

KIDS' CORNER

MAY 2026 | Volume 10 No 4

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A/I = AUTHORS +
ILLUSTRATORS

POETRY AND PLOTS

REAL READING

NOTABLES AND THE NEWS

SHARING STORIES



COVER BY KIM DE HAAN

WELCOME TO REAL READING with KIDS' CORNER MAY 2026

Whether your favourite books are **FACT**, **FICTION**, **NOTABLES** or **"THE NEWS = NEW BOOKS"**, you can bet that they are even better when shared.



KC for MAY features
a new comics series by
our **GUEST AUTHOR/
ILLUSTRATOR**
KIM de HAAN



who introduces us to Daisy and Bug – friends whose different ideas just keep growing.



Images by Kim de HAAN

Plans for more **BITS OF BOOK WEEK** are starting to come to light with **POETRY and PLOTS**.

AI = AUTHORS AND ILLUSTRATORS help check out the truth about **AI BEHIND THE SCREENS**.

So, is it **AI = ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE?** Or **AI = AUTHORS AND ILLUSTRATORS?**

The BOYA SHORT LIST invites **SHADOW JUDGES** to celebrate **CREATIVE RESPONSES** to some of Australia's best children's literature, AND readers **COLLIDE** with some **NOTABLE BOOK TRAILERS**.

The NOTABLES and **the "NEWS"** bring us new books about technology, friendships, stories across generations, ancient creatures, micro worlds, different ways of seeing the world, and more **REAL READING**.

READING TEAMS are **SHARING STORIES** and beginning to imagine great ideas to share about good books.

KINDNESS KORNER reminds us that, sometimes, just **ONE KIND WORD** can change the whole day.

LET'S GO on adventures with **KOALAS** by **WRITING A BOOK IN A DAY**, being part of more **SIMULTANEOUS STORYTIMES** and listening to a **SYMPHONY OF STORIES**.

:: STAY HEALTHY :: HAPPY READING ALWAYS ::
MORRIE AND CO, with extra thanks to **DAISY AND BUG**
for **KIDS' CORNER** <https://www.cbcansw.org.au/kids-corner>



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Maestro Pebbles is a well-respected conductor of songs, stories and formalwear. A regular musical arranger for fashion shows, Pebbles also owns and runs London's foremost ethical-tailoring business 'Penguin Suits'.

Artwork by Briony Stewart <https://cbca.org.au/childrens-book-week/>



**WELCOME to our
GUEST**

**AUTHOR/ ARTIST/
ILLUSTRATOR**

KIM de HAAN

<https://www.kimdehaan.com/>

**with Daisy and Bug in
TREEHOUSE TROUBLES
(Perentie Press)**



<https://perentiepress.com/titles/daisy-and-bug-treehouse-troubles>



??? True or false? As a dedicated bookworm, Kim has been known to cart a **500-page book with her to parties – just in case ...**

While Kim's artworks are influenced by earlier work in the fields of architecture and design, she has discovered the excitement of creating as an author and illustrator for readers aged young to young adult. Kim is currently discovering the surprises of developing a new series of graphic novels. Will Daisy's and Bug's great project of building the best treehouse ever be bothered by the fact that they don't have a tree? Hmmmm ...



Hi, my name is Kim de Haan, and I'm an author and illustrator. I love creating books that are warm and optimistic, and I just released my first-ever graphic novel, *Daisy and Bug: Treehouse Troubles*.

I never thought I'd make graphic novels. They're a lot of work! But now I'm working on my second and looking forward to doing many more. So let me tell you a bit about how my book came to be and what I love about graphic novels.



Daisy and Bug's origin story

My characters, Daisy and Bug, actually appeared long before their story. Two years ago, I was brainstorming a completely different project, and I started drawing these strange, alien-looking characters. And then Daisy and Bug just...appeared.

From the beginning, I knew I wanted them to be opposites. One bright and bubbly like sunshine, and one quiet and reserved. But despite their differences, they were best friends. For the longest time, they just sat in the back of my brain, chatting and bickering.

How they became a book

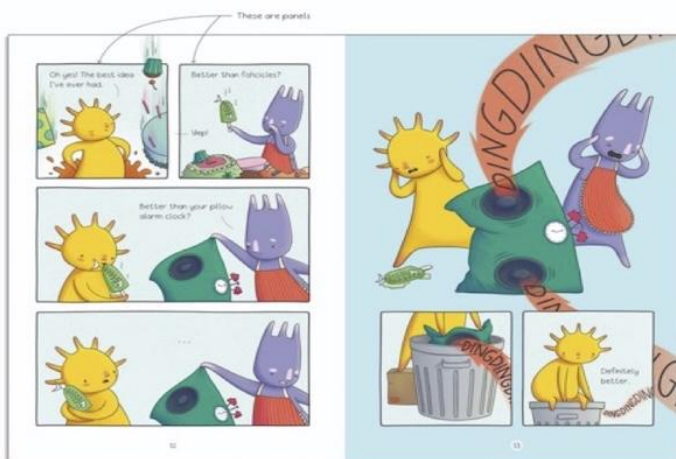
A year after they first appeared, a new publisher called Perentie Press started up. They specialise in graphic novels. I'd always told myself graphic novels were too much work. But I really wanted to work with them. So I dusted Daisy and Bug off, drew a little comic, and shared it with the publisher.

They loved the characters and asked if I had a story to go with it. I didn't...yet. But I said yes, and that night I sat down and wrote out the very first ideas. And one of those became this book.

From that first little comic to holding the finished book in my hands took about a year. I worked on it every night for around six months - that's two whole school terms! The rest of the time was spent printing the book and getting it into bookshops. Through it all, I discovered that I loved telling stories in a graphic novel format.

What makes graphic novels special?

Graphic Novels use panels to tell their stories. What I love is how a small change in expression between one panel and the next can tell a whole story, without needing words.



Can you tell a story with just two panels and no words?

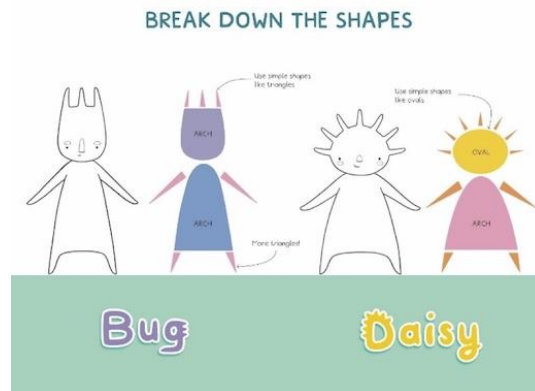
What changes between the panels?

Designing Daisy and Bug

Illustrators will often build their characters from very simple shapes. Daisy and Bug use only three shapes - arches, triangles and ovals. Here is a little breakdown:

I start by sketching the simple shapes lightly in pencil. Then I build the characters' bodies around the lines. If you like, you can even rub away the shapes later with an eraser.

Can you create your own character from simple shapes?



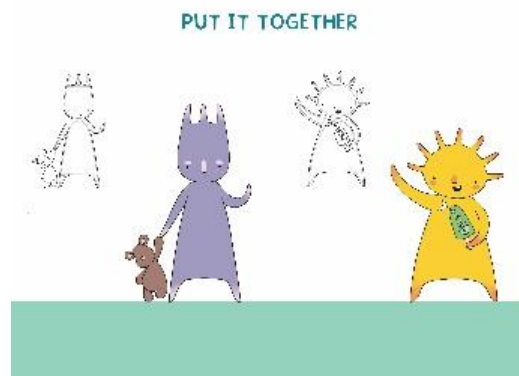
So, what is 'Daisy and Bug: Treehouse Troubles' about?

Daisy wants to build the BEST TREEHOUSE EVER. But there's a little problem...Daisy and Bug don't have a tree. Daisy has a bad reputation for good ideas. Bug just wants to nap.

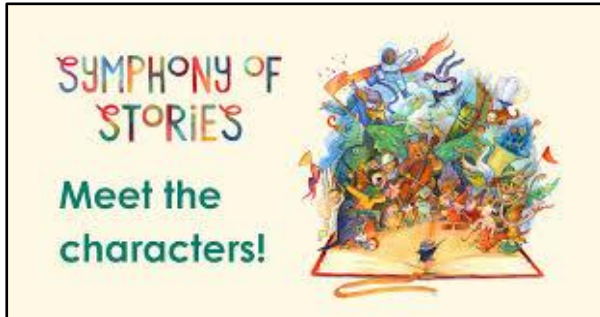
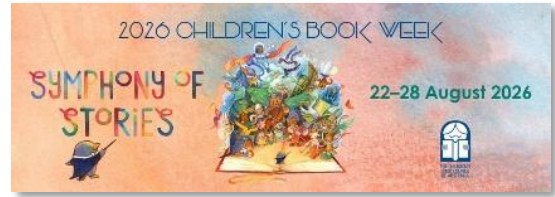
What will happen when one of Daisy's ideas grows out of control?

It's a funny, chaotic adventure. But underneath all of that, this book is about friendship and problem-solving. I want readers to realise there are so many creative ways to solve a problem. Mistakes aren't something to be afraid of - they're how we figure things out!

So, I hope you dream big. Keep your friends close. And maybe don't let Daisy near your alarm clock.



::: BITS OF CBCA
CHILDREN'S BOOK WEEK®




See **Maestro Pebbles**
and more CBCA Children's Book Week
artworks as created
by **BRIONY STEWART** with CBCA.

'I decided to try and show what stepping into a symphony of stories might be like. A huge colourful collection of characters bursting out of a book representing their different stories with weird and wonderful instruments.' -Briony

Artwork by Briony Stewart – 2026 Children's Book Week

<https://cbca.org.au/childrens-book-week/>

| | |
|---|--|
|  | <p>Maestro Pebbles is a well-respected conductor of songs, stories and formalwear. A regular musical arranger for fashion shows, Pebbles also owns and runs London's foremost ethical-tailoring business 'Penguin Suits'.</p> |
|---|--|

<https://cbca.org.au/symphony-of-stories-characters/><https://cbca.org.au/symphony-of-stories-characters/>

THE SHORT LIST . . .

And the CBCA BOOK OF THE YEAR AWARDS keep coming. . .



See the **2026 CBCA BOOK OF THE YEAR SHORTLIST AWARDS**

***List - <https://cbca.org.au/2026-shortlist/>**

***YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jlpqBIT7BeM>**

2026 BOOK OF THE YEAR AWARD SHORTLIST OLDER READERS



Of Flame and Fury, Mikayla Bridge (Macmillan Australia)

Darkest Night, Brightest Star, Barry Jonsberg (Allen & Unwin)

This Stays Between Us, Margot McGovern (Penguin Random House Australia)

We Saw What You Started, Carla Salmon (Pan Australia)

Golden, Jade Timms (Text Publishing)

Unhallowed Halls, Lili Wilkinson (Allen & Unwin)

CBCA YOUTUBE- 2026 CBCA BOYA OLDER READERS SHORTLIST JUDGES' comments -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r7PNbDzSmkM>

2026 BOOK OF THE YEAR AWARD SHORTLIST YOUNGER READERS



Run, Sarah Armstrong (Hardie Grant Children's Publishing)

Something Terrible: Tim Tie-Your-Shoelaces, Sally Barton, illustrated by Christopher Nielsen (Walker Books Australia)

Little Bones, Sandy Bigna (University of Queensland Press)

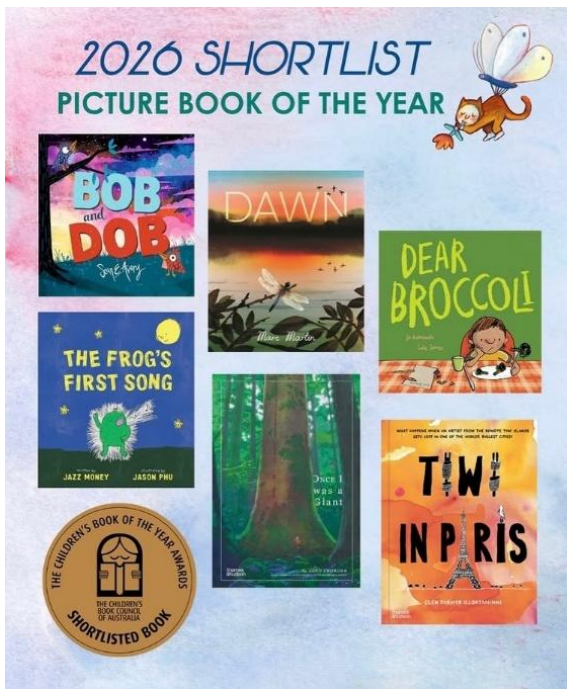
Spirit of the Crocodile, Aaron Fa'aoso & Michelle Scott Tucker with Lyn White (Allen & Unwin)

The Paperbark Tree Committee, Karys McEwen (Text Publishing)

Inked, Karen Wasson, illustrated by Jake A Minton (Figment Books)

CBCA YOUTUBE- 2026 CBCA BOYA YOUNGER READERS SHORTLIST JUDGES' comments

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=89T3SbkFF3A>



2026 CBCA BOOK OF THE YEAR AWARD SHORTLIST PICTURE BOOK

- Bob and Dob***, Sean E Avery (Walker Books Australia)
Tiwi in Paris, Glen Farmer Illortaminni (Thames and Hudson Australia)
Dear Broccoli, Cate James, text by Jo Dabrowski (Affirm Press)
Dawn, Marc Martin (Walker Books Australia)
The Frog's First Song, Jason Phu, text by Jazz Money (University of Queensland Press)
Once I was a Giant, Zeno Sworder (Thames and Hudson Australia)

CBCA YOUTUBE- 2026 CBCA BOYA PICTURE BOOKS - SHORTLIST JUDGES comments
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0FVsn8CDFw>



2026 BOOK OF THE YEAR AWARD SHORTLIST EARLY CHILDHOOD

- The Thing About Christmas***, Jo Dabrowski, illustrated by Briony Stewart (Little Book Press)
Derek, Anne Donaldson, illustrated by Matt Shanks (Little Hare)
Frogs Are Our Friends, Toni D'Alia, Madeline White (Bright Light)
My Nonno Loves, Adelle Frittitta, illustrated by Claudia Frittitta (Little Hare)
The Colours of Home, Sally Soweol Han (Thames and Hudson Australia)
The Emperor's Egg, Rae Tan (Lothian Children's Books)

CBCA YOUTUBE- 2026 CBCA BOYA EARLY CHILDHOOD SHORTLIST JUDGES' comments
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NZJxFTjVaJc&t=227s>



2026 BOOK OF THE YEAR AWARD SHORTLIST EVE POWNALL

There's a Prawn in Parliament House: The Kids' Guide to Australia's Amazing Democracy, Annabel Crabb, illustrated by First Dog on the Moon (Allen & Unwin)
A Loo of One's Own, Eleri Harris (Allen & Unwin)
Peculiar Parents, Stephanie Owen Reeder, illustrated by Ingrid Bartkowiak (NLA Publishing)
The Thylacine and the Time Machine, Renée Tremblay (Allen & Unwin)
Caution! This Book Contains Deadly Reptiles, Corey Tutt, Ben Williams (Allen & Unwin)
Ningaloo, Tim Winton, illustrated by Cindy Lane (Fremantle Press)

CBCA YOUTUBE- 2026 CBCA BOYA EVE POWNALL SHORTLIST JUDGES' comments

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qc8p9SjwC5k>



2026 BOOK OF THE YEAR AWARD SHORTLIST NEW ILLUSTRATOR

Save the Gum Trees, Bees and Big Blue Seas, Luke John Matthew Arnold (Scholastic Press)
Beyond the Shore, Mark Chester Harding, text by Kirli Saunders (Scholastic Press)
A Loo of One's Own, Eleri Harris (Allen & Unwin)
Prayer for a River, Uncle Glenn Loughrey, text by Andrew Kelly & Uncle Glenn Loughrey (Wild Dog Books)
A Farm by the Sea, Jillian Packer (Berbay Publishing)
Being Indy, Estee Sarsfield, text by Zoe Gaetjens (WestWords Children's)

CBCA YOUTUBE- 2026 CBCA BOYA NEW ILLUSTRATOR SHORTLIST JUDGES' comments

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0-lhEFX5m9Q>



POEMS and PLOTS – the BOOK WEEK POETRY TRADITION ...

<https://www.mikelucas.com.au/book-week-poems.php>

with **HUGE THANKS** to
MIKE LUCAS :: POET and AUTHOR

for his amazing ways with words.

Website: www.mikelucas.com.au



A TRADITION . . . Your BOOK WEEK poems seem to be a tradition for many to “get Book Week thinking started”. When and why did you start creating a poem to fit in with each year’s theme?

My first book week poem was written for the 2017 theme, *Escape to Everywhere*.

Before I had written any picture books or novels, my school visits for book week were centred around poetry. So, I thought it would be a great idea to write and read a poem based on the book week theme. From there, it became an annual challenge I set myself. And now, many schools and individuals anticipate it.

-TO RHYME OR NOT TO RHYME . . . Why poetry?

Poetry is a wonderful way to express ideas and emotions and to explore themes.

Poems are often brief and concise, able to be read and enjoyed in seconds or minutes. And, just as importantly, they don’t take too long to write. . . because I don’t have much time to spare.

-A SECRET LANGUAGE . . . What do you like about poetry as a use of language?

Poetry is a great way to experiment with language.

The normal rules of narrative and prose can be relaxed, or even broken, to suit the style and subject. Every word plays an important role. And because of this, every word needs to be chosen and placed perfectly

-STORIES AND MUSIC . . . What did you like best about combining ideas of stories and music for the -2026 theme of SYMPHONY of STORIES?

I am a lover of words, and a lover of music. And my favourite type of music is that which tells a story. I listen very closely to the lyrics of songs, and I work hard on maintaining a rhythm in my poems. The two are often connected, and so this, to me, is an ideal poem for me to write. ~MIKE

HUGE THANKS !

Mike’s BOOK WEEK POEMS can be found on his website

<https://www.mikelucas.com.au/book-week-poems.php>

They are based on the annual CBCA Children’s Book Week® theme as organised by the Children’s Book Council of Australia.



The theme for CBCA Children’s Book Week 2026® is **SYMPHONY OF STORIES** with official artwork created by Briony Stewart. <https://cbca.org.au/childrens-book-week/>

SYMPHONY OF STORIES

It's showtime for a symphony of stories -
The virtuoso's gift of verse and prose.
From comedy to tragedy, a skilfully played melody
Of literacy and imagery composed.



The stage has been prepared for the performance.
The players have perfected their own parts.
The audience is seated. They're all ready to be treated
To some orchestrated opuses of art.

A drumroll, please. We start with **Early Childhood** -
Books written for the very, very young.
Illustration and narration help to fortify foundations
Of the love of reading books for years to come.



The **Picture Books** arrive with a crescendo,
For children who are just a little older.
Conceptual depth and synergy, continuing that energy,
With themes that can be altogether bolder.

Trumpet in the books for **Younger Readers**.
These narratives are structured to engage,
With strong characters and conflict and capacity to inflict
A desire to keep on turning every page.



Raise the baton for the **Older Readers**,
With stories that are relevant and real.
Deserving recognition of their linguistic ambition,
And their literary merit and appeal.

The world around us plays to its own tempo,
And some stories are accurate and true.
Such subjects are explored within the **Eve Pownall Award**,
Educating and informing our world view.



Let's all applaud the brand-**New Illustrators**
For their storytelling skills and fine technique.
With their fresh originality and picture personality,
They complement the words and help them speak.

We hope you have enjoyed this year's performance.
The high notes have been hit, the trumpets blown.
But don't just stay there sitting. There are more books to be written.
Choose your audience and orchestrate your own.



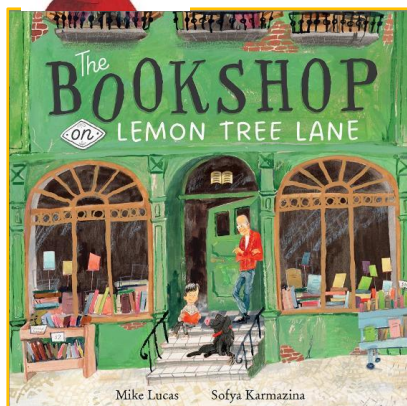
WORDS COPYRIGHT © MIKE LUCAS 2025

Symphony of Stories [poetry for Book Week 2026] © created by Mike Lucas

[Mike's BOOK WEEK POEMS can be found on his website <https://www.mikelucas.com.au/book-week-poems.php>]



If you love books, you love bookshops and libraries for the people and stories they share with us...



THE BOOKSHOP ON LEMON TREE LANE

<https://www.mikelucas.com.au/the-bookshop-on-lemon-tree-lane.php>

(Hardie Grant - 2025)

<https://publishing.hardiegrant.com/en-au/books/the-bookshop-on-lemon-tree-lane-by-mike-lucas/9781760506988>

by **MIKE LUCAS**

<https://www.mikelucas.com.au/>

with **Sophya Karmazina**

<https://www.instagram.com/sofyakarmazina/>



The Bookshop on Lemon Tree Lane is a love letter to bookshops.

It is about a small boy and his grandfather who regularly visit an old, beloved bookshop. With its crannies and nooks, its rickety staircase and its old bookshop dog, it's a perfect place to go on rainy days. But when the bookshop closes for renovations, the boy wonders – what will it look like when it reopens, and will he still like it?

My wife and I own a bookshop, and we have moved premises several times. Each move has brought about some changes, but other things have stayed the same.

The Bookshop on Lemon Tree Lane deals with the idea of change, the fear that it can bring, and the admission that it's okay to have these fears. The first few stanzas came to me quite quickly one day whilst I was walking Holly the Bookshop Dog, and I returned home to finish the first draft. I love the challenge of writing in verse and find that children also love reading it. ~ Mike

:: :: :: **BITS OF CBCA CHILDREN'S BOOK WEEK**

Start some “Book Week” reading with the CBCA NOTABLES because...



The **CBCA NSW COLLIDE COMPETITION**

will invite reading teams to create book trailers based on the Notables.

See some of the samples of Book Trailers made by schools in 2025

<https://www.cbcanw.org.au/collide-book-trailers>



2026 SHADOW JUDGING

<https://shadowjudging.cbca.org.au/>

CHOOSE **READ** **DISCUSS** **RESPOND** **CREATE** **VOTE**

The CBCA Book of the Year Awards connect young people to great literature. During CBCA Children's Book Week[®],

we celebrate reading for pleasure and applaud our awarded books.

We invite young voices from groups across Australia to join the conversation about our annual Book of the Year Shortlist and help judge the books



- What is Shadow Judging - FAQs

<https://shadowjudging.cbca.org.au/faq/>

SHADOW JUDGES <https://shadowjudging.cbca.org.au/getting-started/>

1. **GROUP** with an adult facilitator.
2. **READ** the six books in their chosen category from the CBCA Book of the Year Awards Shortlist.
3. **DISCUSS** the books and **JUDGE** them against the official criteria.
4. **RESPOND and CREATE** Creative Responses to share on this site.
5. **VOTE** collaboratively using the same criteria as the Adult BOYA judges to nominate a winner in their category.

and the Winner is . . . The votes from all groups will be tallied, and the winners will be announced in the official Book of the Year Awards Winners announcement event at the start of Children’s Book Week® on Friday, 21 August.



SHADOW JUDGING PODCASTS

<https://shadowjudging.cbca.org.au/shadow-judging-podcast/>

Join us for lively conversations between young readers and the Shortlisted books’ creators. Our hosts will bring a new episode to you every two weeks. They will be joined by young readers in conversation with the creators of the CBCA shortlisted books in the 2026 Older and Younger Reader Book of the Year categories.

Episodes are released fortnightly, starting Monday, 4 May.

This project is made possible by the Copyright Agency Cultural Fund.

SHADOW JUDGING is based on the **CBCA BOYA[Book of the Year Awards Shortlist** <https://shadowjudging.cbca.org.au/cbca-2026-book-of-the-year-shortlist/>

The 2025 SHADOW JUDGING CREATIVE RESPONSE GALLERY

<https://shadowjudging.cbca.org.au/all-creative-responses/>

includes samples of bookmarks, posters, poetry, redesigned book covers, book trailers and more that were created and based on the shortlisted books read by the 2025 Shadow Judging readers.

CHOOSE READ DISCUSS RESPOND CREATE VOTE



KINDNESS KORNER . . .

*finding the positive and just taking a breath
in a busy world.*

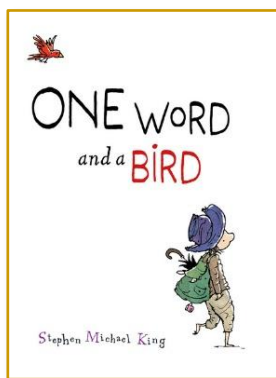
:: CARING & KINDNESS ::

One Word and a Bird . . . & . . . Becoming Indy Words and Differences

ONE WORD AND A BIRD



*Looking at the fly pages, we see from the top of the clouds
to the bottom of the sea, and all the words and people in between, there
is a special word . . .*



*I went searching for a word, an important word
that might give my journey meaning.*

A word like:

*auspicious, or significant,
or even magnanimous . . .*

But nothing seemed to fit. -SMK

ONE WORD AND A BIRD (Scholastic Press)

https://resource.scholastic.com.au/ResourceFiles/100142275_128737.pdf

by **Stephen Michael King** <https://www.stephenmichaelking.com/>



Photo by Luka King

I WENT SEARCHING FOR A WORD . . .

by Stephen Michael King

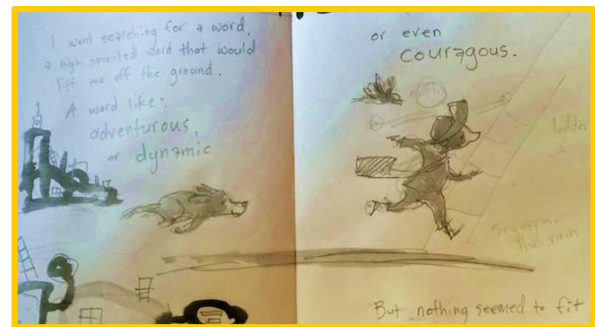
One Word and a Bird is one of my favourite books. It's about freedom (one of my favourite subjects), and it's about truth and authentic connection (another one of my favourite subjects). Of the over one of my favourite subjects). Of the over one hundred books I've created, each one has been a journey. Each Journey begins with discovering/realising that I might have something to say.

My day job (which is this) means I'm usually creating in a play space, with no heavy expectations... just building sand-castle ideas. It's OK if ideas are built and then washed away. I could force myself to produce, but I often find myself gardening, working on our property, cooking or even cleaning when a good idea lands. When I'm at my best, I trust that this will happen.



After much thinking, playing, and looking at clouds, it gets to the creation stage. This is where I'm making roughs, painting pictures and designing the look. This is where I'm searching for costume, colour, and style. There's always a sentence or two that needs moving here or there, or a little something to find that has been hiding away.

I place my words, chop up the sentences, and move the parts around until I notice a rhythm. One of the things I love about *One Word and a Bird* is that it celebrates the rhythm of the picture book - that rhythm is only found as you turn its pages.

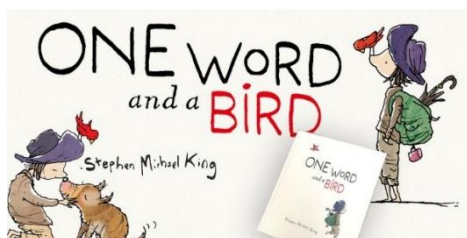


One Word and a Bird opens step by step, leading us to the first BIG spread ... then the middle begins with a tender, simple image spread, a bird appears; then we *shhhhh* back to a quiet spread; turn the page again to a noisy, wordy spread. That cycle repeats a few more times until the book hints of an ending. The last pages are slow turns.

One Word and a Bird is a great book to hold in your hand . . . a simple cover . . . a joyous endpaper . . . a dance from page to page until we discover that many journeys end where they began.

Even though I'm an illustrator, the last page is my favourite moment (surprised me at the time) . . . one little word floating, unadorned, not even a full stop to ground it.

Take a breath... feel its quiet arrival. ~ Stephen





KINDNESS KORNER . . .

*finding the positive and just taking a breath
in a busy world.*

:: CARING & KINDNESS ::

Becoming Indy . . . & . . . One Word and a Bird Differences and Words



*Sometimes differences colour our world
and bring us closer together . . .*

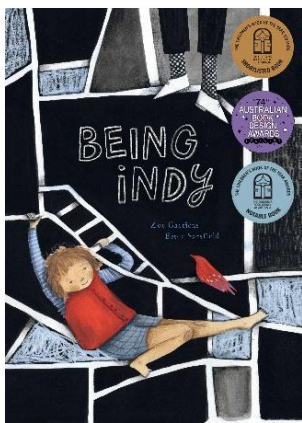
Being Indy

Indy didn't fit any of the rules. . .

But shapes, patterns, colours, designs, people . . . Everyone was different

"You ALL fit right in!"

from Being Indy by Zoe Gaetjens and Estee Sarsfield



BEING INDY

(Dirt Lane Press - West Words)

<https://dirtlanepress.com/product/being-indy/>)

by **ZOE GAETJENS**

<https://www.facebook.com/zoegaetjenswriter/>

with **ESTEE SARSFIELD - Illustrator**

<https://esteesarsfield.com/>



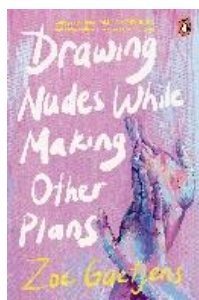
ZOE

Being Indy is about the Mountain, the place where everyone wants to be. Percival is the person who guards the Mountain, maintains rules and order. Indy, our main character, discards her sense of self in order to be let onto and included on the Mountain.

I enjoyed the challenge of bringing the big ideas of inclusion, belonging, identity and sacrifice into a story that is accessible and hopefully, engaging for children. I think what

I loved most of all in the whole creation process was seeing Estee's illustrations for the first time as she brought this story to life. I also love the way we were able to use black and white to symbolise the idea of "sameness" and vibrant colour to represent "diversity".

I really like the way the opening line captures the setting - "There was no finer place to live than on the Mountain", followed by the lines that introduce a potential problem, "Folks came from all around begging to live there."



In contrast, I love Estee's final illustration of Indy and Percival. Her framing of the two characters clearly indicates their connection and coming together while the background pastel palette seems to represent the hope of this newfound



situation. I think it's beautiful! ~ **ZOE GAETJENS**

Watch for Zoe's other new books:

Drawing Nudes While Making Other Plans (Penguin)
and **Little Angler** (Simon & Schuster Australia)



ESTEE

Being Indy is a very universal tale of belonging and a desire to fit in and be included.

It follows two children, Percival, who rules the Mountain and decides who is allowed in, and Indy, who disguises herself to try to fit in with the others and be accepted into Percival's Mountain. It is a story that is so easy to connect to and has a lot of different readings.

I had so much fun illustrating the Mountain as a playground and working out what this world would look like and feel like. It kept growing bigger and more whimsical. I love that the result is something that feels so much bigger than reality and blurs the lines between imaginative play and the real world.

A challenge was to make the playground seem both appealing and desirable, but also very structured, orderly and controlled, and not really such a nice place to be. The bars of the playground are, at times, a little like bars of a jail cell and give a sense of structure and control.



My favourite spread is towards the end of the book, where everyone has revealed their differences.

Percival is waiting for the bickering to begin – while children are frolicking and playing happily all around him. This is the moment where colour and black and white co-exist. There is such a strong feeling of community, play and joy on this page. I loved illustrating all the different people underneath their disguises who share the Mountain together – I think this page really celebrates diversity and difference. ~ **ESTEE SARSFIELD**

::: The Real “NEWS” ... AND TECHNOLOGY :::

AI = Artificial Intelligence? or

AI =AUTHORS and ILLUSTRATORS!

:: BEHIND THE SCREENS:

How the Internet Works & How to Make It Work for You

(UQP) <https://www.uqp.com.au/books/behind-the-screens>

by **NIRAJ LAL** <https://nirajlal.org/>

with **Aśka** (pronounced Ash-ka)

Visual Storyteller

www.askastorytelling.com

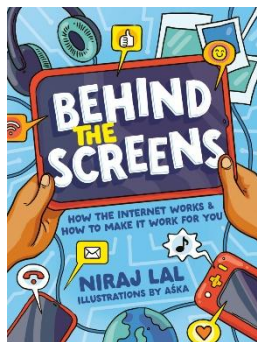
Insta: @askastorytelling

Illustrator www.askastorytelling.com



CHANGE BEHIND THE SCREENS

by Niraj Lal with Aśka



The biggest reason I wrote *Behind the Screens* is that screens (and how we use them) are changing how we have conversations together as a society.

For just about any topic that we all care about, it feels like we’re getting ‘shoutier’ and disagreeing more with other people. The formal word for this is ‘polarisation’ – and it’s starting to have impacts on our conversations and governments too.

We’re also just using tech a LOT. The average Australian spends more than 2 hrs on their phone each day – averaging more than 2000 individual touches. We’re hooked! Despite this connection, we’re also lonelier than ever (more than 2 in 5 young Australians feel lonely).

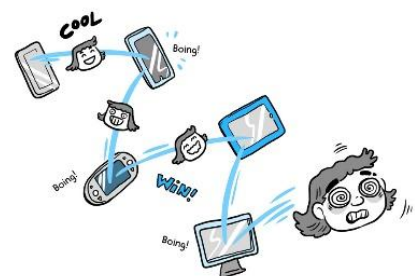


Image by **Aśka**

The internet has had a role in this and much else, and I wrote a book to tell 9-13-year-olds about it. Illustrated by the brilliant comic artist [Aśka](#), *Behind The Screens* explores how the internet works and beyond – what kids need to know about **surveillance capitalism**, the **attention economy**, **phone addiction**, **polarisation**, **dis/misinformation** and a bunch more.

The internet obviously isn't all bad – far from it – it's one of the most incredible and life-changing inventions in human history! It is fundamentally changing education and communication and change in general. Similarly, AI will be part of this. The book's aim is never to be too finger-wagging or apocalyptic or dull.

I wrote it for young people to read *before* they get a phone because I figured: if we can give you some knowledge about how things work, just as you're starting out independently on the net and before you get as *siloed* and *addicted* and *rabbit-holed* and *echo-chambered* as most adults, then you'll be empowered to make better decisions about tech than the generation before.~ **Niraj**

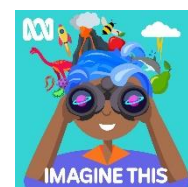
Niraj – bio <https://www.uqp.com.au/books/behind-the-screens>

Niraj is a massive nerd. He practically lives and breathes science. He liked it so much, he did a PhD in it at the University of Cambridge in 2012 and then was named one of the ABC's *Top 5 Nerds Under 40*. (In 2016, they called it "Top 5 Scientists", but everyone knows what they really meant.

He's now a Visiting Fellow at the ANU and the long-running presenter of the ABC's award-winning kids podcast, *Imagine This*

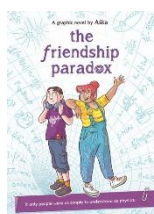
<https://www.abc.net.au/kidslisten/programs/imagine-this>

now in its 13th season with over 18 million listens. His favourite episode is the one answering "Why do farts come out of your bum?".



Aśka - bio [*pronounced Ash-ka*] <https://www.uqp.com.au/books/behind-the-screens>

Aśka is creative dynamite, an award-winning graphic novelist, an ex-quantum physicist, and a



hugely engaging and popular presenter. Having published more than a dozen books and comics. Aśka is passionate about visual literacy and teaching people how to "write with pictures".

And watch for **Aśka's** latest release, a YA graphic novel titled *The Friendship Paradox* (Allen & Unwin) – a mix of a physics road trip, comics, friendships, and more. .



INTERNET INFO EVERYWHERE ~ BEN

As you get older, you'll find yourself engaging with more and more people over greater distances and using the internet to do it. The internet is a great tool for learning, for study and hobbies, as well as for talking to (and playing games with!) Friends and family. Can you believe that the internet is useful for more than "just" downloading **KIDS' CORNER**?

The internet and communication technology are used in so many things that it can be a bit overwhelming, and sometimes it's not all fun and games. This book will help you learn about how these technologies work, how to make the most of them, how to be a safe and responsible user, and what to watch out for so you don't get tricked online.~ **Ben**

TECH TERMS FROM BEN

Siloed - when you're only receiving information from one perspective and are missing the full picture.

Rabbit-hole - following links or suggestions from one piece of media to another, then another, then another, until you end up looking at something on a completely different topic from the first thing. This often happens when YouTube makes bad "watch next" suggestions.

Echo-chamber – similar to an **information silo**, when those getting their information from one perspective get together and reinforce each other's beliefs, leading to a lack of interest in gaining a fuller perspective.

And more vocab to check out:

| | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Attention Economy- | Dis/Mis-Information | Phone Addiction |
| Polarisation | | Surveillance capitalism |



BOOKS . . . for the REAL STORY. . .

Featuring: THE PET SITTERS SERIES

by ELLA SHINE <https://puddledogpress.com/>

created by

[PENNY J REEVE <https://www.pennyreeve.com/childrens-books.html>

And CECILE PATERSON <https://www.cecilypaterson.com/books>

(Puddle Dog Press - <https://puddledogpress.com/>)



PET SITTERS = REAL BOOKS for REAL READERS

By Penny J Reeve and Cecile Paterson

We just launched a new book. And one of the things we are most proud about is the 'humanness' of it.

Yes, it might slow us down a little to not outsource tasks to AI.

Yes, it might cost a lot more to pay humans to illustrate and narrate our work. But the results are worth it.

Our new book, and our entire **Pet Sitters** series, are “human-made”.

They are stories about friendship, working together and finding ways to solve problems.

I like to think that's how we work as a team, too! Shout out to our illustrator, Lisa Flanagan, and our narrator, [Suzanne Ellis](#)- also real people. We love your work!





The latest in the series: :: **PET SITTERS : PIRATE PROBLEMS**

[by PENNY and CECILY- aka ELLA SHINE)

<https://puddledogpress.com/>

Two pet sitters. One talking cat. What could possibly go wrong?

Cassie, Lina and Gus are excited to dress up like pirates when they pet sit Trixie, the parrot. But when everyone starts to talk like a pirate, the girls know they've got a swashbuckling problem – especially with their very first radio

interview coming up!

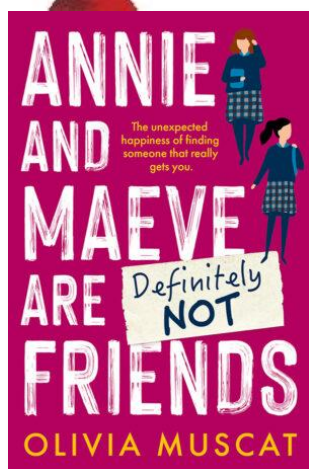
THE REAL NEWS = More REAL NEW BOOKS

The “NEWS” brings us new books about technology, friendships, stories across generations, ancient creatures, micro worlds, different ways of seeing the world, bullying, technology, and more **REAL READING**.



A new year, a new school, a new way of looking at the world.

Does that also mean new friends?



:: ANNIE AND MAEVE ARE DEFINITELY NOT FRIENDS



by **Olivia Muscat**

Website: oliviamuscat.com

Newsletter: oliviamuscat.substack.com

Fremantle Press https://fremantlepress.com.au/books/annie-and-maeve-are-definitely-not-friends/?srsltid=AfmBOop9liR4wxwhexE90_LOLGmkRANBxe42dP1I52FSOsYh8FS83Nlz

Annie and Maeve are Definitely Not Friends is the story of, you guessed it, Annie and Maeve, two girls who find themselves forced into a friendship neither of them wants and end up realising that if you're open and kind and yourself, people and friendship can surprise you in the best ways.

Like me, Annie and Maeve are both totally blind. Maeve has been blind since birth and has been going to her school with her friends since day 1. She's comfortable and confident and thinks she knows everything. Annie was in an accident that caused her to suddenly lose her vision. She's also

the new girl at school, feeling out of her depth and terrified, and having to learn a lot of new skills very quickly.

I really wanted to write a fun, funny, heartfelt friendship story, because they're the kinds of stories I like to read. As a reader, I hardly ever get to see the way I experience the world reflected to me in the stories I love. As a writer, In creating characters, the reason Annie and Maeve are both blind is simply because, that's my life experience.

Having said that, neither Annie nor Maeve is particularly like me. There are aspects of my life that have made it into theirs, but in this book, I really wanted to illustrate that even when two people have the same disability, their lives are not the same, and that goes for me too!

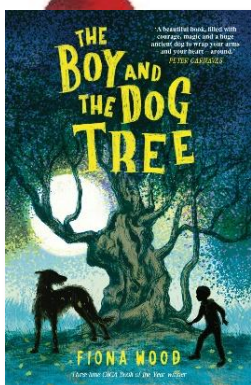
I was also inspired by all the blind and vision-impaired children I work with as a teacher, and the way they share the things they're all experiencing that nobody else they know understands. I wanted to write about that sense of affirmation that being part of the disability community can provide.

I usually must let characters sit in my brain for a long time while I get to know their voices and histories. So, I was very surprised when Annie and Maeve both showed up with a very strong outline. I knew who they were straight away, and it was just a matter of colouring in gaps and widening both their worlds.

I loved creating all the other students in their class. For me, that's what really brings the story to life and grounds it in a fun reality. I love a good supporting character, and it was so much fun to create a cast of my own. That classroom is very vivid and noisy in my head. ~ **Olivia**



... *Blending the almost ancient 'powers' and the friendship influences of Argos with the all-too-prevalent bullying situations that Mitch (and many others) deal with.*



::THE BOY AND THE DOG TREE ::

(UQP) <https://www.uqp.com.au/books/the-boy-and-the-dog-tree>



by **FIONA WOOD** <https://fionawood.com/about-fiona-wood-author/>

:: **Summary** Mitch and his little sister Regi are staying with their gran while their parents are stuck working overseas. Mitch is struggling to fit into his new school and becomes the target of the Grade Five bully. He's lonely and sad and thinks the one thing that would make his life better is a dog.



Then he discovers a tree in a nearby park that seems to...growl. One night the tree calls to Mitch, and a magical dog-like creature emerges from the tree. The spirit of tree and the dog, Argos, have been entwined by 'history, mystery, magic and chance', but the dog can appear when needed by a child.

Argos upends everything Mitch thought he knew about dogs. When Mitch asks if Argos is his dog, Argos corrects him: Mitch is Argos's boy. At first Mitch looks to Argos for protection, but there comes a time when Mitch must stand up for the wild, magical creature.

:: What aspect of the book became a focus for the books' development?

One focus of the book's development was the best way to integrate magical elements into a realistic setting. As a reader and as a writer, I like magic that interrupts real life better than magic in an entirely fantastical setting, but the challenge is to make it believable.

:: Character - What advice would you give to one of your characters?

One of the best pieces of writing advice is to give your protagonist a hard time. Problems create conflict, which then drives the narrative. For that reason, I won't give my characters any advice, they need to struggle and make mistakes.

::Character - Is there a character you identify with?

For me, the trick of writing characters is identifying with all of them, good or bad. If I can't do that, they don't feel real to me. So, even with Seb, the bully, or Argos, an ancient magical creature, I had to understand exactly how it felt to be them.

::Character - What character had to be in the book? Why was one character really unique?

It was Mitch. Because he was feeling worried and lonely, because he felt powerless, because he couldn't find his voice to speak up, because he climbed the oak tree and noticed it was different. His need at that exact time called Argos forth, and then the story of their friendship could begin.

:: Plot - Is there a part of the plot that is similar to something that happened to you?

Like Mitch, I longed to have a dog when I was in primary school. I was never allowed, but when I had children, I made sure that a dog was part of our family.

:: What would you like to happen next? (After the book finishes)

The next thing that happens, in the book that I'm writing right now, is that Mitch's friend, Dido, finds out what it means for an ordinary girl to also be a witch.

:: A kind of special X-factor?

This is the first book I've written that has illustrations. Judy Watson is the artist. As I was going through the editing process, my publisher would send me sketches that became the final illustrations. Each time I received one it was as though Judy had opened my head and looked in – they were exactly as I had imagined Mitch and Argos and Dido.

:: What surprised you about the book?

How clear Argos was as a character from the moment I started writing him. You often need to write your way into a character, sometimes over many drafts, but Argos felt like someone I'd known forever.

:: What questions do you wish people would ask you about the book?

I suppose humour is a big part of the book, but I don't often get asked about that. Much of the humour comes from Mitch's ideas about what it would be like to have a dog and then having Argos turn up. Argos is wild and wilful. He is not in the world to obey or please anyone. Argos is here to help Mitch, and they have different ideas about what that help might look like.

:: Setting - How did time, location or a special something about the location influence the story?

The special something was a very old oak tree in a park near my home in Melbourne. The first time I saw the tree, I thought there was a real dog crouching behind it. Writers often talk about ideas being all around us, and this is one example of a single image that was the inspiration for a novel.



:: What is the origin of Argos as a magical fantasy creature based on?

(I love how he seems such a noble, ancient creature and helps Mitch shape a response to bullying.)

Argos came directly from the image of that oak tree. *image © JUDY WATSON*

When I realised the dog shape was the tree itself, I asked myself why a creature might be bound within a tree and came up with the idea of witch's familiar being granted returning life when called on by a child in need. I decided the witch had cast a spell at the moment of her dog's death.

The creature Argos says that his spirit has been bound with this tree and the tree from which it was struck. So that gave me four or five hundred years, given the lifespan of oak trees. I needed Argos to sound as though he came from a time long ago to give him a fairy tale or mythic quality. When Mitch asks what breed he is, Argos bristles: "I am from the ancient lineage of Cerberus. I am a hunter. I am a fighter. I am a protector. I am a hellhound." Argos is all these things, and they cause as many problems as they solve. ~Fiona



Special thanks to all Australian authors and Illustrators for encouraging Reading, Writing, Thinking, Imagining, for creating real characters we can believe in, and for sharing real information that we can trust and grow.



Ghosts aren't real. Houses don't "come to life", and you're not really an orphan because grandmothers are family, right? But does that mean you can never escape?



:: **DON'T LET THEM LEAVE** ::

(Penguin) :

<https://www.penguin.com.au/books/dont-let-them-leave-9781761355462>

by **MIKE LUCAS**

<https://www.mikelucas.com.au/>



A BRIEF SUMMARY . . .

Don't Let Them Leave is a gothic novel set in Cornwall in 1930. It follows three orphans – Charlotte, Jack and Emily – who have just lost their parents in a tragic accident. They are sent to live with a grandmother

they didn't know existed who lives upon an island off the coast of North Cornwall. But when they arrive, they soon discover that their grandmother's house, and the island, are far from welcoming.

:: What aspect of the book became a FOCUS for you to develop the book? i.e. CHARACTER? SETTING? PLOT? OTHER?

:: PLOT - For *Don't Let Them Leave*, I wanted to write a classic orphan story similar to Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, but with more of a horror vibe. I don't plot my stories, but I was aiming to make this story dark and mysterious with undertones of gothic influence. The book is probably my scariest yet, and though I believe the story to be fresh and original, it also features classic horror tropes to build upon the atmosphere and suspense.

:: PLOT? : Is there a part of the plot that is similar to something that happened to you?

-Thankfully, no.

:: PLOT? - Is there a kind of special X-FACTOR? --What surprised you about the book?

-I don't plot my books, but just down and create the story as it comes to me. I'm often surprised by plot twists that seem to come out of nowhere, and this book is no different. So, when the reader gets to one of these twists, it's worth remembering that I didn't see it coming either.

:: SETTING? -- The setting of the book was important to me, but so, too, were the characters. I tried to give each of the three children different personalities and to make their reactions to the strange happenings as realistic as possible.

When the children reach the island, the setting and its history became a focus for the story, along with Cornish folklore, and the main challenge was to tie all of this together into a cohesive and satisfactory ending.

:: SETTING? How did time, location, or a special something about the location influence the story?

Don't Let Them Leave, like many horror stories, is centred around isolation. Firstly, the time period. Before mobile phones and even before many people had landlines. And you can't get much more isolated than an island. I grew up visiting Cornwall for holidays, and I tried to use these experiences to portray the county for what it is – beautiful, but sometimes wild, remote and rugged.

:: CHARACTERS? What advice would you give to one of the characters?

-To all the children – leave the island while you can! In fact, don't even go there!

:: CHARACTERS? Is there a character that you identify with?

-Not really. They are all pure invention and not influenced by anybody I know.

:: CHARACTERS? What character HAD to be in the book?

-Each of the three children bring something to the story. Leaving one of them out would have made it a totally different tale.

:: CHARACTERS? Why was one character really unique? :: Where did the ideas for these three time-period characters come from?

-I have no idea. After ten minutes of sitting down and beginning to write, they existed on the page. And slowly, word by word, their individuality and the bond they shared began to evolve.

:: CHARACTER? -What advice would you give to one of the characters?

To all the children - – Leave the island while you can! In fact, don't even go there!

:: CHARACTER? -Is there a character that you identify with?

Not really. They are all pure invention and not influenced by anybody I know.

:: CHARACTER? What character HAD to be in the book?

Each of the three children bring something to the story. Leaving one of them out would have made it a totally different tale. [Thankfully, no.](#)

:: PLOT? What would you like to happen next?

-This would give away the ending 😊. ~ **MIKE**



When you are a misfit and only 2 cm tall, does “fitting in” mean you leave all you’ve known for something totally different? Can civilisations of tiny humans and societies of insects discover the answer? (and watch for amazing artworks by Sarah)

:: FLIGHT OF THE DRAKKONBARQ
by **SARAH GIDDY**

<https://www.sarahgiddy.com>

(Riveted Press)

<https://rivetedpress.com.au/bookshop/flight-of-the-drakkonbarq>



:: ABOUT THE BOOK: Set in a world where people are the size of

insects, *Flight of the Drakkonbarq* is an illustrated novel about courage, dragonflies, and belonging. Bat Brikson, a twelve-year-old boy with a pet moth named Oddity, feels a bit like an oddity himself. He hates being a misfit in his home under the grass; that’s why he flies away. Up in the treetops, he discovers the fearsome Drakkonbarqs and falls in love with their world of exploration and adventure. He goes on daring honey quests, befriends the fierce heir of the tree, and finally starts to feel like he’s found his people. Then the doubt creeps in.

:: Tell us about the characters. What advice would you give them?

My main character, Bat, is a real dreamer, which is why I love him — he’s the sort of person who questions things that other folks don’t even notice. Of course, he hates standing out, but he doesn’t let that stop him, because why should he go with the flow? He’s curious and adventurous and scared and stubborn, and he’ll always fight against injustice. If I could give him advice, what would I tell him? *Don’t run away from home?* I’m not sure. Maybe I’d just say, *you’re not alone, I promise.*

:: How did the setting shape the plot and the characters?

The setting 100% makes this story. It’s just a few trees, rocks, a little creek, some grass and bushes — and yet it feels magical because of the change in scale. Suddenly the world is an entirely foreign kingdom, with civilisations built around different insects and their ways of life (from war beetles to messenger ants). Of course, the tree-dwellers and dragonfly-riders value daring above all else, while those who live on the ground must cling to safety. This concept shaped the story, as I started to think to myself, what if a ground-dweller wanted to explore, or a tree-dweller was scared of flying? How would they fit into society? How would they feel?

:: Can you describe your writing and illustrating process?

For me, the characters and setting came first, and I drew a lot of pictures of Bat Brikson and his friends until I understood them all perfectly. The plot came later and only worked itself out as I was writing it. Long walks in nature helped the ideas to untangle themselves.

:: Is any part of this story based on your own experiences?

Weirdly, yes. I’ve never lived inside a snail shell house or caught and ridden a wild dragonfly. But I do know what it’s like to feel like you’re different from everyone else, and in that way, I identify with all of my main characters.

:: What do you wish people would ask you about?

Hmm, maybe, *What happens next? Does Bat ever return to the tree?* The book ends in the middle of a battle, with some problems still unsolved (like a boy still stuck in an enemy tree, for example!) I'd like to explore what happens next for him, as well as some of my other characters. Does Elfrida ever become ruler of the tree? Does Silvana eventually learn to fly? There are so many stories still waiting. ~ Sarah



Future, libraries, climate change, fairytales and family - they're all happening. . .

:: ONCE UPON TOMORROW ::

(Lothian Children's Books/ Hachette Australia)

<https://www.hachette.com.au/karen-comer/once-upon-tomorrow>

by Karen Comer <https://karencomer.com.au/>



Once Upon Tomorrow is a feminist fable about three girls with interwoven fates. Miri is a hopeful Jungian student who discovers she's pregnant in her final year of school, in 2025. One hundred years in the future, in 2125, Aleita shelters in the library to avoid jolts from her neural implant. In between them is Sylvie, a fairytale character, who must weave a tapestry to save her life and the kingdom's.

The futuristic section was the hardest for me to write – I deleted two thirds of Aleita's story and rewrote it.

In fairytales, all characters are a version of us – the same is true for a writer's characters. So I am a small part of pregnant Miri, figuring out if she can pursue her big dreams, a small part of Aleita, trying to find spaciousness in a digital world and a small part of Sylvie, who can only weave the truth in her creations.

My idea came to me while sorting washing in the laundry! I was listening to an interview with Margaret Atwood where she mentioned a book she had written for the Future Library of Norway. This is a future library of one hundred books, where over one hundred years, one hundred authors would submit a manuscript, beginning in 2014. A forest was planted around the library, and in 2114, the trees will be cut down to make paper to print the one hundred unread books. I knew then and there I wanted to write a book set over one hundred years about a forest library.

Verse novels are narratives told through poems. The poems don't necessarily rhyme but do use lots of poetic techniques such as rhythm, alliteration, similes, metaphors, symbolism, imagery. They are lyrical and can be told in fragments – the perfect way to tell my story of wood, wool and words.

All my themes – **libraries, forests, AI, Jung, fairytales, motherhood and crafts** – are my favourites! I did enjoy writing about libraries, though – thinking about their importance now and in the future.

I asked myself what type of stories have lasted for hundreds of years that would still be relevant in a library of the future – the answer was fairytales because they have endured for centuries and are

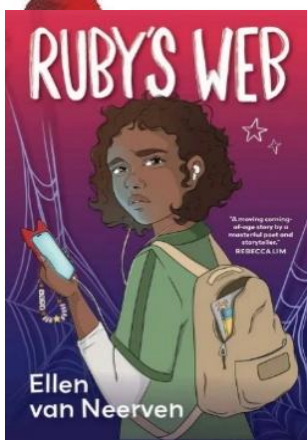
the truest of stories. We see ourselves in the third brother, the seventh princess, the son with no fortune, the daughter cast out.

I knew I would need to address AI in the futuristic section. And would have to face my own fears about how AI would dictate our lives and what we would lose as a consequence.

I hope readers will reflect on the importance of preserving stories, cultivating creativity and valuing discernment and connections over knowledge. ~Karen



Ruby juggles friendships and honesty, family and generations, racism and online bullying, independence and individuality, and a surprising acceptance that her own talent as a writer may well be part of her identity. How do you decide who you really are?



:: RUBY'S WEB::

(Magabala Books)

<https://www.magabala.com/products/rubys-web>

by **Ellen van Neerven**

<https://ellenvanneervencurrie.wordpress.com/>



:: Book Summary

My novel *Ruby's Web* features bookworm Ruby who is seeking out creative ways to solve the bullying problem at her school.

:: Is there a character that you identify with?

I identify with Ruby because, like me, she is close with her Nan, a grounding gentle person in her life that teaches her about Country. When Ruby walks along the river, she feels a deep connection of the thousands of years her ancestors cared for the land and waterways. Spiders and dingoes also play a role in the story, but I can't say any more as I don't want to spoil the story!

:: How did time, location, or a special something about the location influence the story?

The book is set in 2023. I made the decision to set it then because of the impact that time period had on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. In the months leading up to the Voice to Parliament referendum, politically, the country was engaged in an intense debate which saw an increase in racism and bullying on social media towards First Nations people, and this is still at its peak.

I show what a young Aboriginal person is dealing with on a micro (at school, amongst family and friends) and macro (society) level. As authors, often we wait years to write about history in fiction. But I thought I needed to write about this now because it is urgent.

:: After the book finishes, what would you like to happen next?

As well as being a big reader, Ruby also writes. She finds the confidence to share her writing with others. I would love for Ruby to continue this journey and end up being a published author someday! It wouldn't surprise me if she finishes her first book while she's still in high school! ~ *Ellen*

:: :: :: SHARING STORIES – Whether your favourite books are Fact, Fiction, NOTABLES, some of “the NEWS” = NEW Books, or ORIGINALS, you can bet they are even better when shared with a group of readers and writers.

There are LOTS of GROUP activities to make YOUR BEST stories even better!



THE KIDS' CANCER PROJECT
WRITE A BOOK IN A DAY

WRITE A BOOK IN A DAY 2026 is a fun, creative team challenge for aspiring writers and illustrators to produce a book in 12 hours or less!

The competition encourages writers to work together to create their book, fostering communication and literacy skills in the process. Each team member takes on roles to complete their book, from drafting the story to editing and illustrating.

The competition also sees writers practice altruism by fundraising for childhood cancer research. The Kids' Cancer Project has funded over 387 projects that have improved outcomes for kids with cancer through advances in medical research.

“We have refined our skills to produce something meaningful to ourselves, but also to those who read it. We hope to achieve happiness and satisfaction from our final story, and knowing we have impacted lives with our donations towards a great cause! -

-Team Eunoia: The Beautiful Thinkers, best illustrated book winners from 2023.

All books submitted will be assessed by our talented team of judges, and there are prizes on offer throughout the competition. Winners of the ‘Best Overall Book’ and ‘Best Illustrations’ prizes will be chosen from each state as well as nationally at the end of the competition.

WABIAD - Key dates:

1 May – Registrations open

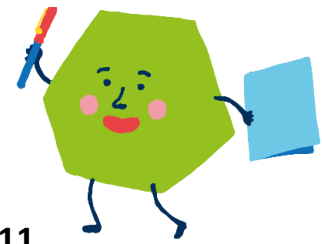
1 June – 30 September: Choose any day to write your book

30 September: Last day to fundraise

Register, Write a Book <https://writeabookinaday.com/>

If you have any questions, please call Kimberley on 02 8394 7711

Or email info@writeabookinaday.com



LET'S GO :: READING IS AN ADVENTURE

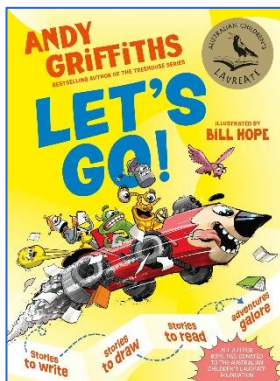


with **ANDY GRIFFITHS**,
your Australian Children's Laureate for 2026 and 2027

AND with **BILL HOPE**, *illustrator*.

Andy ... loves reading because "books can take you anywhere and anything can happen. I also love writing because, just like reading, it's an adventure!"

<https://www.childrenslaureate.org.au/lets-go-lets-create/>



Let's read. Let's write. Let's draw – LET'S GO!

Andy's new book is full of stories to write, stories to draw, adventures to have, and fun galore. *Create your own adventures with words, pictures and ideas. So, what are you waiting for?*

Get the book!

LET'S GO: Stories to write, stories to draw, adventures to have, and fun galore (Pan Macmillan) by [Andy Griffiths](#) with [Bill Hope](#), *illustrator*.

And join Andy and Bill online with more of their **LET'S GO! ACTIVITIES**.

Download READING and DRAWING sample activity sheets from the **ACLF** site

<https://www.childrenslaureate.org.au/lets-go-lets-create/>

:: KOALA AWARDS

<https://www.koalansw.org.au/>

:: READ... and VOTE for your favourites ...

See the KOALA SHORTLIST

Children are invited to nominate their favourite Australian books, first published in the last 10 years and not a previous KOALA winner. A shortlist of 40 titles is drawn up from the nominations with 10 picture books, 10 titles for younger readers, 10 titles for older readers, and 10 fiction titles for readers in Years 7 – 9.



2026 Poster created by The KOALA team

PICTURE STORY BOOKS - KOALA Shortlist 2026

Spiro by Anna McGregor

Happy Capybara by James Foley

Shmoof by Heidi McKinnon

OMG – Oh My Goat! by Jol & Kate Temple & Rebel Challenger (Illus.)

Bob Dob by Sean E Avery

Bigfoot Yeti: A Love Story by James Foley

Emmie Builds Something New by Marjorie Crosby-Fairall

Drop Bear by Philip Bunting

Mum For Sale by Zanni Louise and Philip Bunting

Valerie: Australia's Bravest Sausage Dog by Lucinda Gifford

YOUNGER READERS - KOALA Shortlist 2026

Dragon Girls by Maddy Mara

Showers and Break the Curse by Nat Amooore and James Hart

Billie B Brown: Billy's Super Stories by Sally Rippin

Worst Week ever – Friday by Eva Amores & Matt Cosgrove

Invisible Ninja (Ninja Kid #17) by Anh Do

Prehistoric peril (You Choose Mega) by George Ivanoff

Hidden Layers (Cat on the un #3) by Aaron Blabey

You & Me and the Peanut butter Beast by Andy Griffiths

Hello Twigs: Look Who's Grumpy by Andrew Mc Donald

Popstar Power (Ella Diaries Super Special #4) by Meredith Costain & Danielle McDonald

OLDER READERS - KOALA Shortlist 2026

Oceanforged by Amelia Mellor

The Goodbye Year by Emily Gale

Wandi by Favel Parrett

The Girl and the Ghost by Jacqueline Harvey

Perfect Score by Laura Sieveking

Spy Academy: The Peak by Jack Heath

Hatman by Adam Wallace and Drew Lane

Painted Dogs & Doom Cakes (Exploding endings # 1) by Tim Harris

Mim and the Baffling Bully (The Travelling bookshop # 1) by Katrina Nannestad

The thing about Oliver by Deborah Kelly

YEARS 7-9 READERS - KOALA Shortlist 2026

The Midwatch by Judith Rossell

Waiting for the Storks by Katrina Nannestad

Run by Sarah Armstrong

The 113th Assistant Librarian by Stuart Wilson

Drift by Pip Harry

Villain! By Adrian Beck

Romeo v Juliet by R.A. Spratt

Silver Linings by Katrina Nannestad

Andromache in Twin Worlds by Gabriel Bergmoser

Respawn (Villain # 2) by Adrian Beck

In 2026, **KOALA** celebrates 40 years of promoting quality Children's voice & Literature in Australia!

See also the **KOALA ART** by some of your favourite illustrators. <https://www.koalansw.org.au/new-page>



NATIONAL SIMULTANEOUS STORYTIME is an annual event that aims to promote the value of reading and literacy in libraries, classrooms, and communities around the country.



The NSS book for 2026 is
Luna Roo-the Kangaroo Baller
by Adam Jackson and Adrian Lloyd,
Illustrated by Jake A. Minton
(Little Book Press <https://littlebookpress.com.au/>)

Rookie captain Luna Roo leaves nothing on the pitch as she leads FC Outback in a thrilling face-off against Bush United. Faced with a spider goalkeeper, snakes in attack and bubbling nerves, Luna must trust her skills and her teammates to soar to victory.

Written by football veterans Adam Jackson and Adrian Lloyd, Luna Roo captures all the intense excitement of the game, with a heartwarming message that courage and determination are a winning combination.

Adam Jackson has worked in football for nearly 20 years, starting his career at Manchester United and then moving to Australia to work in sports, notably related to sales and marketing.



Adrian Lloyd has played football for over 40 years and is a FA qualified coach, having coached at Fulham FC in London and both adult and children's teams in Australia. Adrian has also spent the last 20 years working in publishing, marketing and digital advertising for major global publishers and brands.



Jake Minton

[@jakemintonillustration](https://www.instagram.com/jakemintonillustration)

Jake lives on Bundjalung Country near Byron Bay. Jake was a finalist for the Little Hare Illustration Prize in 2022. His first picture book, *There's No Such Book*, went on to be shortlisted for the CBCA Award for Best New Illustrator. Jake's second picture book, *Two Turtles*, has been named an Honour Book in the 2025 CBCA Awards. *Inked* is on the 2026 CBCA Shortlist. Jake is also the illustrator of the popular illustrated junior-fiction series *Zombie Diaries*.

MORE RESOURCES:







ALIA (Event page): <https://www.alia.org.au/nss>

Reading Australia: <https://readingaustralia.com.au/lesson/luna-roo/>

Little Book Press: <https://littlebookpress.com.au/pages/resources#:~:text=Luna%20Roo%20the%20Kangaroo%20Baller>

Source: adapted from <https://www.alia.org.au/nss>

DAYS and DATES TO PUT IN YOUR CALENDAR

| | | |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| 26 MAY | <p>NATIONAL SORRY DAY https://healingfoundation.org.au/stolen-generations/national-sorry-day/ National Sorry Day acknowledges and raises awareness of the history and continued effect of the forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from their families, communities and culture.</p> |  |
| 27 MAY – 3 JUNE | <p>NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK https://www.reconciliation.org.au/our-work/national-reconciliation-week/ National Reconciliation Week celebrates and builds on the respectful relationships shared by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians.</p> |  |
| 3 JUNE | <p>MABO DAY https://www.indigenous.gov.au/stories/what-mabo-day The Australian High Court delivered the Mabo decision on 3 June 1992, providing legal recognition that Indigenous people have a special relationship with the land. This decision paved the way for land rights known as native title. Mabo Day celebrates the life of activist Eddie Koiki Mabo.</p> |  |
| 14-20 JUNE | <p>REFUGEE WEEK https://www.refugeeweek.org.au/ Refugee Week is celebrated around the country. It is an opportunity to acknowledge the success of refugees and humanitarian entrants in Australian society.</p> |  |
| 20 JUNE | <p>WORLD REFUGEE DAY. https://www.unhcr.org/au/get-involved/take-action/world-refugee-day This day honours refugees and celebrates the strength and courage of people forced to flee their home country to escape conflict or persecution.</p> |  |
| 5-12 JULY | <p>NAIDOC WEEK https://www.naidoc.org.au/ National Aboriginal and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week is held annually in early July. It is a time to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and achievements. It is an opportunity to recognise Indigenous Australians' contributions to our country and society. 2025 was the 50th anniversary of NAIDOC Week and that year's theme was 'The Next Generation: Strength, Vision & Legacy'. The theme for 2026 is 50 YEARS OF DEADLY</p> |  |

** All images are from CANVA Elements.



This issue of KC was compiled by jackie.hawkes7@gmail.com

With the **HELP** and **PATIENCE** of **LOTS** of people who **LOVE** to **READ, WRITE, THINK, IMAGINE** and **CREATE!**

We would **LOVE** to hear **YOUR IDEAS** to include in **KIDS' CORNER!**

Happy reading always - Morrie and Team! <https://www.cbcan.org.au/kids-corner>