

# Scribblers Festival



*Teacher Resources*

**IDEAS FOR YOUR CLASSROOM**

**YEARS 3-6**

**THURSDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 2022**

YEARS  
3 – 6

15  
SEPT

# THURSDAY



THE REGAL THEATRE

## WHAT ARE THE ODDS?

10.15AM – 11.00AM

What would you do if you found \$105 lying on the street? What would you do if your favourite characters started escaping their worlds and invading yours? These are the dilemma's facing Milo and Kip in the two new series *Bored* and *The Odds* from funny man **Matt Stanton**. The author-illustrator reveals his secrets to creating laugh-out loud books and how playing with different formats can open up new ways of storytelling.

## CURRICULUM LINKS:

**English:** Creating literary texts that experiment with ideas and vocabulary choices, recognise relationships between words, sounds, imagery and language patterns in narrative texts, using language devices e.g. humour & onomatopoeia, explain visual language choices, e.g. perspective, shots & angles, analyse how point of view is generated in visual texts.

**Visual Arts:** understanding of visual art conventions, experimentation with different approaches used to communicate ideas in art, viewpoints in artwork.

**General Capabilities:** creative thinking, imagining possibilities and connecting ideas.

**Themes:** Humour, imagination, storytelling, teamwork, perseverance, resilience, identity.

## TRADE SECRETS

11.10AM – 11.55AM

In award-winning writer **Katrina Nannestad's** earliest story, her character was hanging off the edge of a cliff on page one and she was stumped as to how to save her. Talk about a cliff hanger! Sure, that story was written when she was ten, but even accomplished writers find themselves in similar situations. Katrina shares some of her favourite tricks to get characters out of difficult spots plus gives us a sneak peak of her new novel *Rabbit, Soldier, Angel, Thief*.

## CURRICULUM LINKS:

**English:** historical fiction, adventure stories, how authors make stories exciting, texts and context, features of literary texts, setting, plot, character, show don't tell.

**History:** World War II, reflecting on narrative texts that use researched facts, events and experiences.

**Themes:** belonging, identity, friendship, family bravery, resilience.

# Scribblers Festival

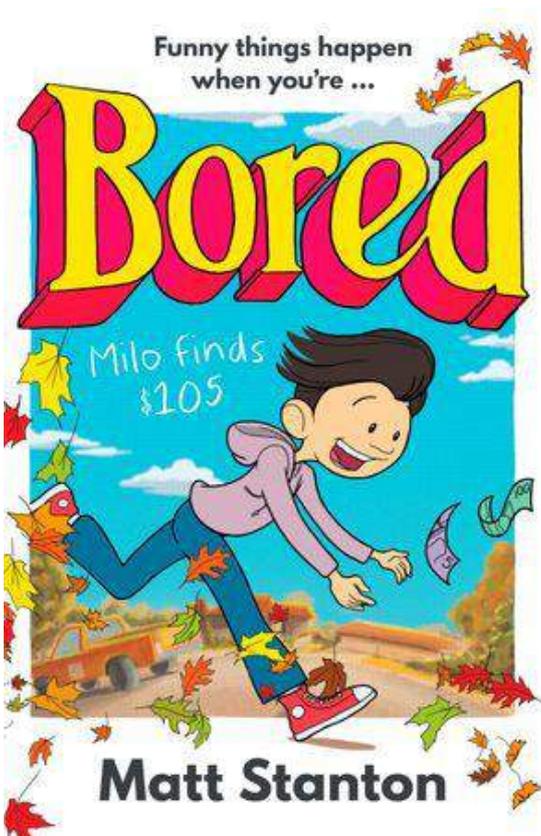
13 – 18 SEPTEMBER 2022



*Credit: Jennifer Blau*

## Matt Stanton

**Matt Stanton** has sold more than one million books and his middle-grade series *Funny Kid*, has legions of fans across the globe. Matt produces a daily kids YouTube show and has also written popular picture books including *There Is a Monster Under My Bed Who Farts and Pea + Nut!* He lives in Sydney, with his wife, bestselling author Beck Stanton, and their children.



## Bored

Harper Collins Publishers Australia

Sometimes feeling bored is just the beginning ...

Hi, I'm Milo, and right now I'm chasing \$105 as it flies down my street. The wind is blowing it towards Evie Watson's house, which is very bad news. It's also making for some pretty awkward running.

My neighbours, Rocco, Luisa and Zak, must be laughing their heads off. And who knows what's happening with the new kid next door. His name is Frog and he's invented his own type of martial art, which he's not very good at even though he made it up.

Finding this much money should have been a good thing, but it's turning into a disaster!

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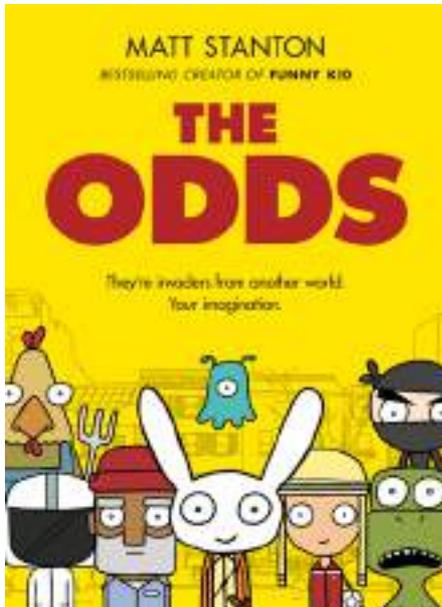
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FORM: Building a State of Creativity

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# Classroom Resources



## The Odds

Matt Stanton

### BOOK SUMMARY

Kip is a quiet kid in a loud city. She's easy to miss and that's the way she likes it.

Then, one day, Kip's quiet life is suddenly interrupted. Ten of her favourite characters have stepped out of their worlds and into hers.

But what happens when a dragon-hunting rabbit leaves his comic strip? When an old man leaves his picture book? When a ninja leaves her TV show, a race-car driver leaves their video game, and a dinosaur turns up from Kip's nightmares?

From million-copy bestseller Matt Stanton comes the start of a hilarious and heart-filled graphic novel series about identity, imagination and discovering who you are.

Meet the Odds ... because fitting in is overrated.

### ISBN:

9780733340635

### NOTES BY:

Mandy Newman

### PUBLICATION DATE:

November 2020

### KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

- ACELA1518
- ACELT1524
- ACELT1613
- ACELT1617
- ACELT1618
- ACELT1711

### THEMES

- Imagination
- Discovering who you are
- Belonging
- Identity
- Resilience
- Bullying
- Multimodal texts
- Humour

**Recommended Ages:** 7+

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# Classroom Resources

## Before Reading

### Resilience, the imagination, friends and the power of storytelling

A key theme of this graphic novel is the power of storytelling and friends. Matt Stanton shows how falling into the world of the imagination can sustain us, and how following the journey of characters in a story can also inspire and make us feel better.

Invite students to bring their favourite book to class.

- Ask them to tell the class why they like it and who is their favourite character.
- Share the books and ask other students to review or respond to the other books.
- Make a list of the class's favourite characters and work out if there are common characteristics and why.
- Ask the students if they like the protagonist or antagonist more and why.
- You could also invite students to look at the narrative shape of the text as well. Does the protagonist encounter a problem?

Stories are not just confined to books and novels. Narrative elements and memorable characters appear in: our dreams and nightmares, our imagination, our daydreams, audiobooks, apps, graphic novels, picture books, comics, slide presentations, web series, web pages, YouTube videos, TikToks, animations and video games.

Ask students to discuss:

- What is the character you have loved the most in a TV show, movie, book or game you have played?
  - Why do you love this character?
- Can you remember the scariest figure you have ever dreamt about?
  - Draw a picture of the character and explain why it was so scary.
  - Did the character feel real? Why?
- What is the best dream you have ever had?
  - Who appeared in the dream?
  - Draw the character and write a conversation between you and the character.

As a class, discuss the following quote by the children's writer CS Lewis: 'We read to know we are not alone.'

## During Reading

### Examine the relationship between words, sounds, imagery and language patterns in narratives

A graphic novel is a multimodal text. In multimodal texts, composers add more meaning to a text because they utilise more than one mode of communication. Multimodal texts are made up of two or more of the following modes, and each mode can add to telling the story. The modes are:

- Written and spoken language
- Visual language – images, page layouts and formats, filters, the use of colour, viewpoint, framing, angles
- Sound – volume, natural/unnatural sounds, noise, silence, rhythm of music, sound effects
- Facial expressions and body language – body movement, eye movement, gaze
- Spatial – position of layout

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# Classroom Resources

Think about each character in *The Odds* – how does Stanton use the different modes of communication to create his characters? How does he combine words, sounds, images, facial expressions, clothes, eyes and language patterns to make each character unique?

<b>Character</b>	<b>Facial expressions</b> Eyebrows, eyes, shape and position of mouth	<b>Appearance</b> Face and body shape, hairstyle, clothing, facial covering, jewellery/ accessories, make-up, props	<b>Eyes and gaze</b> Gestures Movement of head, arms, hands, legs, feet Stance	<b>What does this character add to the story?</b>
Kip				
Dad				
Diana				
Lance				
Theo				
Booster				
Ninja-Nina				
Blub				
The G.O.A.T.				
Mr Pink				
Racer				
Unicorn				

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# Classroom Resources

Create and draw two contrasting characters using sound, gestures and facial expressions to show how they are different. Make a six-frame cartoon with the two characters arguing about ice cream.

Write two PEEL paragraphs on the character of Kip and one of the Odds. Use these sentence stems to start you off.

## Paragraph One

Kip is characterised as a person who ...

Matt Stanton uses facial expressions/appearance/gestures/hairstyle to convey ...

Matt Stanton also uses facial expressions/appearance/gestures/hairstyle to show how ...

## Paragraph Two

To contrast Kip, the character of \_\_\_\_\_ is characterised as ...

Matt Stanton uses facial expressions/appearance/gestures/hairstyle to convey ...

He also uses facial expressions/appearance/gestures/hairstyle to show how the character is ...

## After Reading

As a class, analyse the multimodal elements of the text:

1. What are the modes being used? Written, visual, spatial, tactile, gestural, audio or oral?
2. What is the purpose of the text? Who is the audience?
3. What elements of each mode are emphasised and why?
4. The structure – is there a narrative element? Is a problem presented and a solution offered?
5. What visual elements are most significant? Is there repetition of shapes? Is there a sharp contrast between two elements? What is the proximity of objects or figures?
6. How is humour used? Why is it used?
7. How are gestures used? Why?

## Focus on visual literacy

Composers control what a viewer can see or not see to influence how the viewer feels. Perspective created by shots and angles makes audiences feel a particular way. A close up, for example, lets the viewer see the intimacy of a character's emotions. A single tear running down a cheek or terrified eyes fills a shot or frame, which communicates sadness to the audience. Think about how Stanton creates perspective through his choice of shots, angles and colour to communicate a range of emotions. These choices increase tension, a sense of anticipation and unpredictability. Audiences love to be surprised.

Each one of these shots and angles is used to great effect in *The Odds*:

- Long Shot:  
A shot from some distance. A long shot establishes the landscape and atmosphere of a story. A barely visible character in the background may be seen. A full body may be shown. It may show the loneliness or helplessness of the character. Or it may just set the scene. Find an example of this shot type.
  - Look at all the pictures at the beginning of each chapter – are they long shots?
  - What does Stanton convey with each picture?
  - What can you see in the long shot?
  - What emotions do you feel? Why?

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# Classroom Resources

- **Medium Shot:**  
The most common shot. It shows a character or a figure from above the head to just below the waist. Find two examples of medium shots.
  - What can you see in the medium shot?
  - What emotions do you feel? Why?
- **Close Up:**  
A shot taken of a character's or figure's head from just above the head to the top of the upper ribcage. There is little or no background. The image takes up at least 80 per cent of the frame. Find an example of a close up.
  - What can you see in the close up?
  - What emotions do you feel? Why?
- **Extreme Close Up:**  
A very close shot focusing on a very specific object or part of a body such as an eye or a hand. Find an example of an extreme close up.
  - What can you see in the shot?
  - What is the effect of focusing on this specific thing?
  - Why has this thing been highlighted to the reader?
- **Eye Level:**  
A picture at the character's eye level. It makes the viewer feel as if they can see what the character can see. Can you find an example of this shot type?
- **High Angle:**  
This angle shows things from a higher point than eye level and may even cause the reader to look down on the subject of the shot. The subject looks smaller and can appear powerless or trapped. Find an example of a high angle shot.
  - What emotions do you feel? Why?
- **Low Angle:**  
When this angle is used, the picture is drawn from below eye level. It may cause the subject to appear strong, powerful, or threatening. Is there an example of a low angle shot in *The Odds*?
  - What is the effect of this on the reader?

Choose one character from *The Odds*, and look at the different shots and angles that have been used by Stanton when they are depicted. Finish the following analytical paragraph.

With the representation of \_\_\_\_\_, the composer uses \_\_\_\_\_ camera shots and angles, plus other multimodal elements such as colour, sound, facial expressions and gestures to make the character \_\_\_\_\_ . For example, Matt Stanton uses a (circle one) close up/long shot/low angle shot of \_\_\_\_\_ to convey \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ which makes the audience feel \_\_\_\_\_ .

Create three pictures to represent yourself.

- What angles and shots would you use to convey who you are?



# Classroom Resources

## Focus on the oral and sound elements

Composers also add to meaning by using sound devices, which elevate and accentuate the sounds of words. Onomatopoeia makes the reader feel the sound. For example, the word 'crash' sounds as it is written. There is a lot of onomatopoeia in *The Odds!*

- Find five examples of onomatopoeia in *The Odds*.
- Why has Stanton used onomatopoeia? How does it add to the meaning of the text?
- Go back to the three pictures you drew to represent yourself. Add one example of onomatopoeia.

## Think/Pair/Share activity

Invite students to pair with another student. Using their communication, writing and representation skills, students can interview their partner, write a 150-word article about them, and then create a 45-second multimodal presentation to introduce their partner to the class.

- Make careful choices to increase the power of your images and words.
- Use sound devices, angles, shots, colour, contrast, cropping, text, onomatopoeia, facial expressions and gestures in the presentation.

## About the Author

Matt Stanton is a bestselling children's author and illustrator who has sold more than one million books worldwide. His middle-grade series *Funny Kid* debuted as the #1 Australian kids' book and has legions of fans across the globe. He has published such bestselling picture books as *There Is a Monster Under My Bed Who Farts*, *This Is a Ball and Pea + Nut!*, and produces a daily YouTube show for kids. He lives and works in Sydney, Australia, with his wife, bestselling author Beck Stanton, and their children.

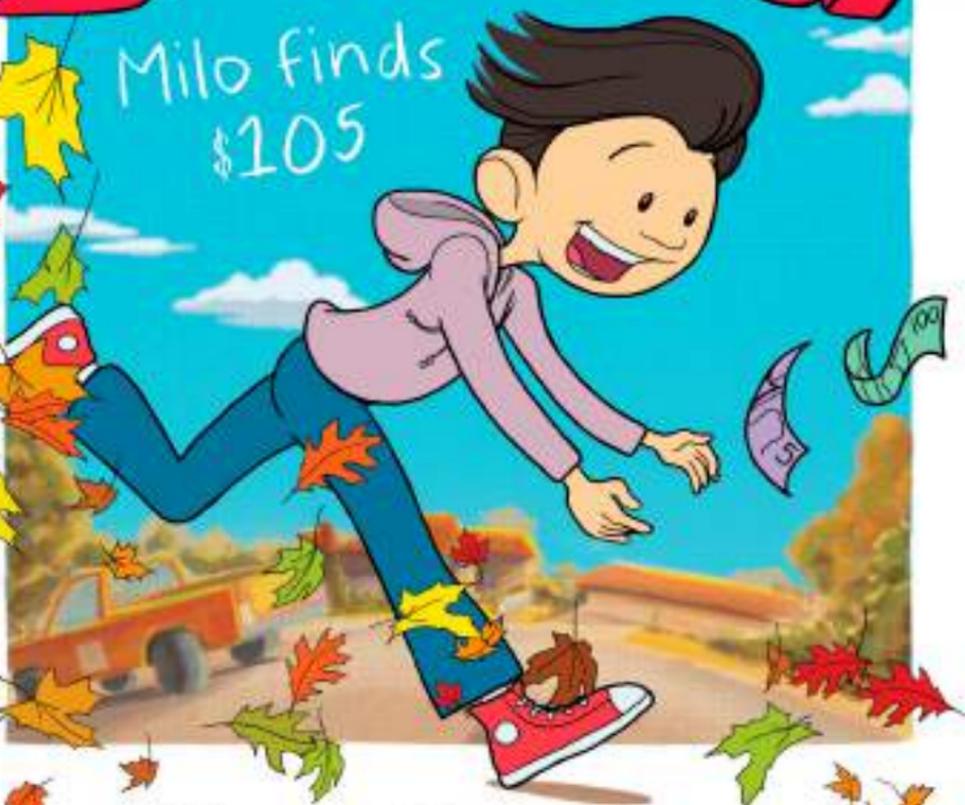
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Funny things happen  
when you're ...

# Bored

Milo finds  
\$105



**Matt Stanton**

**Bored**  
**Milo**  
**Finds**  
**\$105**

**Matt Stanton**





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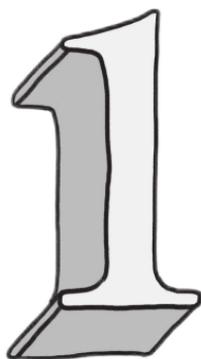
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My name is Milo Kim and I am *very* bored.

I'm so bored that I'm following an ant. I think it's bored too, hey. It doesn't seem to know where it's going.

The ant and I are walking very slowly along the street outside my house. I live at number one, Turtle Place.

Mum and Liz say our street is called that because it's slow and free of drama. I dunno. Seems pretty obvious to me. Our street is shaped

like a turtle so what else are you gonna call it?

I think the ant looks lonely. Why don't you have any ant friends? Where's your mum? Or your big bro? Did he join the army like mine?

I wonder if the ant knows whether there's an actual war going on. I don't. Whenever I ask Mum, she tells me I should be doing clarinet practice. Whenever I ask Liz, she tells me to talk to Mum, which just brings us right back to the clarinet.

So I've stopped asking. I hate my clarinet.



The ant finally gets to my BMX bike ramp. I don't think he's very impressed.

Fair enough. It's just a piece of wood with a photo of Extreme Steve on it. I stuck that there for inspiration. Extreme Steve's doing a mad jump. One of those ones where you turn your front wheel on the side while you're flying.

I reckon Evie Watson would think Extreme Steve was very awesome. I'd better make sure they never meet.

I would have leant my ramp up against the gutter so I could get air, but we don't have gutters in Turtle Place. Just a bit of a grass and then a bit of dirt and then the road. So my ramp is really just a wonky slope with two bricks under one end.

I'd better show the ant how it's done.

I hop on my bike and pedal as fast as I can, with my arms bent and my bum in the air. My front wheel hits the ramp. I see the photo of Extreme Steve. I feel the inspiration. I stick out my tongue just like him.

CLA-CLUNK!

That's the sound of the piece of wood thudding against the bricks as I ride over it. I don't get much air. Not enough to turn my wheel or be very awesome.

The ant thinks my jump sucks. This ant is a

very critical ant.

‘How about some encouragement, eh?’

I circle around to go again.

But I stop.

There’s money on the road.



A one-hundred-dollar note is sitting in the middle of the street. I've never even seen one before. I didn't even know what colour they were.

There's a five-dollar note too.

One hundred and five dollars in the middle of Turtle Place. It's a miracle!

Someone must have dropped it. I look around.

My street is a cuddly sack. That's what my big brother, Henry, always calls it. Or what he

used to call it before he went away.

I don't know why he started calling it that, but it annoyed Mum, so he kept doing it. Mum would correct him every single time. She would say each syllable like it was a stick she was poking him with. Cul-de-sac. But cuddly sack *is* better.

There are only six houses in Turtle Place and they all face each other. There are new people next door to us, but I haven't seen them yet. Then it's Evie Watson's place. And next to her is the empty block. Then Rocco's, with Zak and Luisa's next door to him. Mr and Mrs Katz live opposite us. Henry used to call them the Old Cats. Mum didn't like that either.

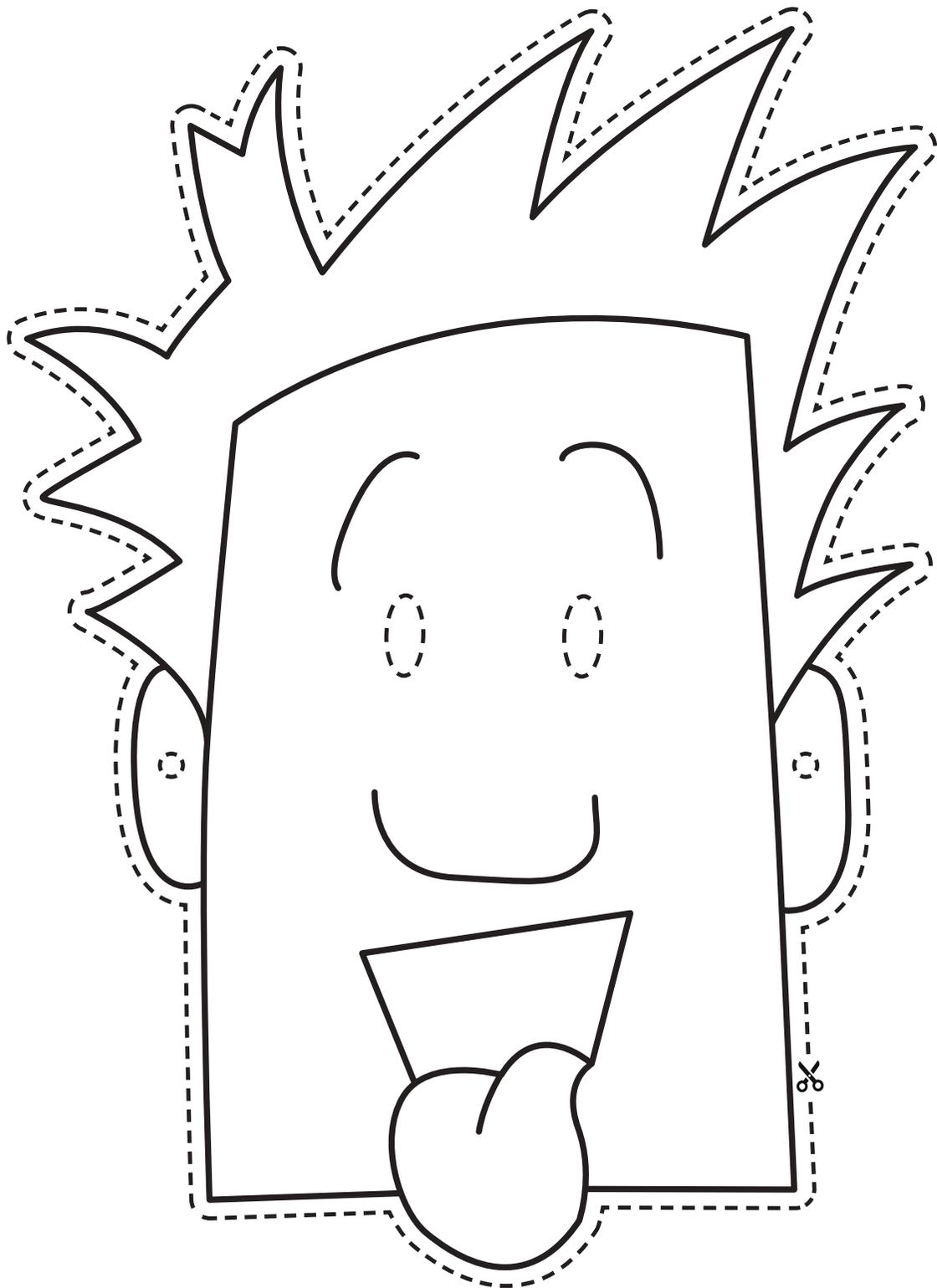
No one is outside this morning. Just me and this ant.

'You missing any dollars, ant?'

Before the ant can answer, my front door

opens.

Out walks my stepmum.



Become Max the  
**funny kid**

**01.**

Colour in your  
mask (make sure  
I look cool!)

**02.**

Carefully use  
scissors to cut  
along dotted line

**03.**

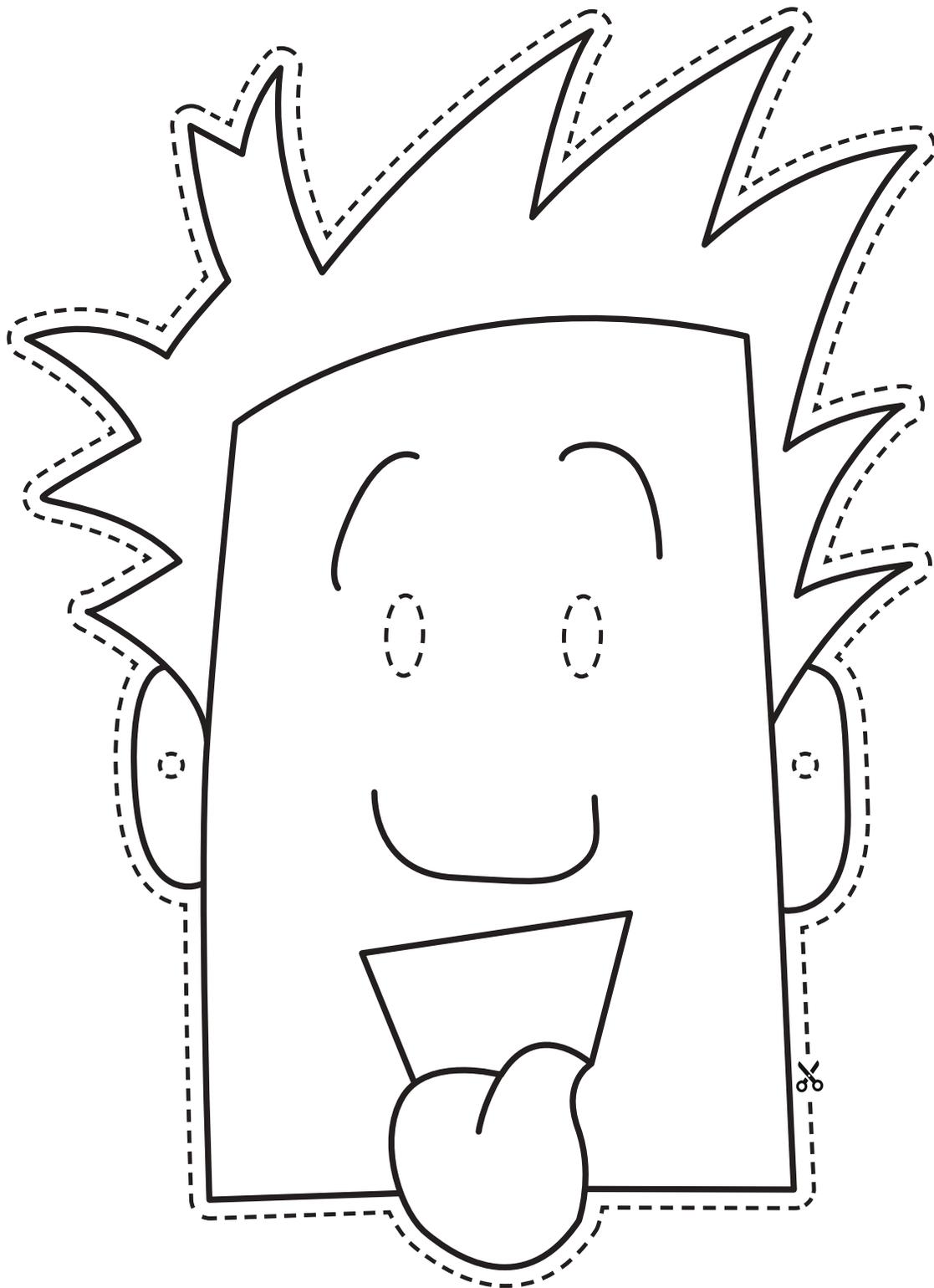
Attach string to  
the two holes

**04.**

Become the one  
and only Funny  
Kid (that's me!)

**05.**

Play awesome pranks!



# Become Max the **funny kid**

**01.**

Colour in your  
mask (make sure  
I look cool!)

**02.**

Carefully use  
scissors to cut  
along dotted line

**03.**

Attach string to  
the two holes

**04.**

Become the one  
and only Funny  
Kid (that's me!)

**05.**

Play awesome pranks!

# Scribblers Festival

13 – 18 SEPTEMBER 2022



Credit: Rebecca Rocks

## Katrina Nannestad

Katrina Nannestad is an award-winning Australian author. Her books include the CBCA-shortlisted *We Are Wolves*, *The Girl Who Brought Mischief*, the Travelling Bookshop series, the Girl, the Dog and the Writer series, the Olive of Groves series, the Red Dirt Diaries series, the Lottie Perkins series, and her latest historical novel *Rabbit, Soldier, Angel, Thief*.

Katrina grew up in country New South Wales, in a neighbourhood stuffed full of happy children. Her adult years have been spent raising boys, teaching, daydreaming and pursuing her love of stories. Katrina celebrates family, friendship and belonging in her writing. She also loves creating stories that bring joy or hope to other people's lives. Katrina now lives on a hillside in central Victoria with her husband, a silly whippet called Olive and a mob of kangaroos.

## Rabbit, Soldier, Angel, Thief

Harper Collins



Award-winning writer Katrina Nannestad transports us to Russia and the Great Patriotic War and into the life of Sasha, a soldier at only six years old ...

Wood splinters and Mama screams and the nearest soldier seizes her roughly by the arms. My sister pokes her bruised face out from beneath the table and shouts, 'Run, Sasha! Run!'

So I run. I run like a rabbit.

It's spring, 1942. The sky is blue, the air is warm and sweet with the scent of flowers. And then everything is gone. The flowers, the proud geese, the pretty wooden houses, the friendly neighbours. Only Sasha remains.

But one small boy, alone in war-torn Russia, cannot survive.

One small boy without his home cannot survive.

What that small boy needs is an army.

From the award-winning author of *We Are Wolves* comes the story of a young boy who becomes a soldier at six, fighting in the only way he can - with love. But is love ever enough when the world is at war?

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# Classroom Resources



**ISBN:**

9780733341465

**NOTES BY:**

Mandy Newman and Jemma Myers

**PUBLICATION DATE:**

November 2021

## Rabbit, Soldier, Angel, Thief

Katrina Nannestad

### BOOK SUMMARY

Award-winning writer Katrina Nannestad transports us to Russia and the Great Patriotic War and into the life of Sasha, a soldier at only six years old ...

*Wood splinters and Mama screams and the nearest soldier seizes her roughly by the arms. My sister pokes her bruised face out from beneath the table and shouts, 'Run, Sasha! Run!'*

*So I run. I run like a rabbit.*

It's spring, 1942. The sky is blue, the air is warm and sweet with the scent of flowers.

And then everything is gone.

The flowers, the proud geese, the pretty wooden houses, the friendly neighbours. Only Sasha remains.

But one small boy, alone in war-torn Russia, cannot survive.

One small boy without a family cannot survive.

One small boy without his home cannot survive.

What that small boy needs is an army.

From the award-winning author of *We Are Wolves* comes the story of a young boy who becomes a soldier at six, fighting in the only way he can – with love. But is love ever enough when the world is at war?

### KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

- ACELA1483
- ACELT1764
- ACELT1798

### THEMES

- Belonging
- Identity
- Resilience

**Recommended Reading Ages:** 10+

**Resources Created For:** Upper Primary

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# Classroom Resources

## Before Reading

### Engaging the Reader

The protagonists in films and books – who audiences love the most – tend to be sad, kind, brave and funny and living in a difficult time and place. In the text, they have moments of sorrow and joy, which make readers feel both sad and happy for them. The best characters have contradictions – they are not consistent – just like real people. They get angry, can be terrified and then be brave, and then be scared.

1. In pairs or small groups, ask students to discuss their favourite characters in movies or books.
  - a) What do they have in common?
  - b) What is different?
2. As a class, discuss Harry Potter (or another character from a book you've studied).
  - a) Why do readers like Harry?
  - b) What do readers dislike about Harry?
  - c) Why is this mix of characteristics important?
  - d) How does the setting and time impact Harry?

As a class, complete the table:

What's sad about Harry?	What gives Harry joy?	How is Harry noble and kind?	Who does Harry look up to? Why?	How is Harry like us?	How is Harry different from us?

### Judge a book by its cover

1. Examine the front cover of the book and the title, *Rabbit, Soldier, Angel, Thief*. How do the author and illustrator draw in the reader with this cover and title?
  - a. Ask students to identify as many visual techniques as they can, particularly:
    - i. Symbols
    - ii. Colours
    - iii. Placement and framing
  - b. What elements of the cover and title seem to clash?
    - i. An angel and a thief?
    - ii. A soldier's uniform and flowers and a young boy?
    - iii. War and flowers?
  - c. Do these clashing elements make the seem book interesting/make you want to read it?
  - d. How are time and place demonstrated on the cover?

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# Classroom Resources

## Understanding context

This story is told from the perspective of a young Russian boy and is set against the backdrop of World War Two in Germany, Ukraine and Russia. This setting and context allow the author to consider the universality of the human experience, human qualities, the impact of war on individuals and notions of enemies and allies.

1. As a class, discuss what they already know about World War Two, including:
  - a. When did the war happen?
  - b. Which countries were involved in the conflict?
  - c. Who is Adolf Hitler?
2. In order for the class to properly understand the context of *Rabbit, Soldier, Angel, Thief* ask them to do some research on:
  - a. What happened between Germany and Russia during World War Two?
  - b. Who or what is the Red Army?
  - c. Who are partisans?
  - d. What happened to Stalingrad by the end of World War Two?
  - e. What happened in Berlin at the end of World War Two?
  - f. What was the relationship between Germany and Russia at the end of the World War Two?
  - g. Where is Siberia and Stalingrad?
  - h. What is kasha, a balalaika, and a ushanka?
3. After students have discussed their findings, ask them to think about:
  - a. Why are Berlin and Russia, during World War Two interesting places to set a story?
  - b. Why do we like to read stories set in World War Two?
  - c. Why are they relevant today?
  - d. Who is a friend or an ally? Who is an enemy?
  - e. How does a setting add to a story?

## **During Reading**

### Examining Sasha

1. As students have thought about Harry Potter, and what makes him an engaging and relatable character, ask them to think about Sasha and his attributes. Ask them to complete this table as they read through the novel:

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# Classroom Resources

Chapter	What's sad about Sasha?	What gives Sasha joy?	How is Sasha noble and kind?	Who does Sasha look up to, and who does he despise? Why?	How is Sasha like us?	How is Sasha different from us?
1						
2						

- Why is this mix of characteristics important?
- How does time and place impact Sasha and the reader?
- Why do readers like Sasha?

## After Reading

### Making the reader curious

Great writers make readers curious. A curiosity gap – created with intrigue or surprise, pulls in an audience rather than pushes them away.

Katrina Nannestad draws a reader into her story by rousing the reader's curiosity and using skills such as sensory detail and personification to bring the scene to life.

- Read these passages from Chapter One:

*I'm cold. I'm crawling through the dark, flat on my belly, elbows and legs working. But I'm cold. So cold. The ground is hard, icy, cruel. The chill presses through my clothes and skin, right to the core of me. And the fear does, too.*

*... I make straight for my target, pale and plump, almost shining in the night. I pull back my arm, clench my jaw, then stab. I plunge the knife as deep as it will go. A voice cries out, waking soldiers all around me, but I'm here now and determined to finish what I started. I pull downward and the blade of the knife rips the stab wound wide.*

For each passage, answer these questions:

- What questions does Nannestad make the reader ask in the first pages of chapter one?
- How does she surprise the reader?
- What does the reader learn about the narrator?
- Why does the reader want to keep reading?
- How is the reader misled and then surprised?

# Classroom Resources

## Show don't tell

Katrina Nannestad is also very good at showing and not telling, which is a key skill of good creative writing.

1. Study Chapters One and Two as a class and work out what Nannestad shows and doesn't tell. Identify quotes from these chapters, and the techniques they use.
  - a. How does Nannestad reveal the time and place of the story, without telling the reader directly?
  - b. When do you learn Sasha's name and how old he is?
  - c. Why is this more powerful than reading – Sasha was very young and he became a soldier for the Red Army in Berlin, during World War Two?

2. In Chapter Six when Sasha is with his family, Nannestad creates a lovely scene that shows him being clever and brave.

*I blurt the words out as fast as I can. 'Yelena crept into Anna Pushinka's garden and picked all her beautiful fat red strawberries, then threw them at the boys when they came in from harvesting the barley and it was such a waste that I wanted to tell Mama and Anna Pushinka, but Yelena made me promise not to blab and I have been feeling very bad about keeping such a naughty secret for weeks and weeks and I am so very sorry!' The grin falls from the prince-monster's face. He stands and stamps his big black boot. Stomp! 'This stupid boy knows nothing!' he roars.*

- a. How did you feel when you read this scene?
- b. What does this show about Sasha?
- c. How does time and place make Sasha's story more dramatic?

3. Then, towards the end of the book in Chapter Thirty-Nine:

*Then, finally, I unbuckle the watch from my wrist. I hold it out to her, but she does not take it. Instead, she offers her thin white wrist and I buckle it on for her. Her skin is soft and smooth and smells like flowers. Just like Mama's skin.*

*'I'm very, very sorry,' I say and burst into tears.*

*And then, the most surprising thing happens. The mama drops to her knees and wraps her arms around me. She hugs me and cries and whispers, 'Danke. Danke. Danke.'*

- a. Which techniques has Katrina Nannestad used in this passage?
- b. What do we learn about Sasha?
- c. Why is this a pivotal moment?
- d. What does it tell us about human nature and how it is affected by time and place?

4. One of the most important symbols in the novel is that of flowers; they even appear on the cover.

- a. Find four or five references to flowers in *Rabbit, Soldier, Angel, Thief*. Try and find these quotes from different parts of the story.
- b. Looking at these quotes, what do you think the author intended the flowers to symbolise in the novel?
  - i. Does this change as the story progresses?
  - ii. Are they associated with any particular people/groups of people?
- c. Using at least two of the quotes you have found, write a paragraph explaining the use of flowers as a symbol in *Rabbit, Soldier, Angel, Thief*.

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# Classroom Resources

## Friends are important

In many stories, the protagonist has a key relationship that helps them grow and learn, and helps the reader to understand them. Relationships with family members, adults, friends and members of a character's community play a key role in building and reflecting the identity of a character.

1. Ask students to list all of the important relationships Sasha has in *Rabbit, Soldier, Angel, Thief*. For each relationship ask them to identify what we learn about Sasha, and what Sasha himself may learn, because of this relationship. Remind students that relationships aren't always between people who like or respect each other, and negative relationships can also be informative (you may also like to point out that not all relationships are with humans).

2. Why is Papa Scruff important?

- a. Read this passage from Chapter Thirty-Nine:

*Papa Scruff nods. He looks at the window where the woman and the two little boys are standing, staring out at us.*

*'Were they a gift?' he asks. 'Did the woman invite you in and offer you her watch and her clock because she thought you were a kind, sweet boy? Did her sons give you their yellow truck because they thought it was your birthday and you deserved a gift?'*

*I stare at Papa Scruff, my eyes now filling with tears to match his own. The watch on my wrist feels suddenly hot and heavy. 'I took them,' I whisper. 'I asked nicely for them. I said please. I even said thank you.'*

*Papa Scruff sighs. 'This is not who you are Sasha. I beg you, do not let hate and greed into your heart.'*

*'But they've taken everything from us!' I cry. 'Even Windy says so.' I look to Windy, but his eyes have dropped to his boots.*

*'Did that woman take your mama and your sister?' Papa Scruff asks.*

- i. What does Papa Scruff teach Sasha in this scene?
- ii. Why is this scene significant in the story?
- iii. Who does Sasha come to belong to?
- iv. Who influences him and who does he influence? Why is this important?

3. Ask students to create a presentation on Sasha's significant relationships.

- a. For each relationship, create a mood board which includes images and sounds/music that reflects the influence this person has on Sasha.

## Extension

There are many ways to make a family. Throughout *Rabbit, Soldier, Angel, Thief* Sasha both loses and gains a family. How is both the importance and diversity of family reflected in the novel?



# Classroom Resources

## About the Author

Katrina Nannestad is an award-winning Australian author. Her books include the CBCA-shortlisted *We Are Wolves*, *The Girl Who Brought Mischief*, the Travelling Bookshop series, the Girl, the Dog and the Writer series, the Olive of Groves series, the Red Dirt Diaries series, the Lottie Perkins series, and the historical novel *Rabbit, Soldier, Angel, Thief*.

Katrina grew up in country New South Wales, in a neighbourhood stuffed full of happy children. Her adult years have been spent raising boys, teaching, daydreaming and pursuing her love of stories. Katrina celebrates family, friendship and belonging in her writing. She also loves creating stories that bring joy or hope to other people's lives. Katrina now lives on a hillside in central Victoria with her husband, a silly whippet called Olive and a mob of kangaroos.

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