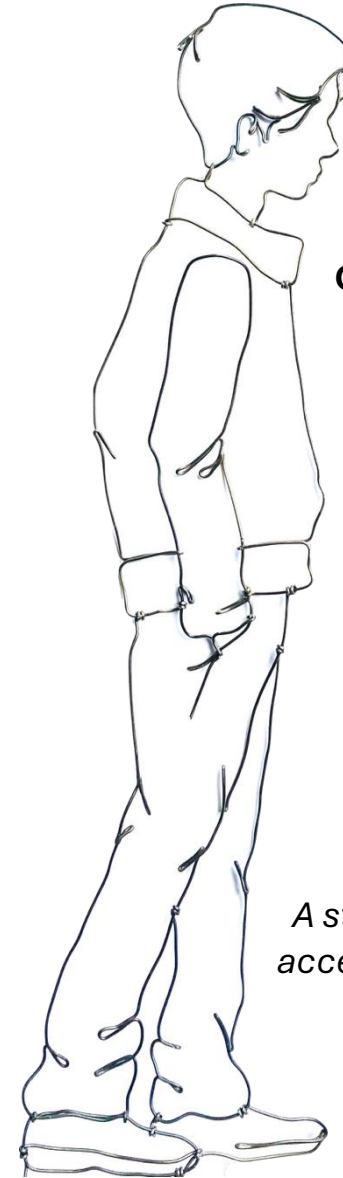
About the artist

Emma Bird is an artist whose works celebrates the beauty of creation. She creates wire sculptures, that are best described as drawings in the air.

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- 📷 birdieemma



**A Parent's
Guide to *Sonny*
by
Lucy Shepherd**

*A story about identity,
acceptance and hope.*