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***Bogtrotter* by Margaret Wild, illustrated by Judith Rossell**

Publisher: Walker Books

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“Stop and smell the roses,” is well-known advice given to people who are often too busy to appreciate the beauty of the world around them. The author gives young readers a similar message when she introduces them to a busy bogtrotter who is forever running.

When Bogtrotter wakes up in the morning he goes outside his cave and starts to run up, down, and around the marshy, mushy bog until it's time to go home again. Each and every day he repeats his running routine, week after week, year after year. Sometimes he feels lonely and wishes things would change but he doesn't know how or why.

One day, a frog asks Bogtrotter why he runs all day long. Bogtrotter stops for a moment to talk and think. Then he looks down and sees a pretty yellow flower poking between his toes. The story unfolds Bogtrotter's dawning awareness of nature's beauty and the creatures that also live in the bog. His explorations reveal his sheer delight in the simple things of life.

But, can there be even more exciting discoveries to be found outside the bog? Bogtrotter stares at the flat, green line of the bog where it meets the huge, blue sky. Will he venture further afield?

The illustrator portrays Bogtrotter as a cheerful creature who just needs encouragement to stop and look around him. Energy and humour fills each page as he gradually awakens to the joys of making a daisy chain, dancing in the summer rain, and mud bank sliding. The soft, watercolour shades of blue and green glow with life. Inside the hardback covers, the endpapers illustrate glorious green fields dotted with daisies - very inviting.

A gently subversive tale that introduces readers to wonders to be explored beyond our safe, everyday routines.

**Reviewed by children's book author
Jean Bennett**



