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PRIMARY STANDING ORDER

As mentioned last month, June is a smaller month for picture books, but what a trio of lovely books they are!



FEATURED BOOK: **KING PIG**

For information about our featured book, please visit our website:
australianstandingorders.com.au

Our featured book this month is the wonderfully funny **King Pig**, written and illustrated by Nick Bland. This is a laugh-out-loud book about a king (who is a pig) who can't understand why his subjects (a flock of sheep) don't adore him. He doesn't seem to realise it has something to do with the fact that he uses his power for his own benefit and is always making the sheep do outrageous things – scrubbing the castle walls at night, catapulting them off trees, making him fancy clothes ... You may find that King Pig and the sheep remind you of characters in the playground (or perhaps the workplace!). Behind all the humour is a lesson about caring for others. Suitable for Lower to Mid Primary.

Chris McKimmie has such a unique style of writing and illustrating. His previous books have proved enormously popular, with three of them – **Brian Banana Duck**, **Special Key** and **Two Peas in a Pod** – all shortlisted in the CBCA awards. In **Scarlett and the Scratchy Moon**, Chris cleverly combines illustrations, text and graphics to create a picture book about family, pets, loss, grief and joy. There are so many layers to this story and so many things to discover. I love the list of pets on the dedication page (particularly 'Charlie dog, diagnosed as being allergic to himself') and the information on the final page about how the book was created. As always, Chris has used children's drawings in some parts of the book. A delight. Suitable for Lower to Mid Primary and also for Upper Primary students studying art and ways of presenting story.

Hold on Tight by Sara Acton is a delightful book for Lower Primary. It's all about imagination, fear and the safety and warmth of family. Sara was awarded the 2012 Crichton Award for her beautiful debut, **Ben & Duck**. Her more recent titles, **The Unexpected Crocodile** (written by Kim Kane) and **Daisy and the Puppy** (written by Lisa Shanahan) also showcase her lyrical style of illustration. In **Hold on Tight**, her illustrations and simple rhyming text perfectly capture the colours and movement of autumn and the little girl's imagination.

Today, as I was putting the finishing touches on these notes, the CBCA shortlist was announced. Much excitement at ASO – all the picture books on the shortlist are ASO selections! I think my personal picture book favourite for 2012 (although it's always so hard to choose) is Gus Gordon's sublime **Herman and Rosie**. Are you happy with this year's shortlist? Did any of your favourite books miss out? We'd love to hear from you, so email our customer service team.

Happy reading.

Belinda

COMING NEXT ISSUE

JEREMY

– Chris Faille and Danny Snell

PARACHUTE

– Danny Parker and Matt Ottley

LET'S PAINT

– Gabriel Alborozo

ANGELA AND THE CHERRY TREE

– Raphaelle Frier
and Teresa Lima

WHERE ARE YOU, BANANA?

– Sofie Laguna
and Craig Smith

SCARLETT AND THE SCRATCHY MOON

CHRIS MCKIMMIE

Scarlett can't get to sleep because she is missing her beloved pet dogs, Holly and Sparky. Although we do not know what happened to them, it is clear that the dogs have died and Scarlett's world now seems empty and sad. Yet life continues, the sun rises and Scarlett's day begins with breakfast, getting dressed and playing her flute. Suddenly, there is a knock at the door and when she opens it, she discovers two puppies sitting patiently on her doorstep, Tiny Rex and Harriet. Happiness is restored as the puppies find their place amongst Scarlett's beloved toys, dress-ups and playhouse ... and as Scarlett drifts off to sleep that night, all is well in her world. Many parents and teachers seek out books about death that are suitable for young children. The loss of a pet is often a child's first experience of grief. But even if the child has lost a loved human, a story like this is a gentle way to help adults and children explore their feelings.

ISBN: 9781743315156

RRP: \$29.99



TEACHER NOTES

Themes: grief/loss, acceptance, renewal, imagination and play.

- Before reading, ask the students to examine the front and back covers, endpapers and read the words on the back cover. What sort of story do they think this is going to be? What makes them think that? After reading it, did the book meet their expectations? Was it what they expected or was it different? How?
- Ask students to bring in a photo of a favourite pet. Open up a class-wide discussion about how our pets make us feel. Get students to talk about how they spend time with their pets, how they look after them, funny things their pets get up to. Make a list of words to describe pets and their special place in a family and put these words up on a classroom wall.
- Now ask students if anyone has lost a pet and encourage those students to talk about how they felt. Other students can talk about how they think they would feel about losing their pet. The words 'sad' and 'lonely' will probably be mentioned. Ask the class if their memories of their pet cheered them up. Explain that we can all have a mixture of feelings at the same time, and that sadness can be mixed with happy thoughts, too.
- Now turn to the image of Sparky and Holly sitting in the boat. Ask students how this picture makes them feel. Is the picture completely sad? What in the picture hints of sadness and what hints of nice memories?
- Have students write a FEELINGS acrostic poem about a pet.
- In the darkest point of the story, Scarlett says, 'I had clouds in my eyes.' Ask students what they think Scarlett is feeling here. Compose a short piece of music to reflect her feelings. Encourage students to think about what kind of instruments they would use. How fast or slow or loud or soft would the music be? Does the music match the colours that Chris McKimmie uses on this particular spread? Now turn to the following spread and ask students to do the same exercise. Is Scarlett still feeling sad, or is she feeling some other kinds of emotions? What might they be?
- Compare the different typefaces that Chris McKimmie uses. What sorts of feelings do they invoke and how has he conveyed the tone visually? Use the typefaces on the page depicting Scarlett's breakfast table to guess who is

speaking and how they are speaking.

- Compare the night sky at the beginning of the book with the night sky on the last page. How do they differ and what might this mean about how Scarlett has changed over the course of the story?
- Ask each student in your class to paint, draw or make a collage of one of their favourite pets. After completion, these can be mounted on the classroom wall with the pets' names, much like the back cover endpapers of **Scarlett and the Scratchy Moon**.

Author style

Chris McKimmie's books are always treasures of clever writing, free and expressive artwork, and highly creative design. His signature style includes the use of myriad materials such as tracing paper, charcoal, water colours, acrylic paints, pencils, buttons, acrylic ink, cardboard, stencils, masking tape, band aids, gaffer tape, and crayons ... to name just a few. Chris's illustrations are child-like and impressionistic. They might be called 'naïve' as they suggest they have been produced by a child, rendering the story all the more powerful because it speaks directly to the child reader. Indeed, **Scarlett and the Scratchy Moon** includes many drawings done by Chris's own children (when young) and his grandchildren.

Author motivation

Chris McKimmie says of his book, 'Dylan, our son in Perth and Scarlett's father, has been sending me little bits of things Scarlett has been saying to help with the book. One he sent ... pretty much sums up what I was trying to do with the book ... sort of jump-cut across time and show a so-called fictional world and a kind of realist world together'.

Dylan writes, 'I was putting Marc to bed last night with the lights off. Scarlett came in and told me she wanted to turn the light on and sing Marc a song. I said to leave the light off to which she asked, "but how will Marc see my words?" She conceives of the world in a way that is different in some respects to the way the rest of us do.'

KING PIG

NICK BLAND

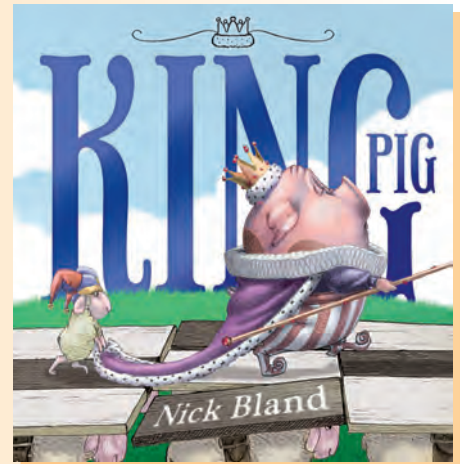
The setting of this story is a kingdom with only two kinds of inhabitants: pigs and sheep. And it is immediately clear where the power lies. There is just one pig – the king – but there are many sheep, and he walks all over them. Literally. King Pig's power is absolute, and the sheep are not happy. The king doesn't seem to understand why. The king doesn't just want obedience; he wants to be liked. He thinks that maybe if he changed his clothes he would be more attractive to the sheep. So the king pretends to extend the trotter of friendship and invites the sheep into his castle. Once inside, though, the sheep realise that the only reason he has allowed them in is so that they can make him a colourful new wardrobe. The sheep still don't like him and the king is dumbfounded – and possibly just dumb. What can he do to get the sheep to like him? The answer is simple: try being likeable. The king feels sorry for the sheep. At last he gets a bright idea and thinks of someone other than himself. He makes the sheep some new clothes to keep them warm. They're not the kind of covering the sheep are used to, or even very practical, but the sheep agree that at least the king's gesture is a start.

From the author: 'King Pig' is my rant about the blindness of power and people's tendency to use that power for quite irksome endeavours. In the end, when King Pig finally gives the sheep back their wool, not only does he expect praise for it, but he truly believes he has improved it for them. He's not completely irredeemable, but it's clear that change might take time.

'That isn't exactly what the young reader will see. The young reader will see familiar characters in a familiar setting and a series of events that is both predictable and slightly surprising. It is an Orwellian fable about a selfish king and his need to be loved.' (For more about Nick Bland's motivation for writing **King Pig**, please see our website's 'Featured Books' section.)

ISBN: 9781742834955

RRP: \$24.99



TEACHER NOTES

Themes

Readers of varying ages will find their own levels of meaning in this text. It can be read by four year olds, as the back cover blurb suggests: as 'a royal romp'. Or for slightly older readers it can be a satire about leadership, power, friendship and selfishness. It can also be read alongside 'The Emperor's New Clothes' as a tale about self-delusion, appearance and reality. And for older readers still, it will echo some of the political themes of Orwell's **Animal**

Farm:

- o The qualities of leadership
- o Government/governance
- o Caring for others
- o Clothes don't make the man
- o If you want a friend, be a friend
- o Exploiting others
- o Seeing the world through the eyes of others
- o Seeing yourself as others see you.
- Ask your students to think about the ways writers, artists and filmmakers have portrayed farm animals. Which animals are portrayed as hard workers (dogs, horses), which animals are portrayed as patient (cows, sheep), and which animals are portrayed as bossy (bulls, dogs, ducks, pigs)? Let your students brainstorm the reasons for these and other representations.
- Remind the students that in stories we often enjoy occasions when a word has more than one meaning. Clearly from the cover illustration the king is literally a pig, but what else might this title suggest? (He's not very nice; he may be rude or a bully.)
- Ask 'What kinds of opinions do humans have about sheep?' (Eg, they are cute when they are little, they are not intelligent, they all follow each other, they are

quiet and patient, you can get them to do whatever you want – with the help of a sheepdog.) Now read the first two double spreads. Are the sheep doing what humans would expect?

- Read as far as 'the more they ignored him'. Ask your students whether these scenes remind them of any other situations they have observed. (Eg, when someone is the boss, or the captain and they can't get others to co-operate; parents, teachers trying to get kids to co-operate.)
- Look at the final page. Ask why the sheep still look a bit miserable. (The king has made them clothes just like his – they're not what sheep would like, but at least getting their wool back makes them a bit warmer.) Ask, 'Do you think the king will be a better leader in future?'
- Ask your students what they liked about the story and what it means to them.
- Compose a personal ad for **King Pig** to place in a 'Wanted: Friends' page online or in a magazine, telling readers why he would be a good friend to have.
- Make a short film or a mural about pigs in literature, movies and TV.
- Create a game in which the king makes further attempts to be a kinder ruler in the future, but loses points whenever he goes back to his old selfish ways.
- Using mime, dance, music and sound effects, perform the story of **King Pig** without any words.
- Imagine one of the sheep being king for a day and create a poster to announce the celebrations. Plan appropriate activities in which King Pig will learn what it's like to be one of the other farm animals.

HOLD ON TIGHT

SARA ACTON

Hold on tight to my hand today. You wouldn't want to blow away. Would you?

When the little girl goes on a walk on a windy autumn day with her mum, she had better hold on tight to Mum's hand! A gust of wind could carry her off on all manner of adventures! A whimsical autumn story from author and award-winning illustrator Sara Acton.

ISBN: 9781742833491

RRP: \$24.99



Teacher Notes

- The little girl shrinks down to the size of the natural things around her, such as the leaves, ladybugs and birds. This way, she can spend time with them on their level. What sorts of things would you like to be the same size as? Ask students to draw pictures of themselves on a small scale with the objects of their choice. Would they ride ants in the sand? Swim with little fish? Surf on leaves or float on flowers?
- What is the difference between deciduous trees and evergreen trees? Ask students to think of examples of trees in each category. As a class project, have them explore the school grounds and their local neighbourhoods for examples of deciduous and evergreen trees.
- Use **Hold on Tight** to discuss the annual cycle of deciduous trees. On the classroom wall, draw the trunk and branches of four trees. Label each tree with one of the four seasons. What would each tree look like in its respective season? Using poster paints and craft materials, give each tree the appropriate foliage and background for its season.
- Autumn leaves come in all shapes and sizes! Have students collect examples of autumn leaves that they find around the school grounds and their gardens. What sorts of colours do they have? Find more images of autumn foliage on the internet and discuss autumn colours with the class.
- **Hold on Tight** is a book that celebrates autumn, but it never mentions the word 'autumn'. As a class, look at the cover and internal spreads of the book. How is the celebration of autumn suggested in the colours of the illustrations? How does the illustration style suggest the windiness of an autumn day?
- Design your own autumn leaves! Cut out different leaf patterns and distribute them among the students. Have them use paints and pencils in autumn colours to make their leaves beautiful. When the leaves are dry, write each student's name on them and create a class autumn collage.
- The little girl's teddy bear shares in all of her adventures. Reread the book as a class, taking note of the teddy bear on each page. Discuss the layers of story in the illustrations. Just as the little girl gets blown away from her mum, the little bear gets blown away from the girl. Could the story be speaking to the bear as much as it is to the girl?
- The little girl has wonderful adventures, but eventually she wants to go home. Why? How does the story change halfway through to bring the little girl home? What do you think is the message of the story?

About the author

Sara Acton was born in the Cotswolds in England and always loved drawing, especially people and other strange creatures. She studied BA Hons Fine Art, and after graduating, decided to train as an art teacher, completing a Postgraduate Diploma in Art Education at Goldsmiths in London. After teaching and practising art for many years in England and New Zealand, she moved to Australia with her family.

Sara now lives in a small seaside village near Sydney, where she enjoys writing and illustrating for children in her studio, while drinking tea and eating far too many biscuits.

Her first picture book **Ben & Duck** won the Children's Book Council of Australia Crichton Award for new illustrators (taken from the author's website: www.saraacton.org).

CBCA SHORTLIST 2013 PICTURE BOOKS

EARLY CHILDHOOD:

The Terrible Suitcase – Emma Allen and Freya Blackwood

With Nan – Tania Cox and Karen Blair

The Pros & Cons of Being a Frog – Sue DeGennaro

Too Many Elephants in This House – Ursula Dubosarsky and Andrew Joyner

It's a Miroocool! – Christine Harris and Ann James

Peggy – Anna Walker

PICTURE BOOKS:

The Coat – Julie Hunt and Ron Brooks

Tanglewood – Margaret Wild and Vivienne Goodman

Herman and Rosie – Gus Gordon

Sophie Scott Goes South – Alison Lester

Lightning Jack – Glenda Millard and Patricia Mullins

A Day to Remember – Jackie French and Mark Wilson

SCIS

Don't forget that all ASO selections have been allocated SCIS numbers. These can be found on our website:

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