

OFF THE SHELF

Issue 17

September 2015

DIARY of a Wimpy Kid OLD SCHOOL



Jeff Kinney

IN THIS ISSUE

The Wimpy Kid Read-a-thon Challenge returns!

How to be happy | Jane Godwin & Anna Walker | *Empire of the Waves*



PENGUIN
TEACHERS'
ACADEMY

WELCOME

Surprise! With a few weeks still to go before the term break, Off the Shelf has arrived a little sooner than expected. Why the rush? We simply had to get in early to wish you the best for the 2015 **Diary of a Wimpy Kid Read-a-thon Challenge**.

The Read-a-thon debuted last year to a huge reception from young readers all around Australia, not to mention teachers and parents who were delighted to see children roaring through eight entire books in less than seven weeks. This year, the bar is raised: to beat the challenge (and get the chance to enter a context to meet and interview Wimpy creator Jeff Kinney!), Read-a-thon entrants will have to read all nine Wimpy books between 1 September and 16 October. Inside, we hear from teachers and students about why they're excited for a new Wimpy Kid Read-a-thon.

Also in this issue: you'll hear from the beloved picture book team Jane Godwin and Anna Walker; a teacher shares the thrill of reading the first published novel by a former student; and three very famous names write about the importance of a positive outlook, and how to nurture this in young people.

Enjoy the coming break, and the start of the next term. We'll be back soon with our end-of-year issue.

Tye Cattanach

Marketing Manager
Education, Partnerships and Events

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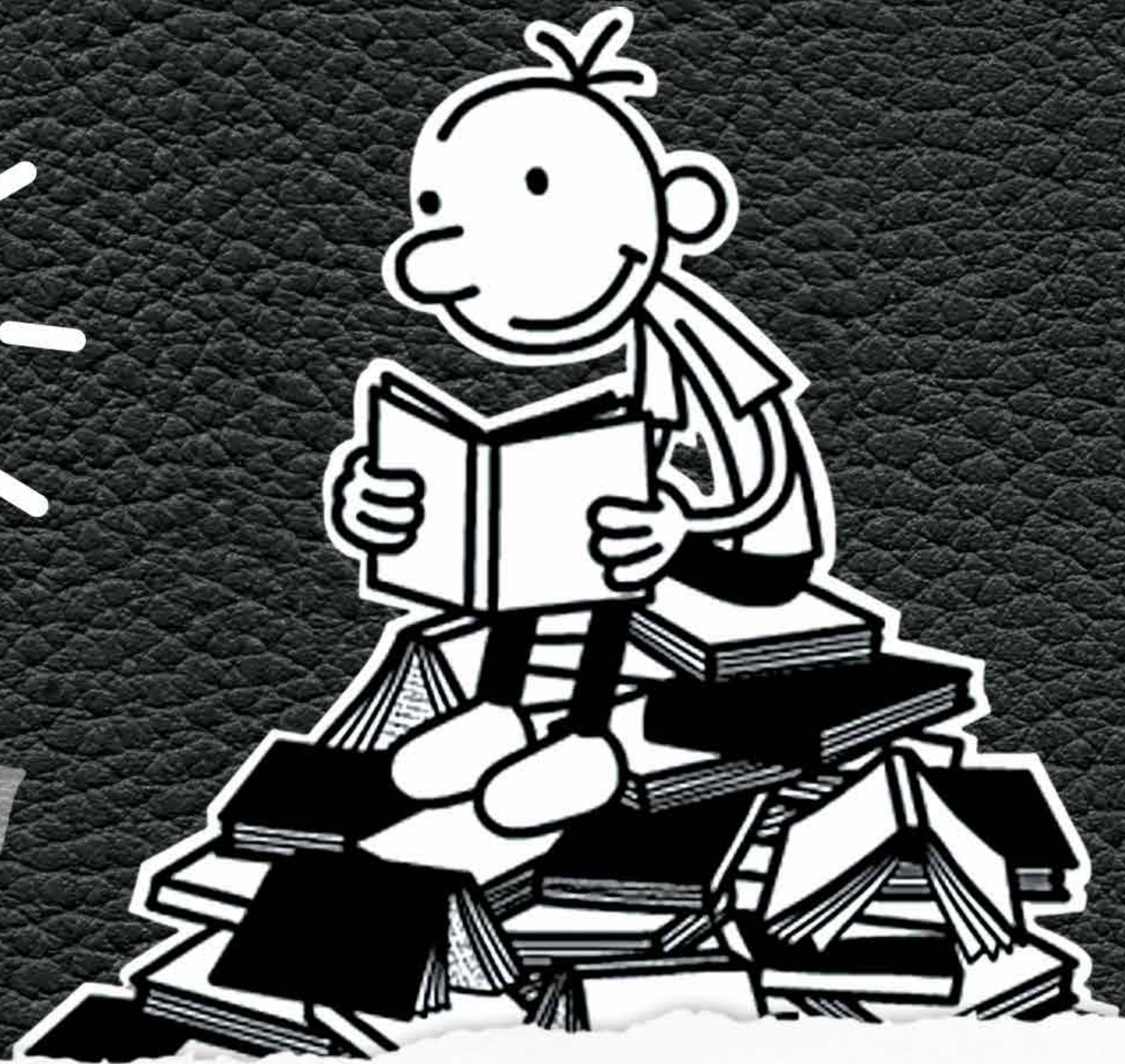
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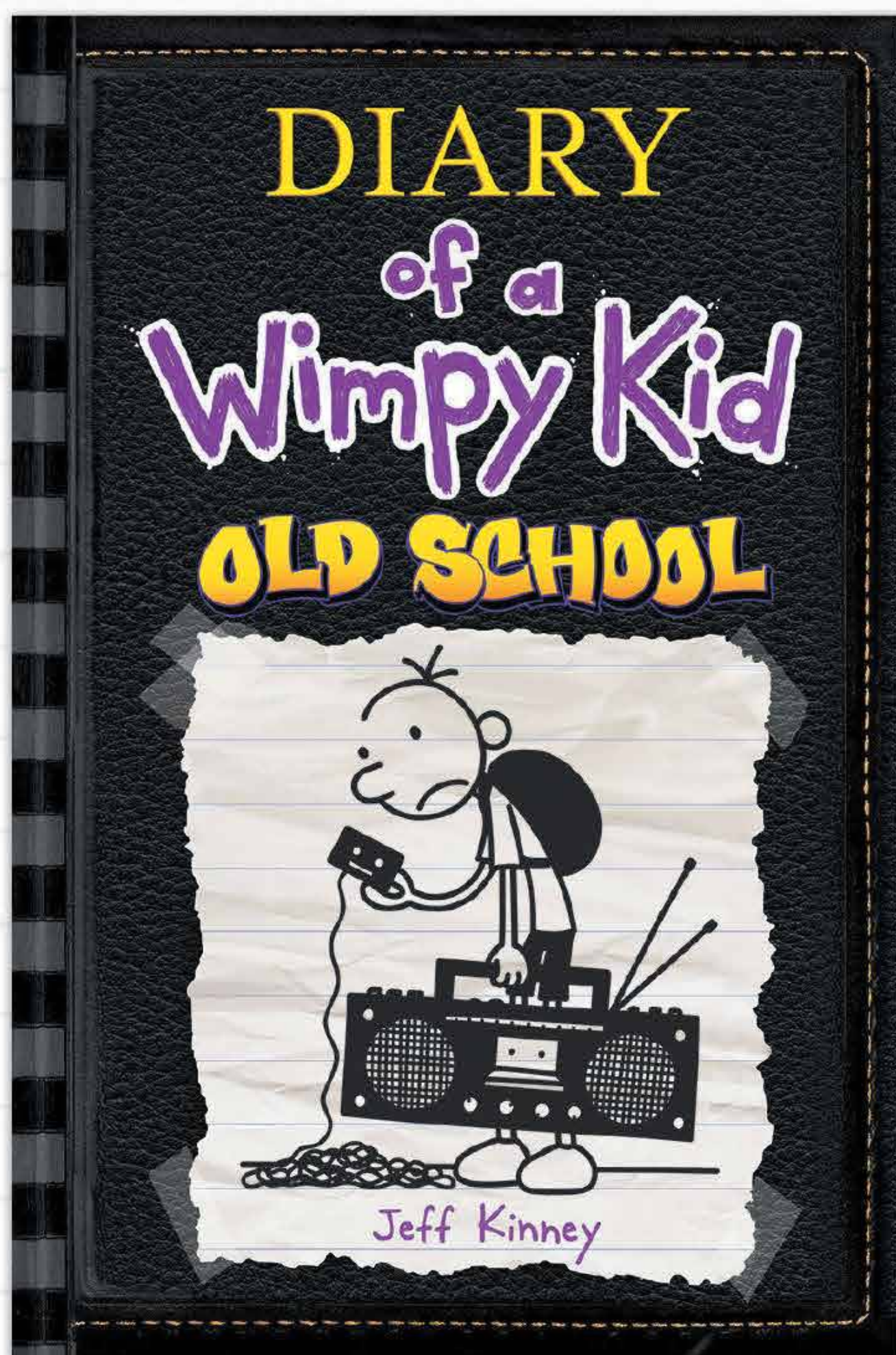
Diary of a Wimpy Kid
OLD SCHOOL

**READ-A-THON
CHALLENGE**

SEPT 1 - OCT 16



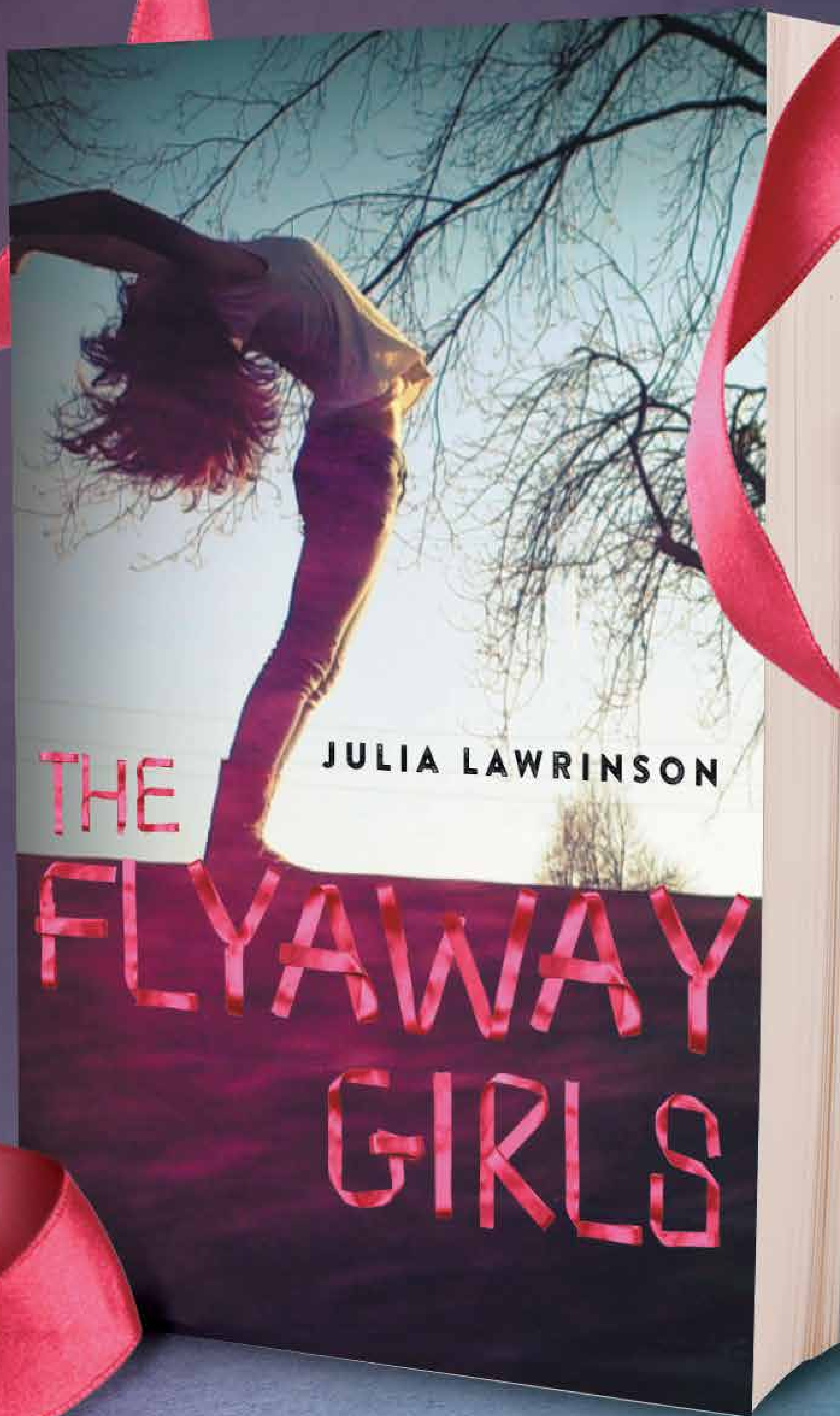
READ THE BOOKS. BEAT THE QUIZ.
WIN AWESOME PRIZES!



Out Nov 3

FOR MORE INFO

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HERE



An inspiring story of gymnastics,
ambition, friendship and rivalry.



FOR MORE INFO

Team of Two

Jane Godwin and Anna Walker have together created five picture books for children, including their Christmas-set collaboration *What Do You Wish For?*





Jane Godwin: The first time I saw Anna's work, I thought wow, she's such a talent. I really wanted to do something with her. I'd written the text for a book called *Little Cat and the Big Red Bus*, so I decided to ask Anna if she'd illustrate it. The first thing she said was, "I really love it, but I can't draw buses." But she did go on to draw some very beautiful buses.

She understands the emotions and the dynamics of childhood. She has kids of her own, but plenty of people who have kids don't appear to have much understanding of childhood. Anna has a very deep understanding, or emotional memory. She remembers what it was like to be a child, in an authentic and rich way. When we did *Starting School*, the way Anna's illustration subtly realised the distinct personality for each one of those five characters – that reinforced for me that she knows those kids, she remembers them.

She's a very gentle and in some ways fairly quiet person, but underneath, there's someone who's very serious about her work and very serious about the art of making picture books. Just because it's for a child doesn't mean it has to be any less carefully thought out. She's a perfectionist, and I really respect her for that.

Anna understands the emotions of childhood... She remembers what it was like to be a child.

Collaborating is a mysterious process. I feel I need to have a fairly strong idea of what I'm doing before I show it to Anna... I'm working on something at the moment that I wouldn't show her just yet. But it has to be a true collaboration. The illustrator can bring so much to the book that the author might not have thought of, and if you don't allow them to do that I always think the book is a lesser piece of art as a result.

Anna never says directly, "That's a load of crap, Janie, you've written 14 sentences when it should be one." She just very gently does a fabulous picture and reveals to me that a lot of what I've written in the text is in her work. I'll take out some words, and then she just says, really nicely, "Oh yes, I think that works really well that way, Janie."

She's much cooler and more stylish than me. Her home is very beautiful and she's always dressed in something that's unique but really works for her. Her kids always look very stylish in their own ways as well. I feel like my life is more chaotic than hers, and messy. From the outside her life looks very cool, as in groovy, and quite ordered. I'm much daggier.

We created this little character for the story of *What Do You Wish For?*, this little girl named Ruby. And when people see the book, everyone says, “Oh, she looks like Jane but as a little girl.” It was the same with the little girl in *Today We Have No Plans* – everyone asked if it’s supposed to be me as a little girl, and Anna would always say she didn’t mean to draw me. But she’s ended up saying, “Well, I guess maybe I did.”



Anna Walker: Janie and I had talked about doing a Christmas book for a while, and we both wanted something that imbues the magic of Christmas. When she sent me the idea and the story about the wishing tree, it seemed so perfect.

My family always celebrated Christmas in Sydney at my grandparents’ house, and one Christmas night when everyone was inside, I’d walked out on the veranda holding a Christmas stocking. I remember that warm glow of everyone inside, and me looking up into the night sky thinking Christmas is just the best, and wanting to hold on to that feeling forever. When I read *What Do You Wish For?*, that memory came flooding back. Jane captured that feeling in the text. The magic and warmth of Christmas resonates through the whole story.

When I first met her at the Penguin office, there were a few people in the room and I was probably a bit nervous. A few days later I was at Safeway with the kids and a woman said hello to me – she said it as if she knew me, and I could not figure out for the life of me who this person was. And then – it was Jane! I nearly died. I didn’t recognise her, I think it was just out of context. Afterwards I thought, Oh my god, I can’t believe I didn’t recognise the author. We laugh about it still.

It’s wonderful to talk to someone about something you love, especially when they’re as passionate about it as you are.

When I first read Jane’s text for *Little Cat and the Big Red Bus*, it was a memorable moment. To this day it’s still clear in my mind. I must’ve been waiting for the text to arrive, because I remember picking up the yellow envelope from the letterbox and sitting on the couch in the sun and opening it. I was nearly in tears when I read the story about a little girl who’s the smallest on the bus, it was as though it had been written for me. I couldn’t believe I’d been asked to illustrate such a special story. I felt so lucky.

My kids used to tease me. I had her phone number in my phone, and when I could see it was her calling, I'd jump to the phone to answer it really quickly. And the kids would tease me – “Oh, ooooh, it's Jane Godwin on the phone!”

She's such a dynamic person. She's always doing different exciting things. At one stage she was walking some extraordinary amount at lunch times, training for a half marathon! Her energy and passion for life inspires me.

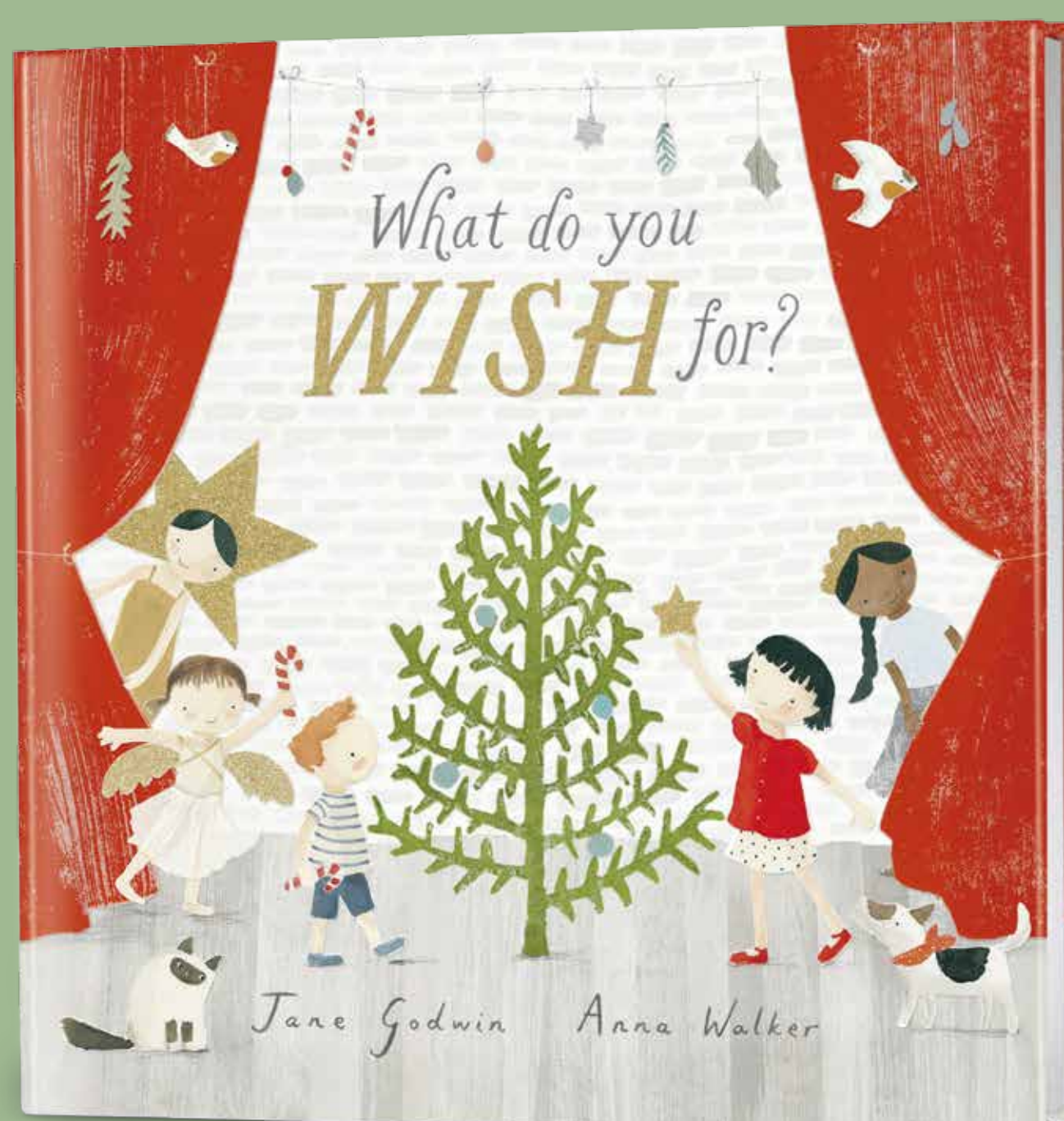
Jane's braver than I am. She visits remote communities, flying in tiny aeroplanes, and she has these beautiful stories about meeting children who've never seen snow. Even though I love the idea of being adventurous, I think I'd be slightly terrified of the little planes. I'd think about it too much and those thoughts would stop me. I think it's fabulous when Jane does things like that, she embraces opportunities and takes them on with gusto. She seizes the moment.

We're both passionate about children's books. We can talk for so long. We have long chats over coffee about stories, ideas, what's happening in our worlds. It's wonderful to talk to someone about something you love, especially when they're as passionate about it as you are.

Jane Godwin and **Anna Walker** were interviewed by Greg Cormack.

What Do You Wish For? is published 23 September 2015.

Article cover image: lilliethompson.com  [@lillie_thompson](https://www.instagram.com/lillie_thompson)

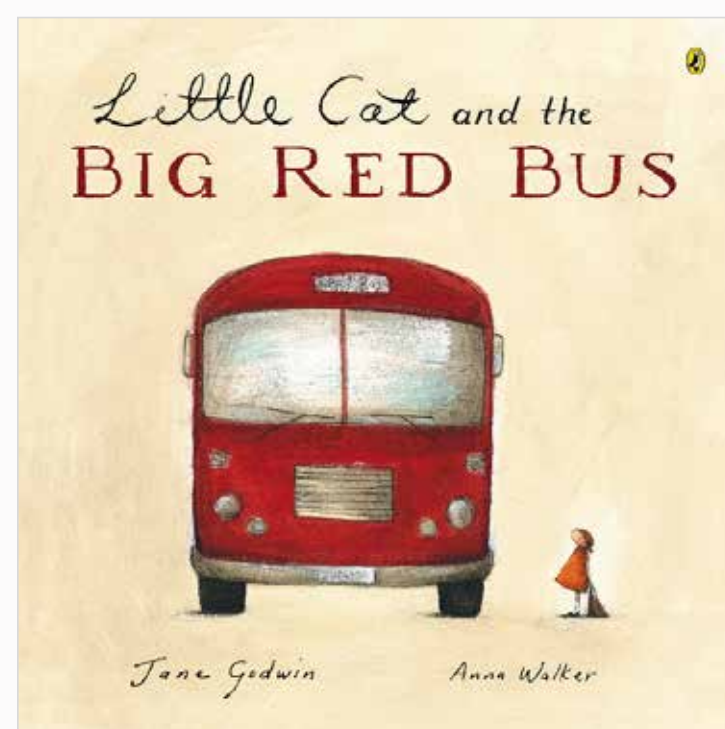


Look inside
What Do You
Wish For?



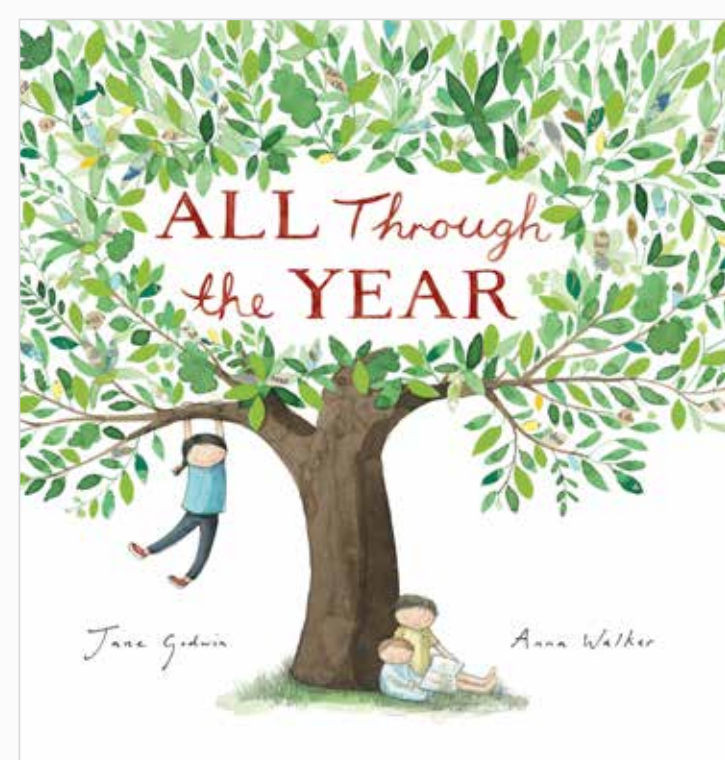
Look what we made!

5 Godwin-Walker winners



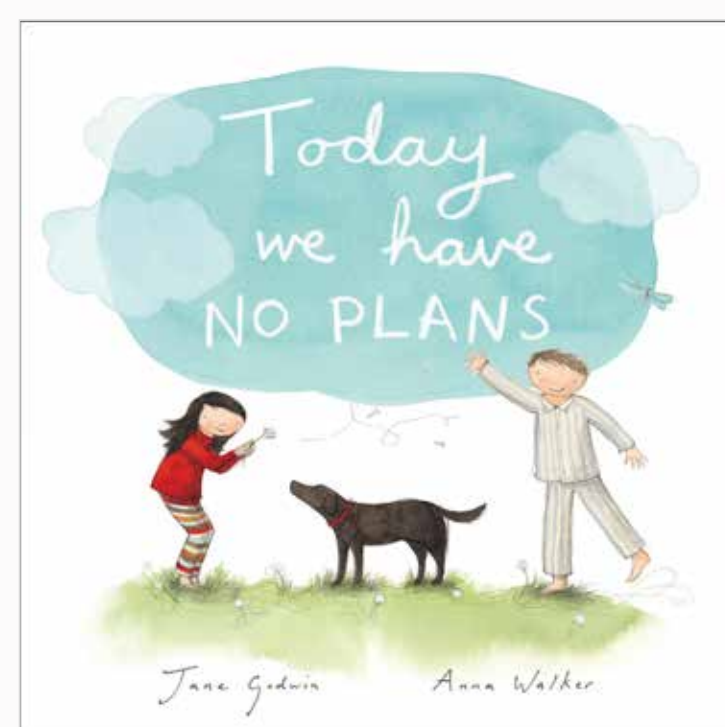
Little Cat and the Big Red Bus

Her sister's sick today, so Little Cat has to take the school bus on her own. On the way home, Little Cat falls asleep on the bus and no one notices. When she wakes up, the bus is empty and it's dark outside... A heart-warming story about one little girl's adventure.



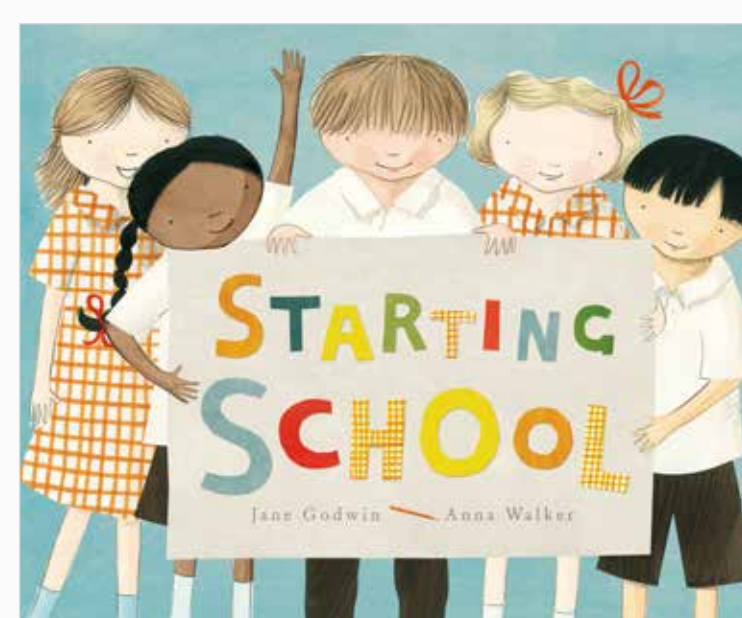
All Through the Year

A year in the life of an Australian family, told through the eyes of a child. "I want to take you through one year – twelve months in all. Each day is different from the last. Some go slowly, some go fast."



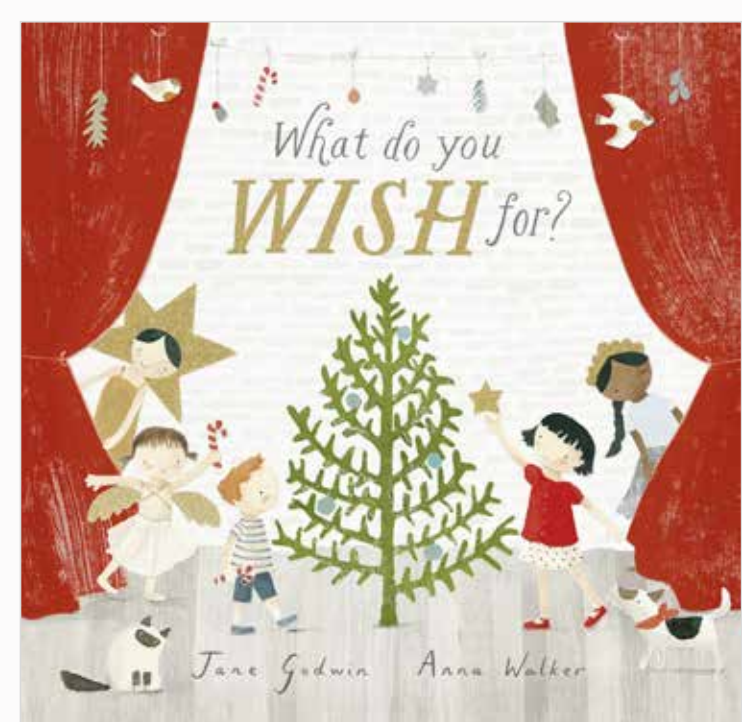
Today We Have No Plans

Join an Australian family on their journey through one week, busy with different activities and different feelings – and especially celebrating those precious days that have no plans.



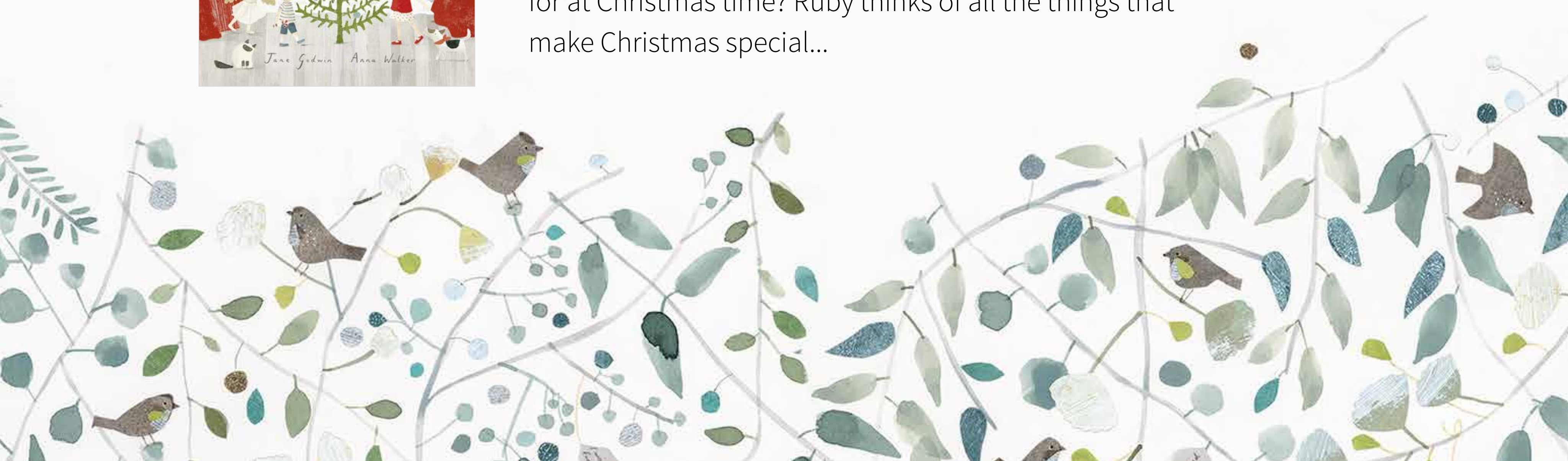
Starting School

Five very different children starting school for the first time have very different experiences and feelings. There are new friends to make, fun ways to learn, and so many things to discover.



What Do You Wish For?

All the children in the street are writing down a special Christmas wish. But what is Ruby's wish? What does she wish for at Christmas time? Ruby thinks of all the things that make Christmas special...



Roald Dahl

Matilda

Illustrated by Quentin Blake

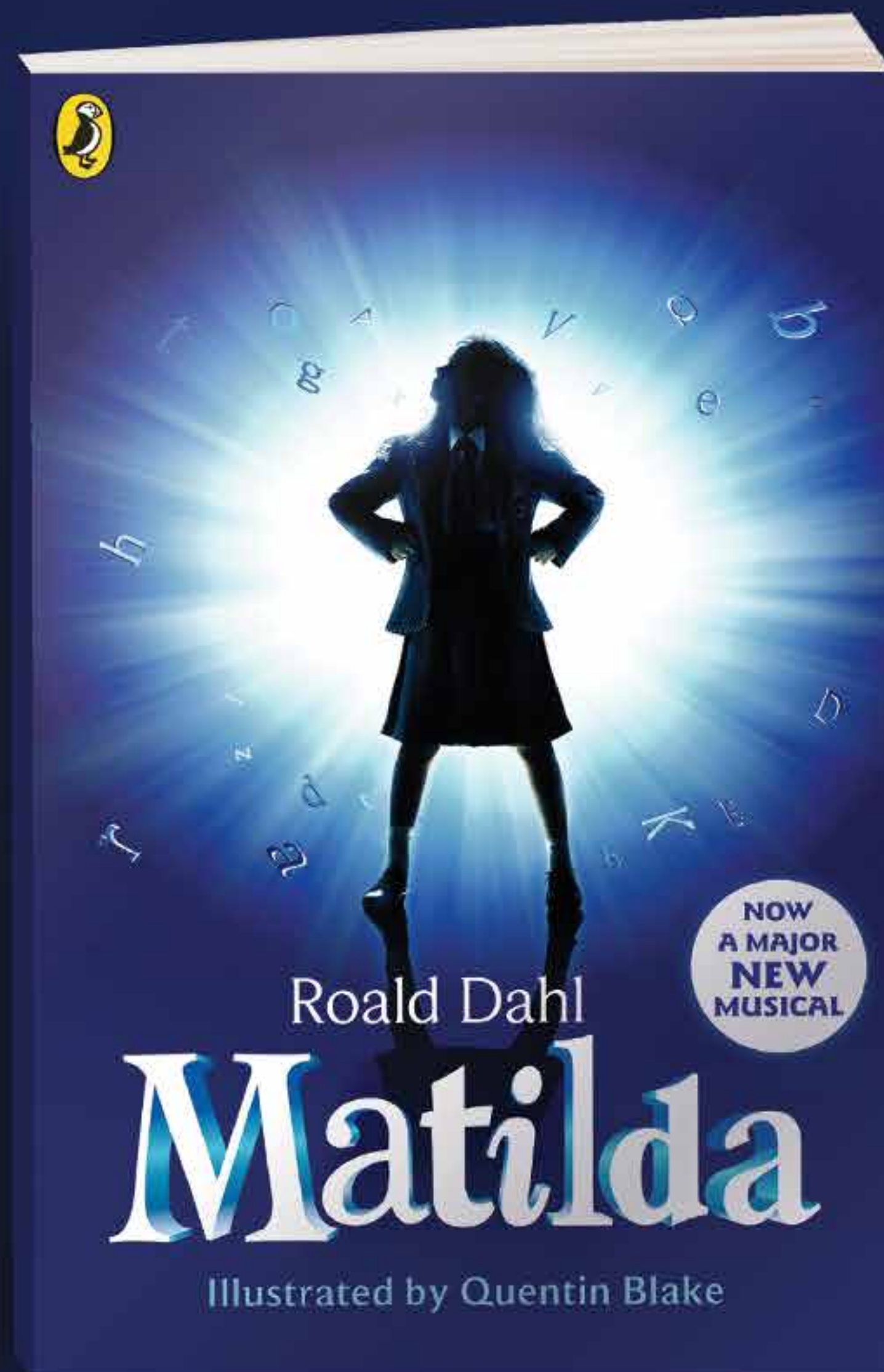
“It’s a funny thing about mothers and fathers. Even when their own child is the most disgusting little blister you could ever imagine, they still think that he or she is wonderful.

Some parents go further. They become so blinded by adoration they manage to convince themselves their child has qualities of genius.

Well, there is nothing very wrong with all this. It’s the way of the world. It’s only when the parents begin telling us about the brilliance of their own revolting offspring, that we start shouting.”



FOR MORE INFO ON THE BOOK



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MATILDATHEMUSICAL.COM.AU



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TIM WINTON

ISLAND

HOME

a landscape memoir

23 SEPTEMBER 2015



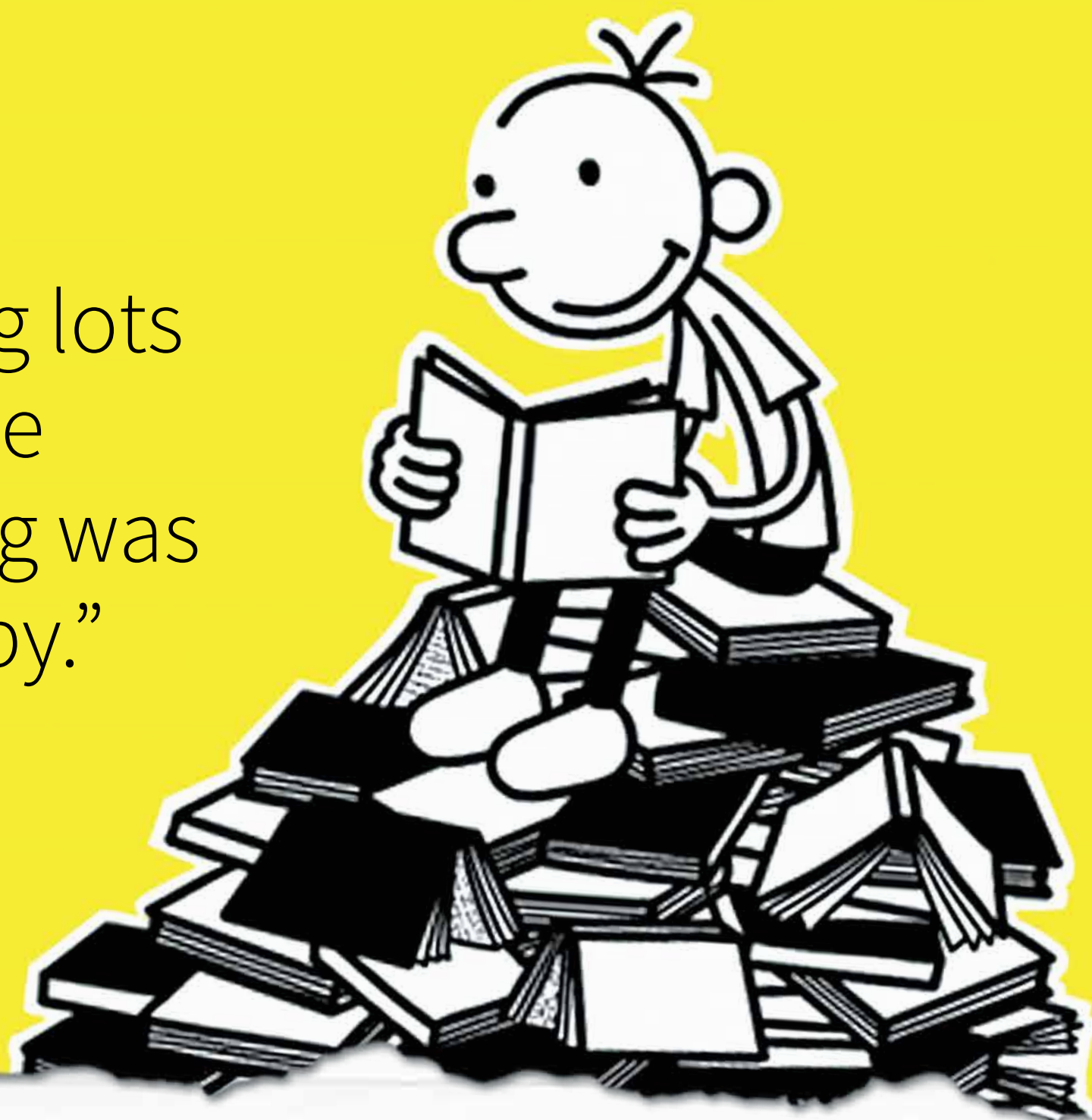
GAME ON!

Nine books in less than seven weeks:

An ambitious challenge for young readers? The readers who took part in the Diary of a Wimpy Kid Read-a-thon in 2014 were game, signing up in such numbers that the phenomenon has this year gone global. We checked in with students and teachers who are looking forward to this year's event – which offers keen readers the chance to meet Jeff Kinney.

“I think it was good, because I was reading lots of books, and after the Wimpy books, reading was like officially my hobby.”

Joshua, Year 7



Jeff Kinney’s *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* books are favourites in classrooms, kids’ bedrooms and on bestseller lists around the world. They’ve won awards, sparked film adaptations and, last year, inspired a popular Read-a-thon in Australia. The event was such a hit with Wimpy Kid fans, newcomers and teachers, it’s happening again this year – on a global scale.

“If you asked me on most days, I’d have said the idea of students reading nine books in less than two months was – let’s admit it, in a lot of cases, ambitious,” says Steph, a teacher at a NSW primary school. “But the setup of a Read-a-thon made it fun. Some kids who are a bit reluctant to pick up a book, they seemingly had a book in their hand all day, for weeks.”

Joshua, now attending Year 7 in Melbourne, has been a Wimpy Kid fan some years and had already read the entire series before last year’s Read-a-thon began.

“But I just thought OK, I’ll read them again,” he says. “Because my friends were all into it. The whole class was into it, really, because we did some activities in class.

“I think it was good, because I was reading lots of books, and after the Wimpy books, reading was like officially my hobby,” he says. When we spoke Josh had moved on to *Lockie Leonard: Scumbuster*.

The 2015 Read-a-thon begins 1 September and continues to 16 October. Participants can sign up at the [Read-a-thon website](#) any time during that

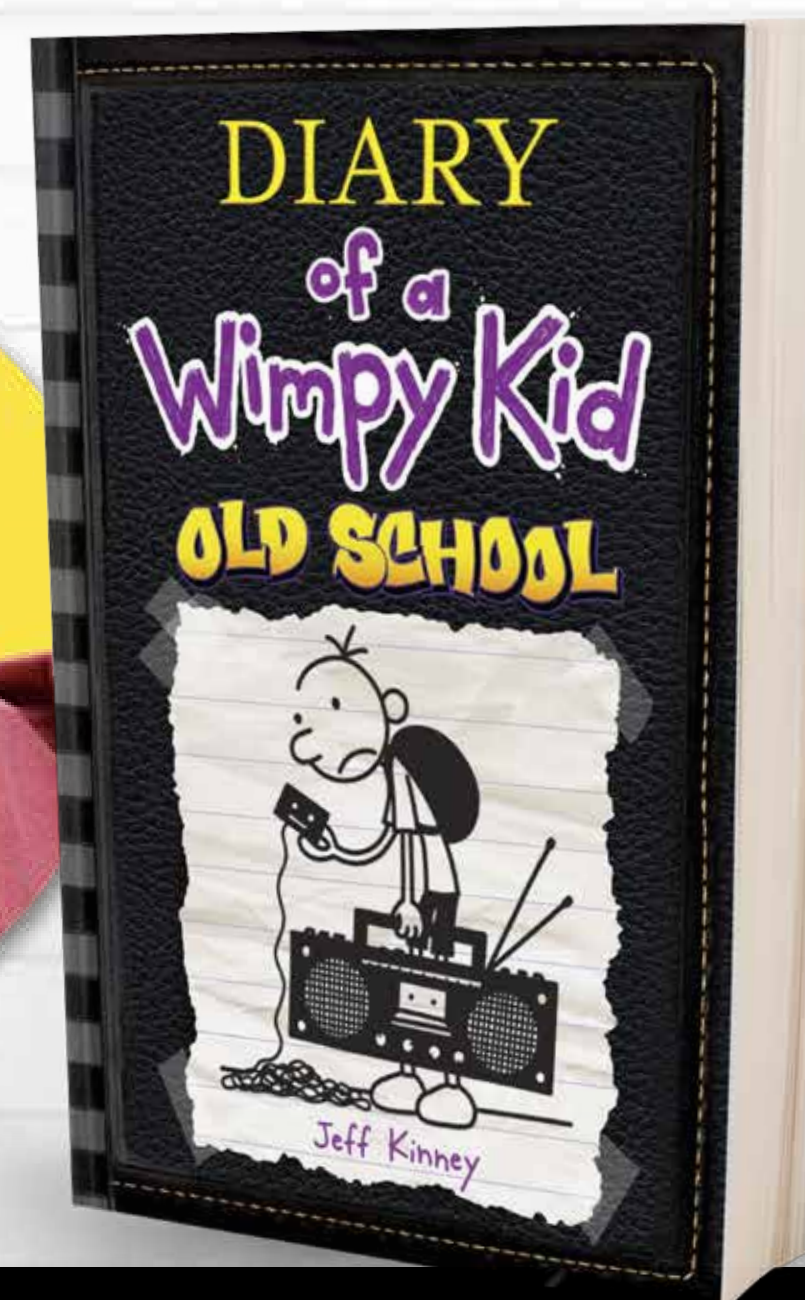
window (**but the first 1,000 to register get a *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* yo-yo!**). Completing a three-question quiz for each book confirms their “has read” status.

And ticking off all nine currently published Wimpy books before 16 October unlocks the entry form for a contest: the grand prize being a trip to Sydney (with a parent or guardian) to meet Wimpy creator **Jeff Kinney**, and interview him for the magazine K-Zone.

That’s more than enough motivation for Sarah, 9, from central-west NSW.

“I’d like to meet Jeff Kinney because he’s my favourite writer and I really like the books he writes,” she says. “If I get to interview him, I’d probably ask him why did he decide to write Wimpy Kid. Or I would ask him what’s his favourite joke, because he’s really funny.”

Certainly sounds like that’s one early registrant in the bag. Other young readers can join her in the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* Read-a-thon by signing up [here](#).



The next book in the Wimpy Kid series, *Old School*, is published 3 November.



FOR MORE INFO



What do you
WISH for?

Jane Godwin Anna Walker

A sparkling and beautiful story, full of the wonder of Christmas, the magic of wishing, and the timeless dreams of a child.

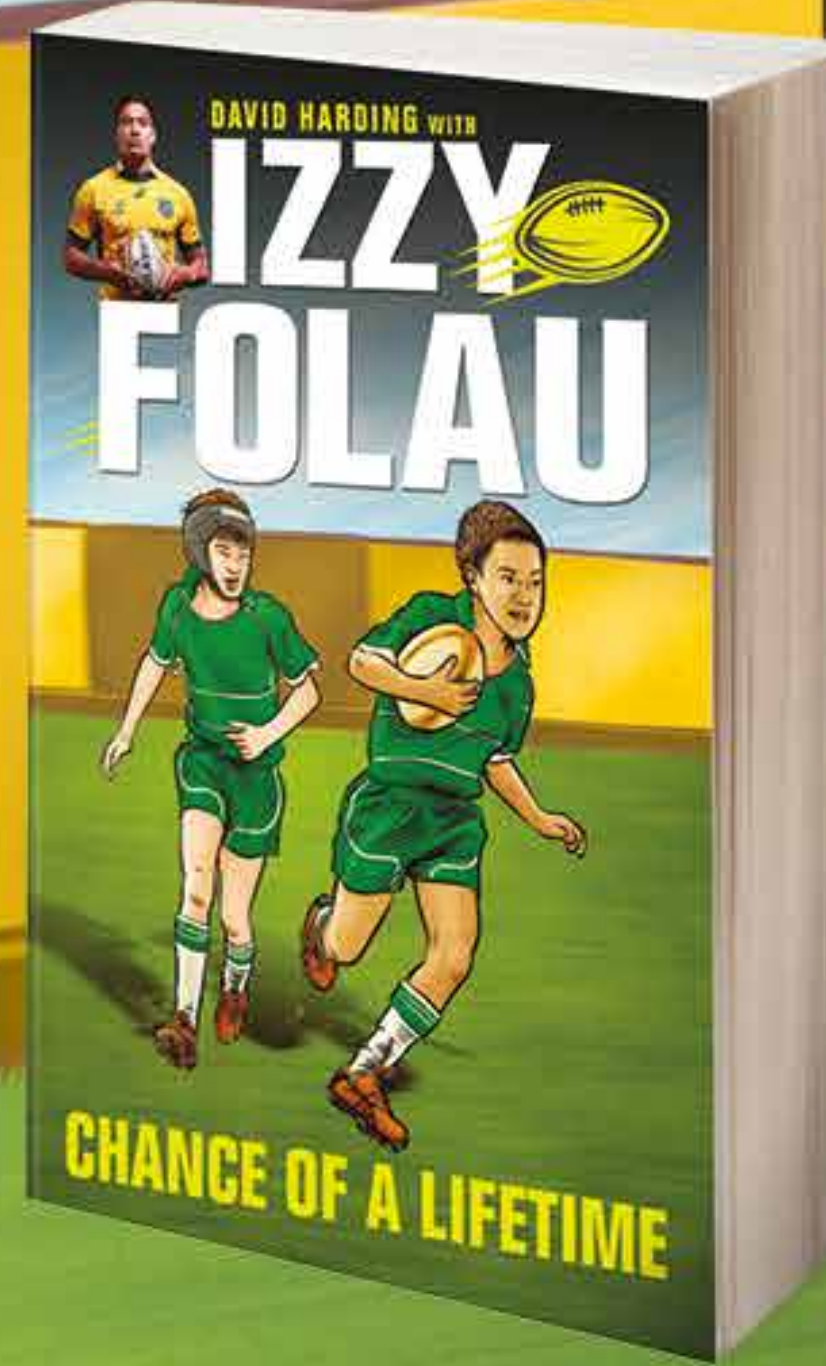
CATCH ALL THE ON-FIELD RUGBY ACTION WITH

IZZY FOLAU



WALLABIES SUPERSTAR,
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GRAB IZZY'S
GREAT KIDS BOOKS
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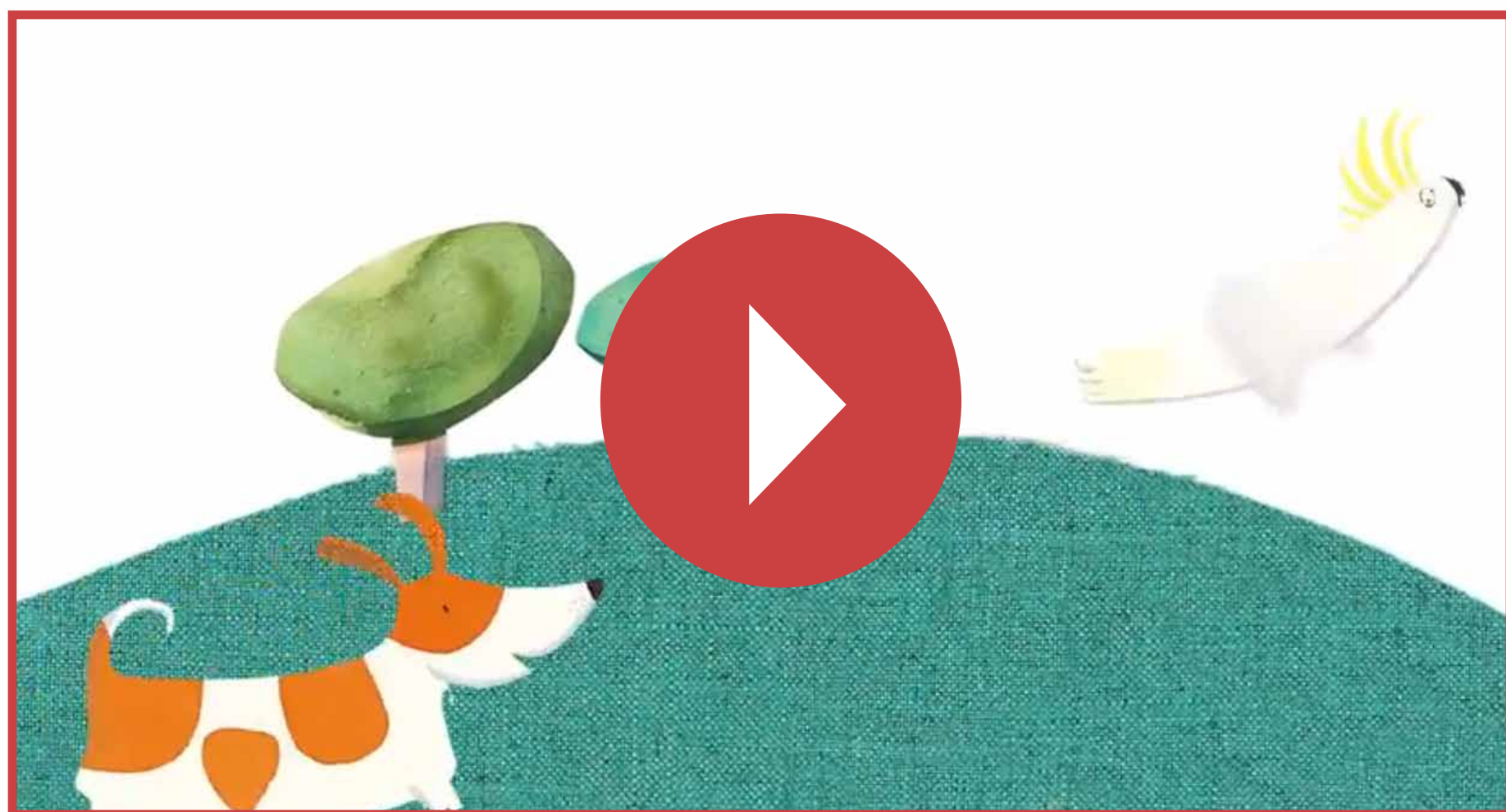


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my DOG BIGSY

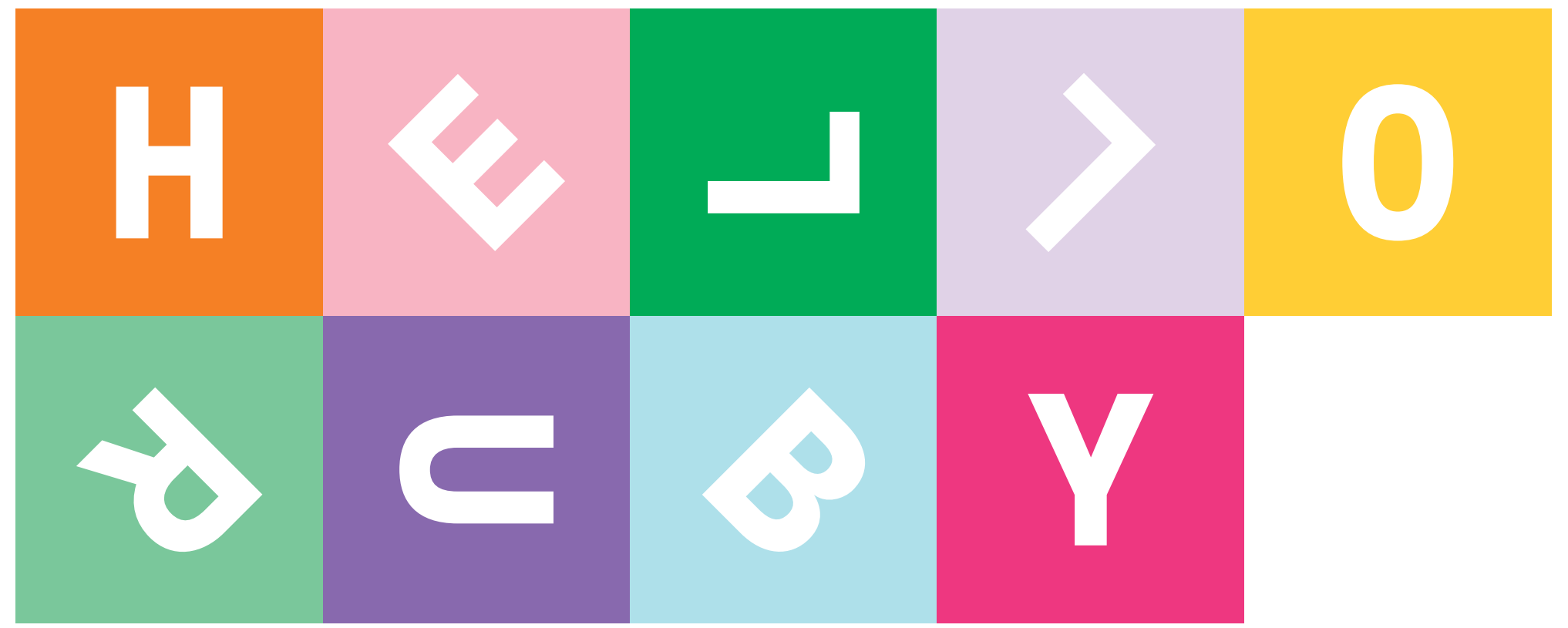
From Australia's favourite picture-book creator comes this energetic story about a little dog who causes a big commotion.



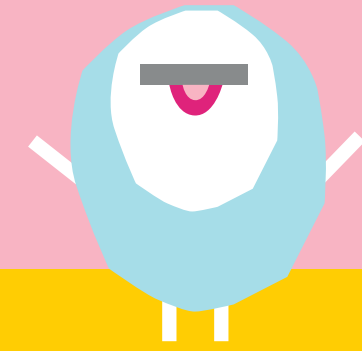
[Click here to watch a video about Bigsy](#)



ALISON LESTER



BY **Linda Liukas**



Hello!

Hello Ruby is the world's most whimsical way to learn about computers, technology and programming. The story starts with a book. It's suited for kids between 5 and 8 (but even adults might learn something new).



Photo: Otsu Kaijaluoto 2015



"She wants kids to understand and embrace basic computer logic, so that they later formulate code in the same effortless and creative way they build structures with LEGO."

The Wall Street Journal

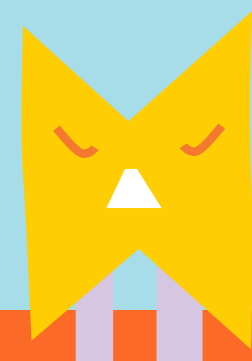


Photo: Maija Tammi

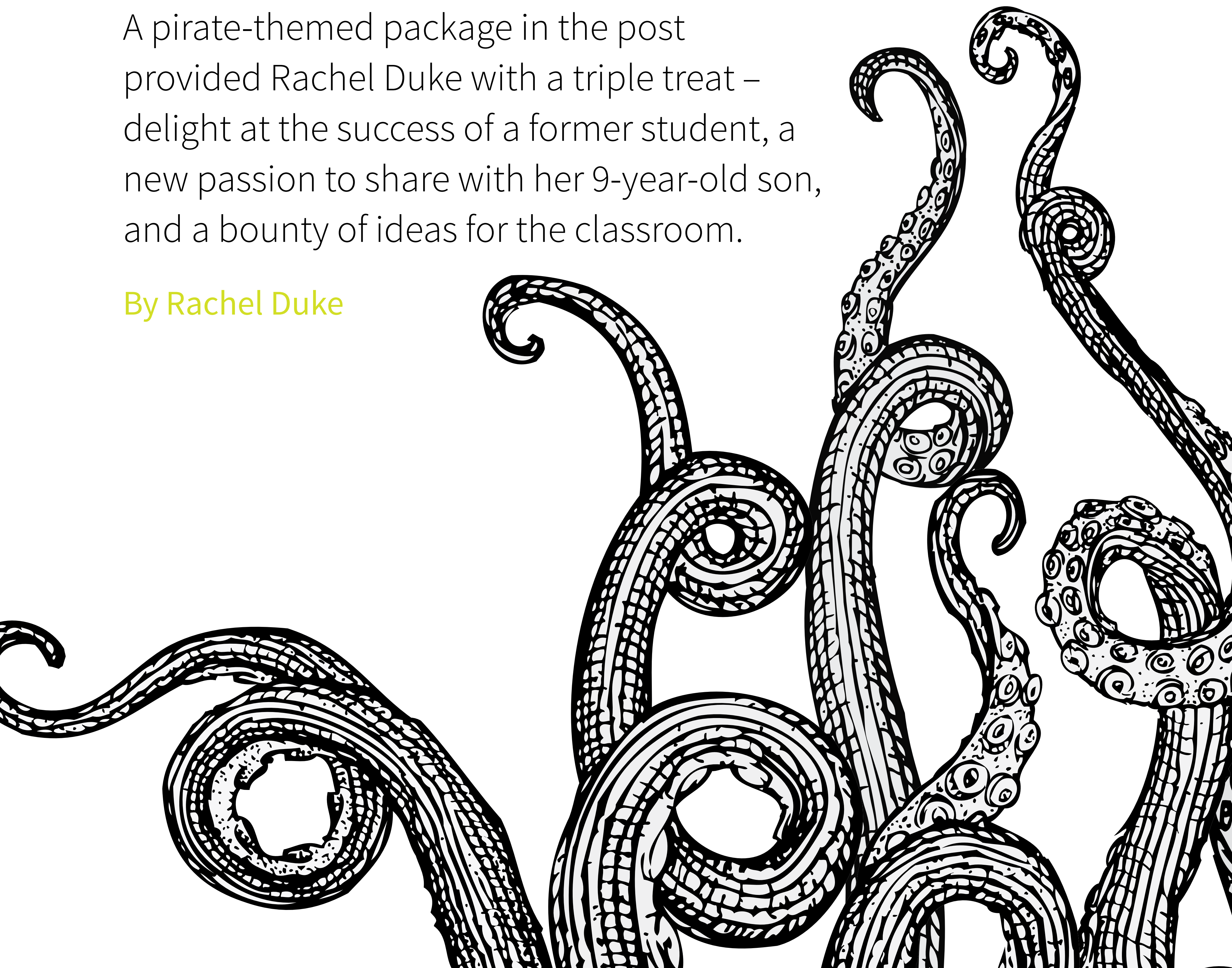
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Timber-shiveringly GOOD

A pirate-themed package in the post provided Rachel Duke with a triple treat – delight at the success of a former student, a new passion to share with her 9-year-old son, and a bounty of ideas for the classroom.

By Rachel Duke



I first knew Christopher Richardson as a school student and it was obvious then he'd be a writer. He has told me since that he knew it himself at 12, the time I first met him in the classroom.

So, it was with some excitement that my son, Henry (9), and I opened the parcel (wrapped in pirate paper) Chris had sent us, containing his first published book *Empire of the Waves* – a maritime epic fantasy/adventure story. It had arrived just in time to be put through the long-haul flight test and as we flew over the tedious stretches of desert and ocean below, Henry and I allowed ourselves to be drawn into the world of floating cities, giants, pirates, politics and ingenious nautical desserts such as “caramel oysters, butterscotch prawns and blue ice-cream”. Art and life merged as we kept following the adventures of Anni Tidechild (what an inspired name!) during a few summer days in Venice – another ancient floating city – and we half-expected a wibbrens to appear at any moment.

Henry has been completely absorbed by the epic scale of *Empire of the Waves* – the story, the escapades, villainy and action, but the sign of Christopher's finest achievement, in my view, is that Henry talks of Anni as if she were in his class at school.

Anni is feisty, independent, sensitive; a girl who knows her own mind. She deeply loved her father, Sunsword, the city's librarian, who disappeared when she was only three, taking with him some profound secrets. Anni's longing for him pervades the novel in a melancholy way but also drives her energetically on her quest. As his name suggests, apart from his reverence for books, Sunsword is probably not like any suburban librarian you've known and he has an intriguing past that Anni is desperate to understand.

After an idyllic family holiday in Europe, it was time to return to the chalkface and, as I put my English teacher hat on, I started to think how this wonderful novel could work in the classroom. These are as yet untested ideas, but *Empire of the Waves* is a novel that I can really see working for middle-school students (Years 5-8), especially the ones who enjoy being transported into a vivid imaginary world while being anchored by characters they believe in. The ones who loved

Empire of the Waves could hold its place in a fantasy unit, a unit on The Epic, an exploration of quest stories...

Narnia, *The Hobbit*, the Harry Potter series and *Northern Lights*. The ones who can be left a little cold by YA realist 'issue fiction'. It's the first in a trilogy, so those hooked will have more to look forward to.

It's a decent length (375 pages) and the vocabulary level will stretch your capable readers, so it would probably work best in a mixed-ability classroom as one of a few text choices offered to students in a broader unit on fantasy, epic or adventure stories.

The strong female protagonist is a definite drawcard, but her endearing companion, Duck, also wrestles with his own questions about his father's identity and about whom he can trust. He is a complex character in his own right and they form an interesting friendship.

Although *Empire of the Waves* could hold its place in a fantasy unit, I'd be tempted to place more focus on the epic maritime qualities that are so distinctive to the story. A unit on The Epic could cover a novel like this alongside some more ancient examples of the genre: ***Jason and the Argonauts*** and ***Beowulf*** (which has a sumptuous and classroom-friendly graphic novel version by a master of the form, **Gareth Hinds**).

If you wanted to look more broadly at the depiction of epic voyages, the **Australian Maritime Museum in Sydney** has permanent exhibitions which would provide evocative stimulus for writing as well as a historical perspective on our relationship with the sea and its adventurers (**Shackleton**, Kay Cottee et al). They even have a *Horrible Histories* exhibition **coming up** (from December 2015) on pirates that would tie in beautifully. Documentary films such as *Kon-Tiki* and *Voyage of Bounty's Child* (both about real epic voyages of discovery) and epic film dramas such as *Pirates of the Caribbean* and *Lord of the Rings* would be rich and interesting companion in a study of the evolution of this genre.

The novel could also work well alongside others in an exploration of quest stories. It's hard to find stories in this genre with strong females at their heart, so *Empire of the Waves* could sit alongside *The Hobbit* or an Arthurian retelling to explore the archetypes associated with this kind of story and how they can be remoulded for new audiences.



Satisfy young readers' demands for compelling action while poignantly depicting the darker side of human nature

It also reminded me of Jennifer A. Nielsen's *Ascendance* trilogy (a popular classroom text in the United States – full of pirate action and epic journeys), as both stories satisfy young readers' demands for compelling action while also poignantly depicting their protagonists' reluctant discoveries of the darker side of human nature – political treachery, betrayal, cruelty and snobbery. The issues of true identity and mysterious parentage dominate both sagas. This pairing of texts could spark plenty of interesting intertextual comparison.

Like these other stories, the imaginary worlds of Pel Narine and the seas beyond it in *Empire of the Waves* lend themselves to creative explorations of setting. The reader is given vivid details about food, clothing, architecture, religion, cultural practices, the city, the islands (and the wonderful creatures that inhabit them). These details could fuel visual representations, maps, timelines of the complex city's history, and imagined 'back stories' for characters such as the villainous Filip Able. As part of their study of the novel, students could compile a miniature personal library of artefacts, maps and stories that would make Sunsword proud.

It's also a story that will draw fans simply by being read aloud. If you're looking for a gripping story to read to students in instalments at the end of lessons or as part of a wide-reading promotion in the library, you've found it.

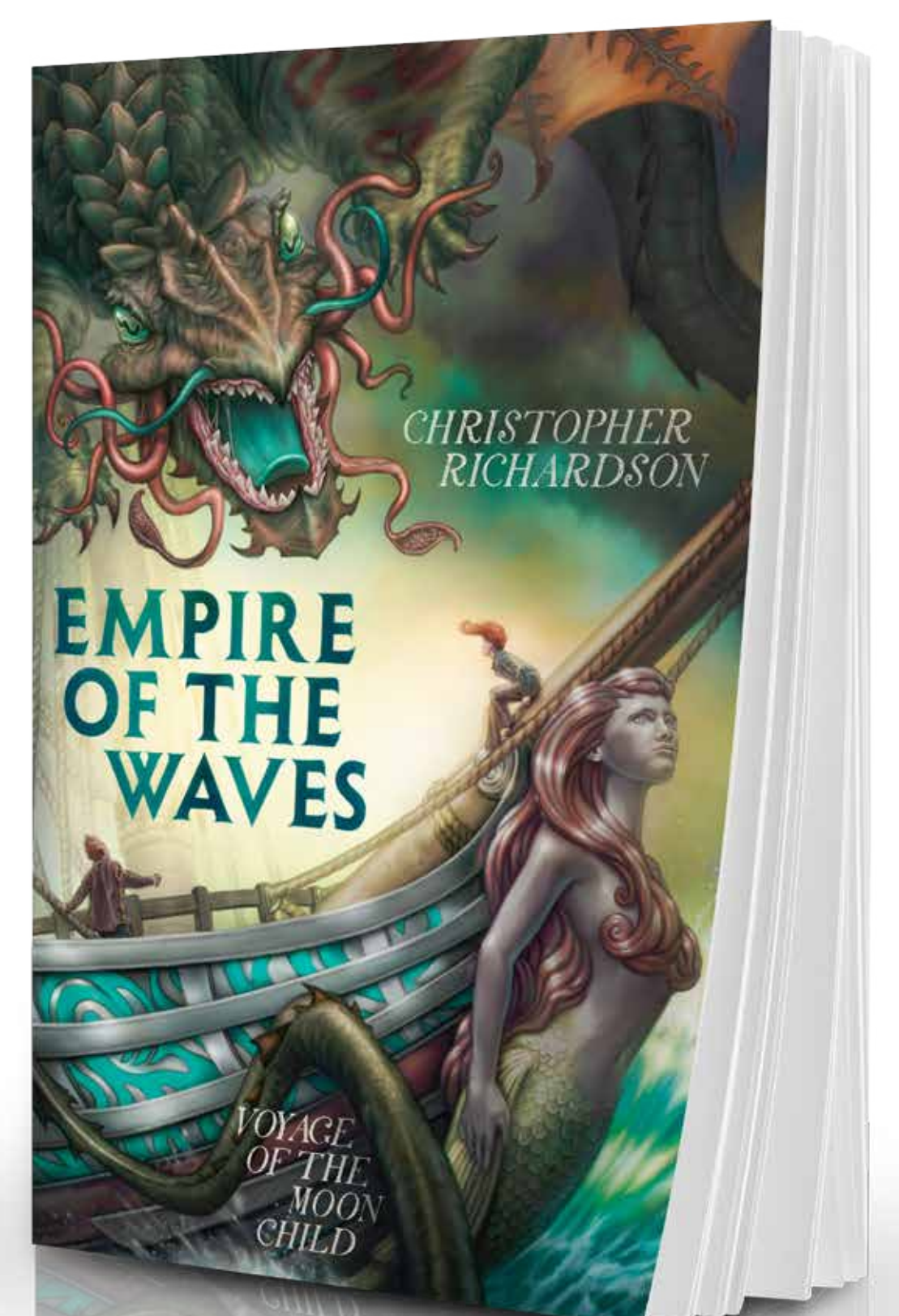
Christopher Richardson is a Sydney-based author. He remembers well what it's like to be an adolescent with a story burning in his head and a love of reading. He speaks with conviction and sensitivity to young audiences and I know he's keen to visit schools and share his novel with them.

Rachel Duke is English Coordinator at Santa Sabina College, Strathfield NSW.

Christopher Richardson can be contacted at chris@christopherrichardson.com.au or on Twitter @Richardson_CW

***Empire of the Waves* is available in paperback and eBook.**

If you're looking for a gripping story to read to students, or as part of a wide-reading promotion in the library, you've found it.





THE LISTIES

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A DICTIONARY OF
DISGUSTING NEW WORDS

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BIG BEAUTIFUL WORLD



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Marc Martin

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Get Happy

New books from Chelsea Clinton, Pharrell Williams and Emily-Anne Rigal explore different paths to positivity and empowerment for young people

By Samson McDougall

All of a sudden, in 2014, *Happy* was everywhere: in headphones, shopping malls, airports, cars, schools, workplaces, cafes and bedrooms.

You couldn't escape even if you wanted to. Pharrell Williams' hit song showed the world how infectious happiness can be.

Celebrating the happiness you have is one thing; getting hold of it in the first place is another. For young people, balancing the weight of expectations of the previous generations against the pressures of the day to day can be challenging. They're learning to negotiate social situations, school and work pressures; who they are and where they're heading. But they're also asking big questions about the state of the planet, poverty, gender equality, civil liberties, food security, health and politics. They have unprecedented access to information and their expectations for the future are high.

Helping young people deal with their insecurities, take charge of the world around them and clap along to a happy beat empowers them to find their own roads to happiness. Books by Chelsea Clinton, Emily-Anne Rigal and Pharrell Williams offer three very different yet complementary pathways to positivity.

Chelsea Clinton is an act-now-ask-questions-later kind of woman, and her book, *It's Your World: Get Informed, Get Inspired & Get Going*, is a call to arms. By unpacking the challenges the next generation faces, she opens up actionable pathways to meaningful change.

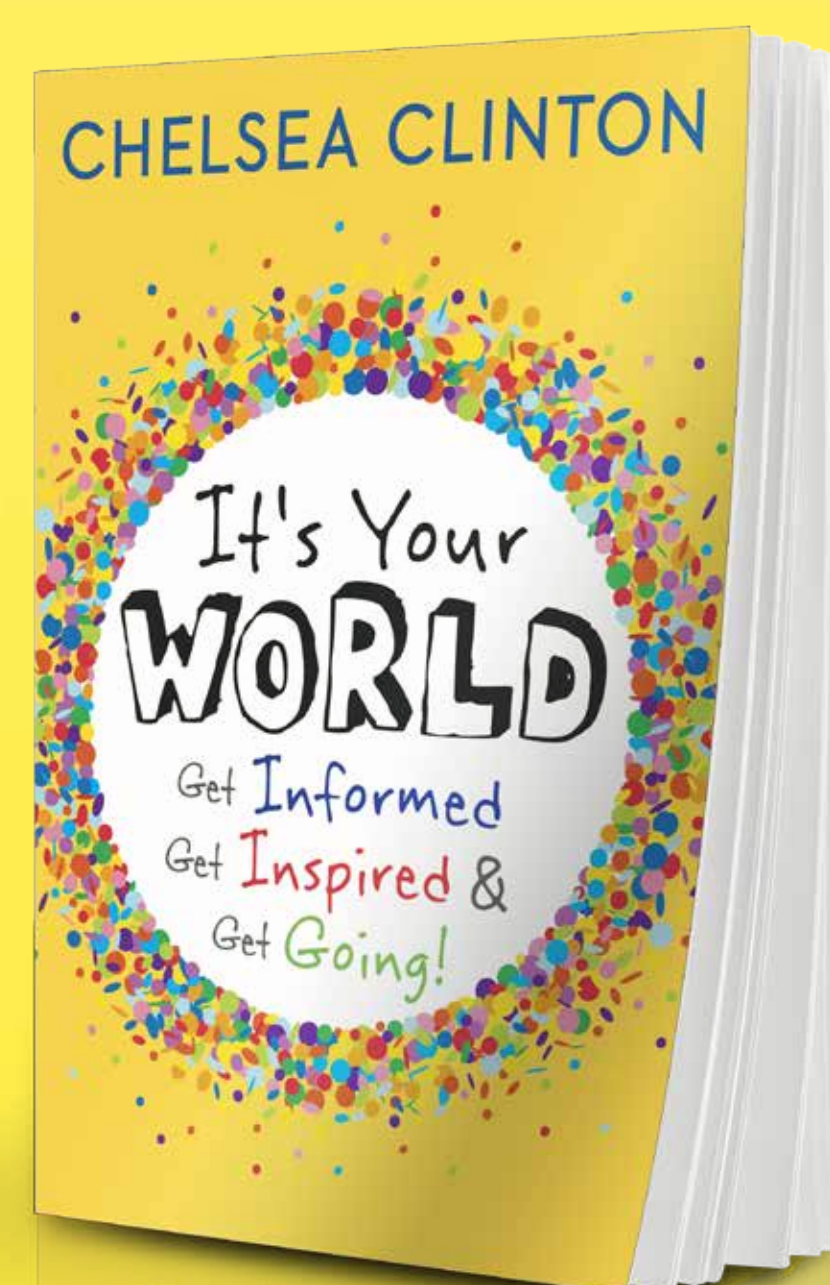
Emerging from the shadow of her U.S. President father and former U.S. Secretary of State mother, Chelsea has cut her own path in the world. She has a Doctorate in International Relations from Oxford University, has worked as a journalist and public speaker, does a wide range of charity work, and holds seats on several boards – including the [Clinton Foundation](#).

Chelsea was inspired to write this book while pregnant with her first child. In an [interview](#) in *People* magazine she commented, “I wanted my daughter to grow up in a world where kids are informed about what's happening, feel empowered to make a difference and ultimately take action on issues they care about.”

It's Your World offers a three-pronged approach for young people to take action towards positive impacts. The first step is to give young readers hard facts and information to equip them for the road ahead.

The next phase is about inspiring young people to action: offering up stories of hope and empowerment; demonstrating how every individual has the power to make a difference.

From here Clinton presents practical, real-world suggestions for ways that young readers can positively impact their communities and the wider world.



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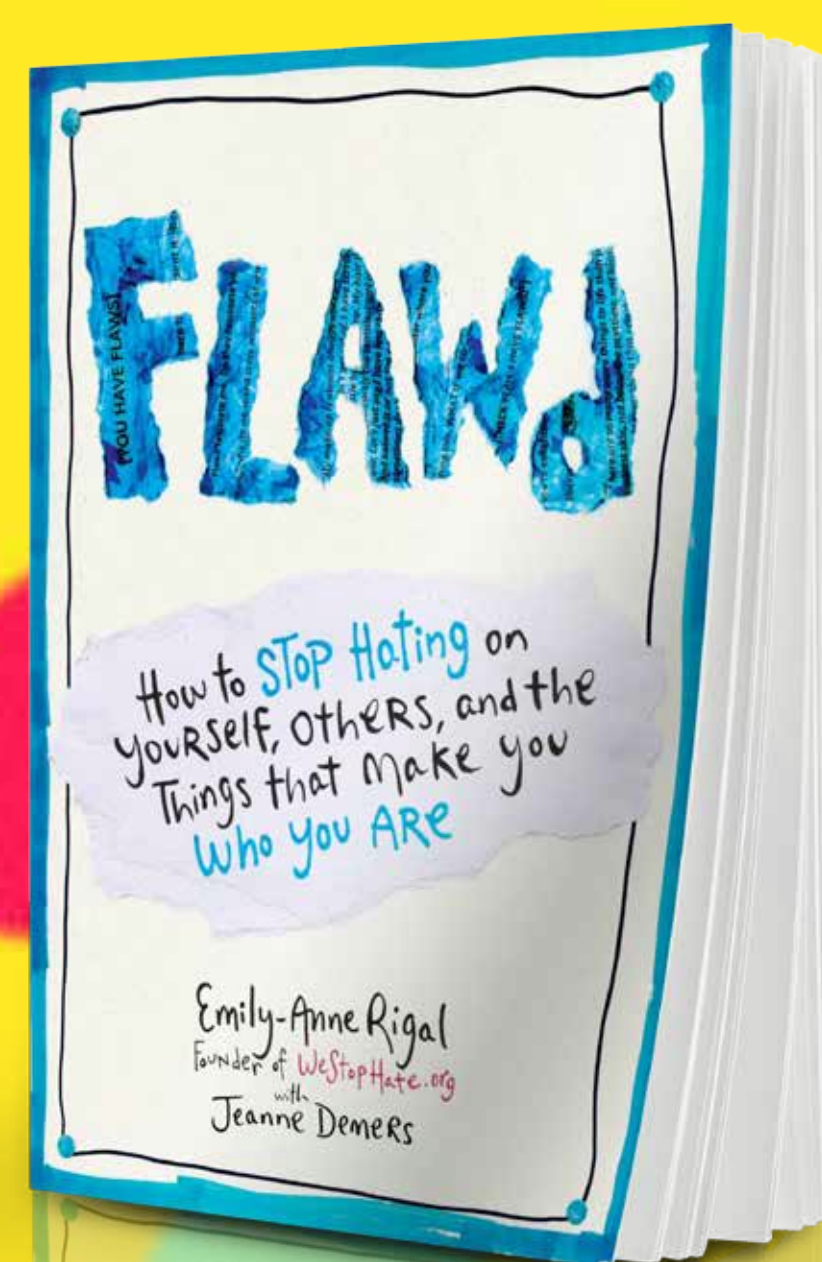
FLAWD's subtitle says it all: *How to Stop Hating on Yourself, Others and the Things that Make You Who You Are*. It's a guide for coping with social-emotional challenges, dealing with insecurities and embracing positivity.

Emily-Anne Rigal is best known as the founder of WeStopHate.org – a content channel featuring videos of teens talking about how they've dealt with bullying and improved their self-esteem.

She believes that rather than restricting our potential by looking at our flaws as limitations, we all should see our differences as doorways to new and exciting things.

"It's about perspective," Emily-Anne states in *FLAWD*'s introduction. "It's about examining and playing with our perspective so that even though we live in a society that thrives on flaw hate, we can move in the direction of flaw love."

The book sets out clear steps for moving towards better awareness, self-acceptance and authenticity. Emily-Anne questions: why feel shame when it's possible to feel compassion? Why experience embarrassment when it's possible to experience curiosity? Why set limitations when it's possible to be free?



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"Because I'm happy / Clap along if you feel like a room without a roof.
Because I'm happy / Clap along if you feel like happiness is the truth.
Because I'm happy / Clap along if you know what happiness is to you.
Because I'm happy / Clap along if you feel like that's what you wanna do..."

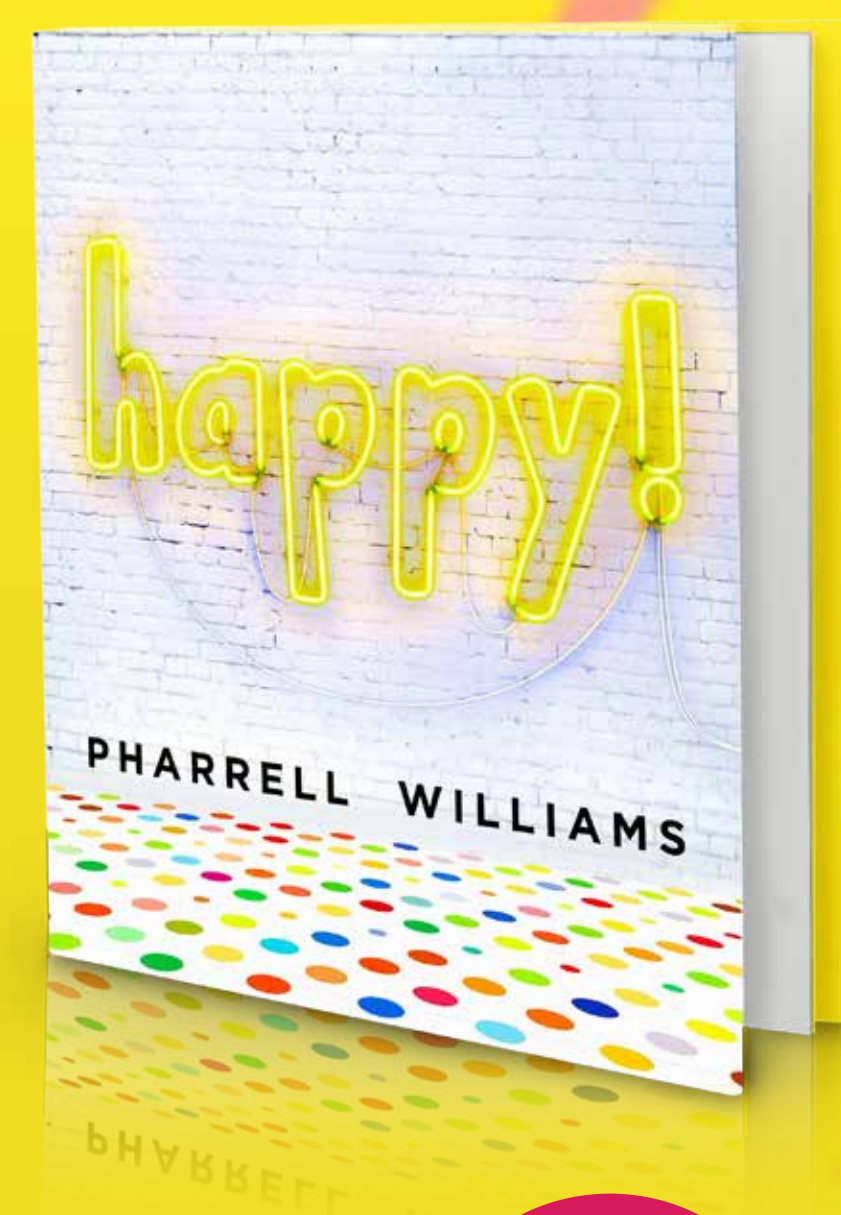
Happy is one of the world's bestselling singles, it held the number-one spot on the ARIA singles charts for 12 weeks, the video accrued hundreds of millions of views on YouTube, and sparked a flood of hundreds of tribute videos from around the world.

To keep the song's good vibes flowing, Pharrell Williams has followed it up with his debut children's picture book.

The book features photographs of children across cultures and around the world, celebrating what happiness means to them.

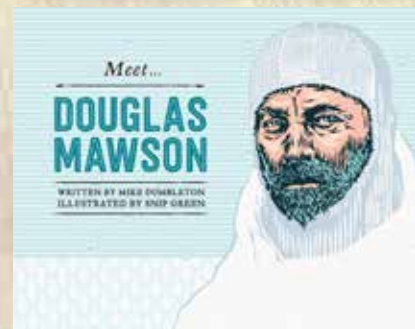
By propelling the exuberance of the song to a wider audience, he hopes to spread his message of positivity further than ever.

"I'm humbled by the global success of *Happy*, but especially in awe of the song's young fans," he commented in a statement about the book. "My collaboration with Penguin allows me to continue a dialogue with these children in a fresh, new way... feeding the curiosity of young minds with imagination."



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MEET THE SERIES!

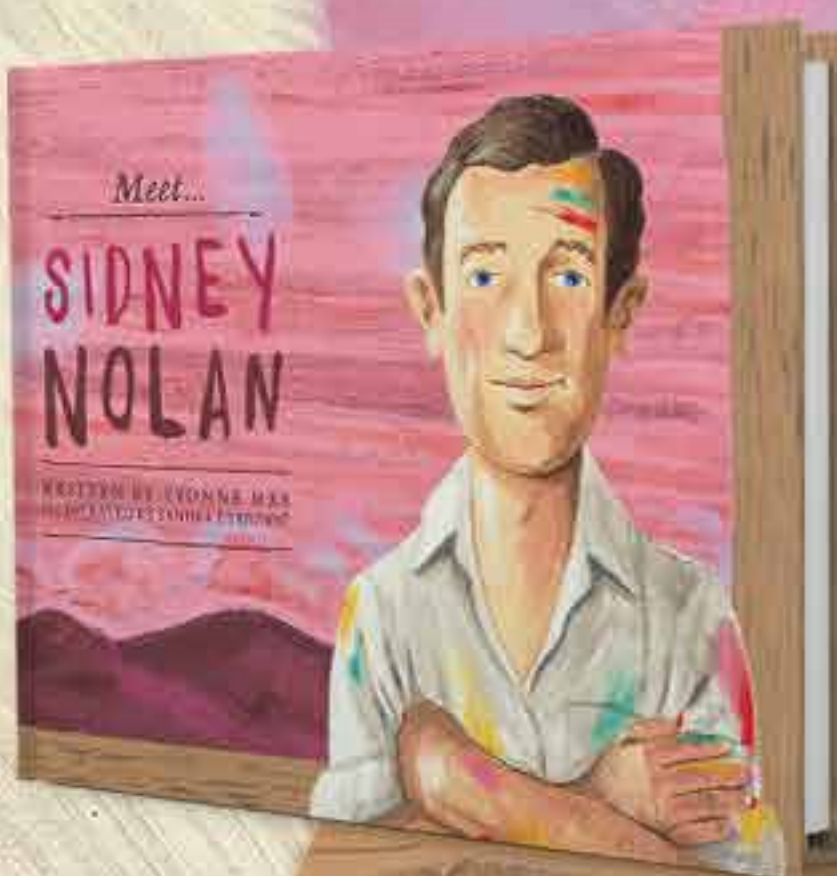


Meet...

SIDNEY NOLAN

WRITTEN BY YVONNE MES
ILLUSTRATED BY SANDRA ETEROVIC

A picture book series about the extraordinary men and women who have shaped Australia's history, including iconic painter Sidney Nolan.



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COCO BANJO

IS HAVING A YAY DAY



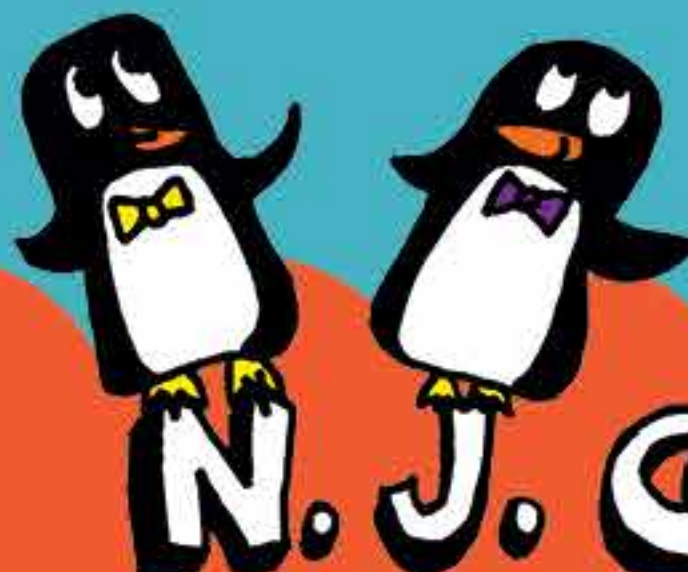
does **NOT** want to go to **SCHOOL** today.

Instead she's planning a **YAY DAY** of fun on her secret island home on Sydney Harbour, with her penguin friends.



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N. J. GEMMELL

LUCY ESTELA AND MATT OTTLEY

SURTI'S WALL

A moving tale of the power of the human spirit brought alive by Lucy Estela and award-winning illustrator Matt Ottley.

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Women of the Sun PENGUIN TEACHER'S ACADEMY EDITION

This quartet of stories speaks with a simplicity and power of the Aboriginal voice illuminating from their perspective the experience of two centuries of white domination.

Alinta – she is one of the first to see the men with faces of clay, and one of the few to survive their invasion of the land of the ancestors.

Maydina – she must submit to a new law which preaches love while it takes her daughter away.

Nerida – she seeks the strength to defy tyranny and give her people hope.

Lo-Arna – she discovers the secret of her origin and must come to terms with all that it means.

Though they lived in different eras they shared the same resilience and spirit.

PENGUIN
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TEACHERS' EDITION

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Please email publicity@penguinrandomhouse.com.au using subject line: **Women of the Sun**



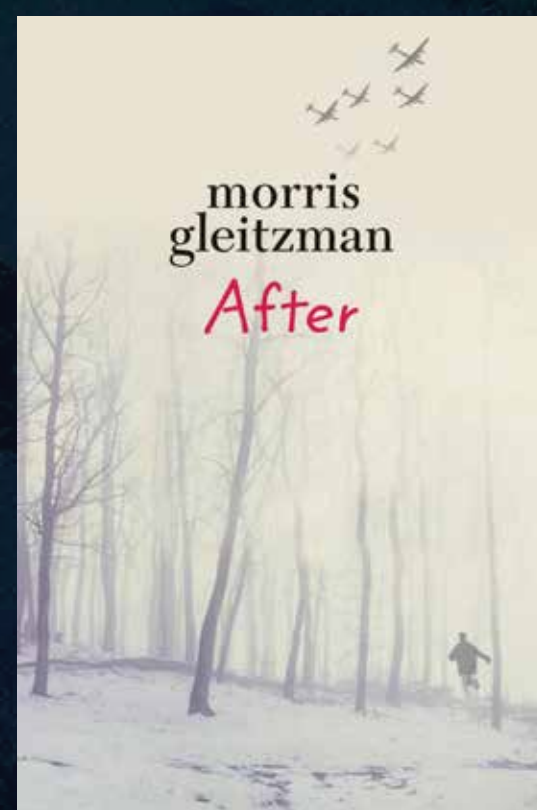
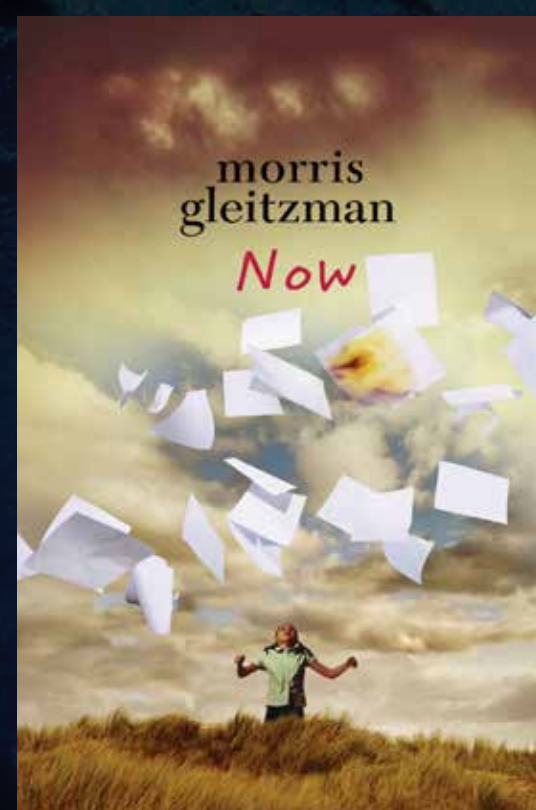
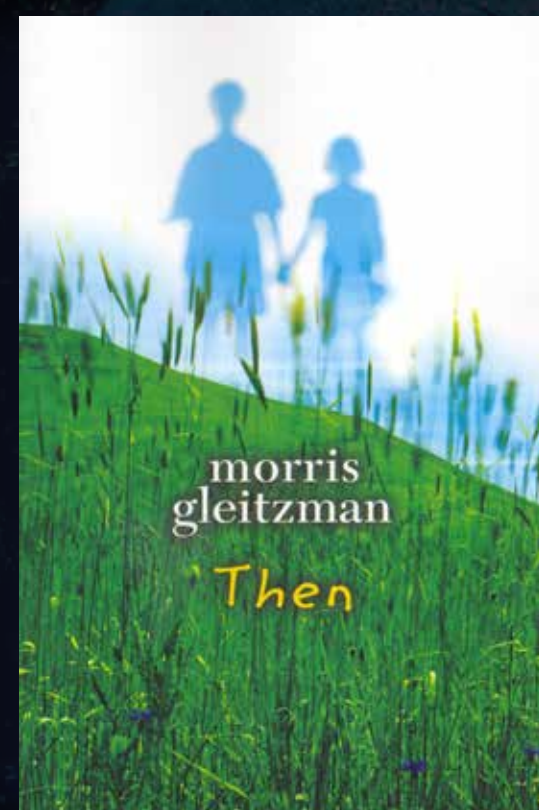
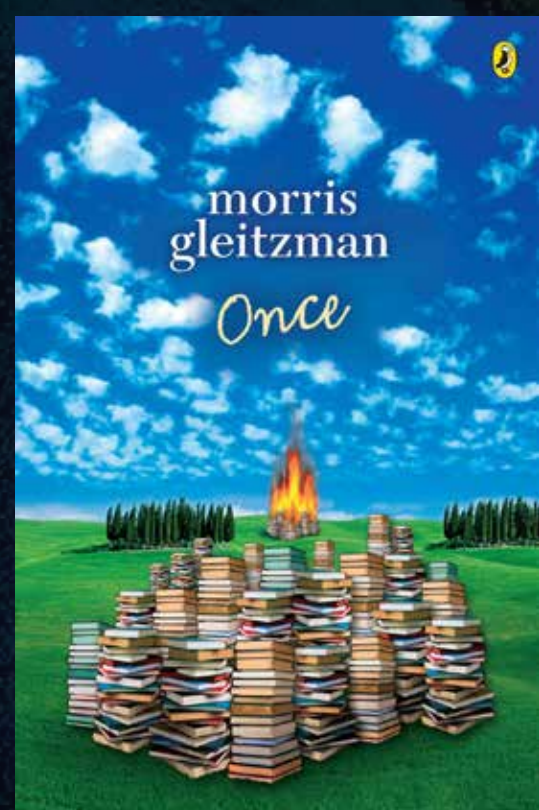
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