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FICTION STANDING ORDER



FEATURED BOOK: **THE GIRL WHO BROUGHT MISCHIEF**

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This month our featured book is one of my favourite junior fiction titles so far this year (do I say that every month?). It's **The Girl Who Brought Mischief** by Katrina Nannestad. It's so, so funny, very moving and made me positively weepy in places. I think it's the kind of title young readers will love. It has plenty of appeal for both boys and girls. The writing is simple, so it will work well for readers aged nine to 11. The story is set in Denmark in 1911. Inge Maria Jensen arrives by boat to live with her grandmother after the death of her mother. At first, her grandmother appears stern and strict and unloving. The unfolding of the relationship between the young girl and the older woman is a delight. Inge gets herself into so much trouble, but her mischief brings laughter and love to a quiet, stagnant community. An absolute gem of a book.

View from the 32nd Floor is also a beautiful, appealing book. William lives on the 32nd floor of an apartment block and from there he can see what is happening in the lives of his neighbours. This very gentle story shows how even a young boy can make a difference in the lives of so many and bring a community together. Suitable for Mid to Upper Primary.

New Zealand-based publisher Gecko Press has just been awarded the Bologna Prize for the Best Children's Publisher of the Year at the Bologna Children's Book Fair in Italy. Here at ASO we're big fans of the way Gecko finds quirky, interesting children's books, translates them and then publishes them in the English language. This month we've selected **Wolf and Dog**, which is a hilarious series of short vignettes about Wolf and Dog, who are cousins. The two animals are always trying to get the best of each other. Short, simple text and lots of colour illustrations make this one perfect for beginning readers. The original Dutch version won the 2010 Dutch Flag and Pennant Award.

That Boy, Jack by award-winning author Janeen Brian, is a terrific book for Upper Primary, boys in particular. Set in Moonta in South Australia in the 1800s, it's the story of the small mining town and the families who live there. It's an exploration of a mining community and the troubles that faced the people struggling to make a living. It's also a great adventure story and Jack is an appealing and lovable character.

The River Charm is the new novel from Belinda Murrell and is suitable for Upper Primary, girls in particular. The story was inspired by, and is a tribute to, Charlotte Waring, an early Australian immigrant, who was also the author of the first children's book published in Australia. It's a thriller, family saga, romance and adventure rolled into one, with lots of historical information that gives an insight into life in early Australia.

Happy reading.

COMING NEXT ISSUE

BUSH HOLIDAY (MATES)

– Leonie Norrington and
Brenton E. McKenna

DIARY OF A BAT

– Sally Sutton and Dave Gunson

LINA AT THE GAMES (OUR AUSTRALIAN GIRL BOOK 3)

– Sally Rippin

JAMIE REIGN: THE LAST SPIRIT WARRIOR

– Paula Tierney

THE BIG DRY

– Tony Davis

SCIS

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www.australianstandingorders.com.au

THE GIRL WHO BROUGHT MISCHIEF

KATRINA NANNESTAD

It's 1911 and ten-year-old Inge Maria arrives on the sleepy island of Bornholm, Denmark with a trunk full of belongings and a head full of fairytales. Covered in fish guts and now missing one blonde plait (thanks to her only travelling companion – a hungry goat) she meets her grandmother for the very first time. Spirited Inge Maria is determined to make her stern, no-nonsense grandmother and the people of Bornholm (themselves mild-mannered and unimaginative) fall in love with her. But this solo mission is not without its challenges! Broken eggs, loose farm animals, fanciful stories and boisterous church singing all threaten to derail Inge Maria's chance at belonging... but it's this talent for mischief that begins to win her grandmother's heart. As the bond with her grandmother deepens, Inge Maria learns that grief and joy can exist simultaneously and that it is okay to have both.

ISBN: 9780733332005

RRP: \$14.99



TEACHER NOTES

- Inge Maria has a lively, vivid imagination. She lives in a magical world of talking animals, fairytales and flying pie dishes. In her apology letter to her Her Nielsen, Inge Maria writes: 'Stories and paintings are the windows to a person's soul. If we make all our stories and pictures the same, I am scared that we will lose the bits of us that make us sparkly and happy and unique' (p 124). Do you agree with Inge Maria? How can stories and paintings be the 'windows' to a person's soul? What would your classroom be like if Her Nielsen was the teacher and nobody was allowed to express their individuality?
- Inge Maria initially feels like she is betraying her mother by finding a new place to belong. Can you belong in more than one place at once? Why/Why not? Where are some different places that you feel a sense of belonging? Why is it so important to have a sense of belonging and what is significant about the last line of the novel?
- For the first part of the book, we don't know why Inge Maria has left Copenhagen. When we learn that her mother has died, our worst suspicions are confirmed. She is an orphan, still grieving but determined to be brave and not to cry. Inge Maria describes how she was humming at her mother's funeral because if she didn't she would want to scream. 'I will scream at the men to dig that box back up again. I will scream at Oline to stop squeezing me so hard. But most of all I will scream that I want my mama right now' (p 77). How did you feel when Grandmother wrapped her arms around Inge Maria and held her while she sobbed for her mother? Why is it important to share your emotions with a friend or family member?
- Through the characters of Inge Maria and Grandmother, the author offers us insight into the journey of grief and losing a loved one. Chapter 18 has some particularly good examples and Inge Maria learns that it is okay to feel grief and joy at the same time. It might be appropriate to consider a class discussion about students' experiences with death and loss. Discussion should refocus on Grandmother's positive words: 'It's okay to be sad when someone goes away, because it means that we are blessed. Blessed to have loved someone so much and to have had them as a special part of our lives,' (p 204).
- The first task Grandmother sets Inge Maria is to write a short story containing a bowl of oatmeal, a fox and a black kitten (p 121). This tells Inge Maria that Grandmother does have an appreciation for imagination! Set up a round robin storytelling circle with the class. Fill a pillowcase with various objects and allow the first student to randomly select an object as stimulus and begin the story using three sentences. The next student takes another item and incorporates this into the story. Encourage students to accept and add to their classmates' ideas and guide the class towards a complication, climax and resolution. This technique proves lots of fun and should guarantee some creative results.
- The story is set on the tiny island of Bornholm, Denmark in 1911. Research the island of Bornholm and prepare a short report for your teacher. Remember to include a map clearly showing where exactly Bornholm is. You might like to include the flag for Denmark too.
- Inge Maria loved fairytales by the great Danish author Hans Christian Andersen. Even though Inge Maria was reading his fairytales in 1911, the author was born over one hundred years earlier. His stories have been around for a long time and you will be amazed at how many he wrote! Research and write a biography of the life and achievements of Hans Christian Andersen. The websites below provide some useful resources for teachers with lots of interesting facts. Depending on the reading levels of your students, you may wish to organise some prints first and make these available to your levelled reading groups.
 - o <http://holidays-family-time.knoji.com/10-facts-about-fairy-tale-writer-hans-christian-andersen-for-international-childrens-book-day/>
 - o <http://www.andersenfairytales.com/>
 - o http://kids.denmark.dk/denmarkKidsHCA_eng.htm
 - o <http://childrensbooks.about.com/cs/authorsillustrato/a/hcandersen.htm>

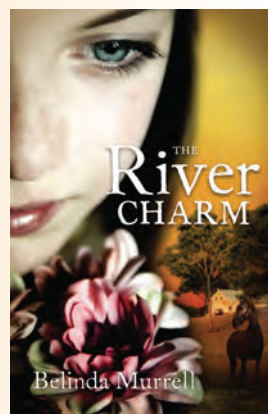
THE RIVER CHARM

BELINDA MURRELL

The River Charm tells in fictional form the story of an early Australian female immigrant, Charlotte Waring (Atkinson/Barton), who married and was widowed with four children. She was then forced to flee from her second husband and to fight the laws of the land in order to have her children remain by her side. Her family's fierce love for the country and their home is one of the major themes. This love for the landscape is enhanced by the Atkinsons' interaction with local Aboriginal culture, and by their empathy with the Aboriginal people regarding their treatment at the hands of settlers. Charlotte was resourceful, intrepid, feisty and brave. She could manage a property and a household, while writing, drawing, painting and teaching, and was able to adapt her skills from a life of pleasure and wealth to having to scrape a living in order to feed her family.

ISBN: 9781742757124

RRP: \$15.95



TEACHER NOTES

- Compare the author's writing style with her great-great-great-great grandmother Charlotte's writing in 'A Mother's Offering to Her Children' (1841) – the stories are structured as a dialogue between a mother and her children, like a playscript. You might discuss the fact that Charlotte's stories, despite her obvious sympathy for the plight of Aboriginal people, sometimes sound quite patronising and racist, because they are a product of the times.
- How does this story compare to the details found in online biographies of Charlotte Waring?
- What problems might an author face in deliberately blending fact and fiction?
- How does this novel fall into the 'romance' genre? What scenes or events are illustrative of this genre?
- Research the daily life lived by early settlers, their leisure pursuits, and how they did things such as cooking, sewing, and crafts such as blacksmithing and carpentry.
- Research the Gandangara people's history. See 'Selected bibliography of the Gundungurra language and people held in the AIATSIS Library' http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/library/docs/langbibs/Gundungurra_may09.pdf.
- Discuss the treatment of Aboriginal people during these early years of settlement. Read pp 71-72. Discuss what this section reveals about nineteenth-century attitudes to Aboriginal people and the practice of violent white retaliation to such incidents.
- How were Charlotte's attitudes to Aboriginal people different to those of her contemporaries?
- Are contemporary attitudes to Aboriginal people and understanding of their cultural beliefs more enlightened in your opinion? What has changed in the past hundred and fifty years?
- Do you think that the executors treated Charlotte badly? Or were they just doing their job?
- Do you think that young Charlotte made the right decision in returning to Oldbury with her family rather than marrying William?

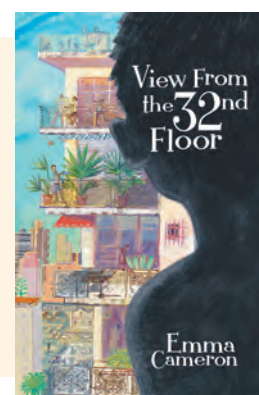
VIEW FROM THE 32ND FLOOR

EMMA CAMERON

Living on the thirty-second floor of an apartment block, William has a clear view of the building opposite. He sees his neighbours eating ice-cream, watering potted palms, painting pictures ... or as shadows behind closed curtains. Shadows worry William. With his new friend Rebecca, and helped by lots of cake, a dictionary of names, tai chi, and banana-shaped sticky notes, he plans to tempt his lonely neighbours back into the world. Can they succeed? Always always.

ISBN: 9781922077295

RRP: \$16.95



TEACHER NOTES

- What are the themes in **View From the 32nd Floor**? Write a statement of belief for each theme, then assess how this book's treatment of these themes makes you feel.
- William and Rebecca keep lists. Do you think this helps them think about what is worrying them? Do the lists help them do something about what worries them?
- Rebecca likes to keep lists of all sorts of things. Make a list of all the characters William and Rebecca meet and include their apartment number and a description of their apartment.
- William likes to pick a new name for himself every day. Hold a 'choose your own name' day in your class where students can pick a new name for the day. Wear a name tag to display the new name. Each student can prepare a presentation to explain what their new name means and why they chose it. Have each student create a collage to illustrate the meaning of the name.
- William chooses his name based on its meaning. Have students research the origin of their name on www.meaning-of-names.com or www.behindthename.com. Also have students ask their parents why they chose their names. Do they think the name describes them? Students can present their findings to the class.
- What does the amount of people on each person's funeral guest list signify? Why do Rebecca and William think this is important?
- 'William decided that, if sounds could be seen, this would look like sun sparkling off the ocean on a bright day' (p 118). Imagine if other sounds could be seen and describe what the following would look like: electric guitar; car horn; lion's roar; maracas.
- What is the moral of this book? Hint: read chapter 22. Why do you think this moral is important? Do you agree or disagree with it? Why?

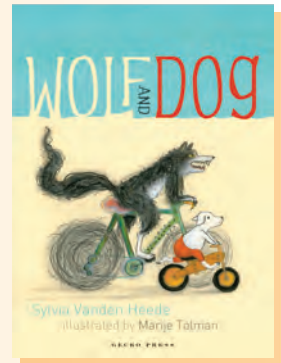
WOLF AND DOG

SYLVIA VANDEN HEEDE AND MARIJE TOLMAN (Illustrator)

Wolf and Dog are cousins. Wolf is wild and Dog is tame. Wolf lives in a forest on top of a hill. Dog doesn't. Dog has a basket. And a boss. Wolf and Dog delight in testing their relationship – they push the boundaries, make and break promises, set up tests and challenges, tease and trick. However, their shared love of language and word play – especially rhyme – alongside a sense of fairness and loyalty to family, means they ultimately look out for and help each other when it counts.

ISBN: 9781877579387

RRP: \$19.99



TEACHER NOTES

- The blurb on the back of the book states that these stories are about 'The important things in life – like food, family, and fleas.' Do you agree that these are important things in life? Why/why not? Choose the three most important things in your life to write a short story about, with you as one of the main characters.
- Dog is tame and Wolf is wild. What is the difference between a tame and a wild animal? Discuss or divide into teams and debate the concept that: 'A wild animal can't be tamed' (p 18).
- Wolf leads Dog to believe there will be an article about his heroic actions in the newspaper (p 55). Imagine you are a journalist and write the article. Present it in a newspaper format, including a picture of Dog.
- Dog is afraid of the cat, as he thinks it is a lion (pp 60-61). In his description, what are the three statements he chooses to describe a lion? Choose ten animals to describe using three statements. In pairs, guess the animals each other has described.
- Anthropomorphism is when animals or things are depicted with human attributes and behaviours. Find ten examples of this in the stories. Find other stories where wolves or dogs are depicted in this way, for example, 'The Three Little Pigs' or 'Little Red Riding Hood'.
- Examine the illustrations in the book. What attracts your attention to a particular picture? What colours are used? What kinds of lines and textures are used? Do the pictures mirror the text or go beyond what the story tells you? Which is your favourite illustration and why?
- There are many language features in the book. For example, similes, onomatopoeia, rhyme, silent letters, palindromes, alliteration, common sayings or puns. Find the definition and an example of each of those listed above.

THAT BOY, JACK

JANEEN BRIAN

Best friends Jack and Gilbert made a pact when they were younger – promising to work together in the copper mines, just like their fathers and other Cornish immigrants. But now Jack is turning twelve, and the thought of working underground fills him with panic. When Gilbert is forced to leave school and earn a wage, Jack wants to keep his word to his friend – but that means facing his fear. And all the while his heart is telling him to follow another path. That boy, Jack, must find the courage to choose.

ISBN: 9781922179005

RRP: \$16.95



TEACHER NOTES

- Old, Anglicised Cornish language is often colourful and pictorial. For example:
 - o *an ashes cat* is a person always found near the fire.
 - o *blawed* means out of breath
 - o *roving with pain* means in agony
 - o *turn 'ee to doors* means to kick you out.Create some colourful, pictorial language of your own for everyday objects or happenings.
- The book ends with Jack starting to read Gilbert's letter, though the reader does not get to see what is in the letter. Write a letter from Gilbert to Jack. Make sure to write it in Gilbert's voice, using appropriate language and slang.
- Why does Jack's mother not want him to go into the mines? How would leaving school and starting work in the mines affect Jack's life? Write a list of pros and cons of Jack leaving school and working in the mines.
- Mr Skinner canes Jack for writing with his left hand. Try writing with your opposite hand to see what Jack felt like. Do you think Mr Skinner was being fair?
- In Chapter 25, Jack doesn't want to tell his parents what is really going on at school. Why do you think he feels this way?
- Jack is scared of going into the mines but is embarrassed to let Gilbert know. Why would he not want to tell Gilbert?
- Bullying is a prominent theme in this book. What does it mean to be a bully? How does Willie Ryan bully Jack?
- Jack's family migrated from Cornwall in the United Kingdom to Moonta in South Australia. Find both places on a map and think about how Jack's family would have travelled that far in the 1800s. How would people travel from Cornwall to Moonta today? Why would people have migrated to Australia from Cornwall in the late 1800s?
- In Chapter 18, Jack reads a newspaper article about Elizabeth Woolcock. Research her in your library or on the internet to find out more about her. Write a newspaper report about her crime.