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Picture Books

When Addie Was Scared
Linda Bailey
Wendy Baily
Wendy Baily, illustrator
Kids Can Press
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Young Addie is scared. She's scared of everything—the big mean turkey in her family's farmyard, the bull in the field on the way to her grandmother's house, noises that she hears (or thinks she hears) in the bush of the prairie where she lives.

She responds intensely to these fears: giving the turkey a wide berth; taking the long way around to her grandmother's house; hiding—all day, if necessary—from the noises, real and imagined.

But one day something scary happens. A threat appears on her grandmother's farm, and Addie doesn't hide. Suddenly, she's brave and protective and fierce.

The author and the illustrator of this book are sisters, and the story is true. Addie is their mother, and she now lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba and loves to tell stories about her growing-up years.

The language in her daughter Linda's retelling of the story is simple and strong, realistic but sensitive. It's clear that many of Addie's fears are unfounded, that she overreacts to them and that her constant state of terror is a problem for her. No one, however, in this girl's world teases her or puts her down for being scared, and neither does the author's tone.

The watercolor illustrations are done with the palette of earthtone colors that one sees on the northern prairie, but they are emotionally vivid. The expressions on Addie's face glitter against the background, and illustrator/daughter Wendy's excellent use of perspective serves to depict Addie's fearfulness and her shining moment of courage.

The most wonderful thing about this book is that the climactic event does not cause a magical transformation in the protagonist. She's still scared. But she learns that she can be courageous—that true courage does not mean being fearless. It means standing up to do what

needs to be done in spite of fear.