

BOOKRAPT™

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***We're Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen, illustrated by Helen Oxenbury**

Publisher: Walker Books

RRP \$19.99

A superb edition celebrating the 25th anniversary of this well-known book loved by children around the world.

Slip off the durable dust jacket to reveal a richly-coloured cover of the father and children starting out on their adventure through the long, wavy grass. The adventurers set out with bravado as they announce:

We're going on a bear hunt.

We're going to catch a big one.

What a beautiful day!

We're not scared.

Words roll off the tongue as the family swishy swashy through the long grass, splash splosh through the cold river, squelch squerch through the thick mud, and stumble trip through the dark forest. Tension mounts as clouds darken the sky and a snowstorm swirls around them. Hoooo woوو! When they find a gloomy cave there's no option but to tiptoe in. Uh-uh!

The double-spread pages alternate between black-and-white illustrations and full-colour scenes that shine with light from the expanse of sky and water. Dark shadows in the cave highlight the scary thrill of seeing the whites of the bear's eyes. They're off! Strip illustrations intensify the speed of the family's retreat as the bear chases them back the way they came. Safe at home, they cuddle up in bed under a sumptuous pink quilt that radiates warmth and security. "We're not going on a bear hunt again."

The end papers are tinged with sadness as the bear trudges along the seashore in the dusk - perhaps he was lonely and just wanted people to play with.

Reviewed by children's book author, Jean Bennett

Author's website:

<http://www.michaelrosen.co.uk/>

In the studio with the illustrator:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AkJboWf5pew>

