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***I don't want to go to school!* by Stephanie Blake**

Publisher: Gecko Press

RRP \$19.99

The stage is set for a showdown when Simon's mother tells him that he is going to school the next day.

He replies, "I'm not going."

Simon is a self-willed, determined little rabbit who often gets his own way. However, his parents realise that this time he's scared of the momentous change in his life. Gently and firmly they guide Simon through his fears and, finally, his father walks him to school.

As his father waves goodbye, Simon says in a tiny, little voice, "Not going!"

At school Simon does hundreds of things. First of all, he cried. Once the emotion is out of the way, he has a wonderful time meeting new friends and being involved in lots of exciting activities.

Bold, bright illustrations capture attention. Simon's night-time fears are highlighted in blue-hued snapshots of the sleepless rabbit repeating, "I'm scared." "I'm not scared." This contrasts with a few pages later where a similar layout shows vignettes of Simon immersed in school life.

The ending is a satisfying, humorous reversal of Simon's initial refusal to go to school. When his mother arrives to take him home, Simon declares, "I'm not going!"

This is a reassuring tale for young children about to embark on their first day at school.

Reviewed by children's book author, Jean Bennett

