



# FICTION STANDING ORDER

I love the mix of books we have for you and your students this month—something for everyone. Our featured book is the wonderful **How to Bee** by Bren MacDibble, who is also our featured author. This is an imaginative, beautifully written novel for Upper Primary. The story is set in a world where there are no bees, and flowers are pollinated by young children using feathery ‘wands’. Nine-year-old Peony wants nothing more than to be a Bee, but her mother comes to steal her away to the city, so far from the life and people Peony loves. How can she find her way back? The language, characters and setting of this novel are full of vibrancy and warmth—it really is something special. (Please note the issue of domestic violence is part of the plot.)

**A Different Dog** is Paul Jennings’ new novel. The publisher’s teacher notes remind us that ‘Paul Jennings has built his career on an intimate understanding of reluctant readers and what is required to get them to pick up a book and continue reading through to its end. And *A Different Dog* is no exception: this story is exciting and surprising, whimsical and gritty.’ It’s about a young boy who witnesses a car crash and finds himself with a performing dog. The bond between boy and animal grows as they have to find their way home through frightening terrain and a gang of bullies. This is a simply wonderful book that will appeal to a wide readership.

**Giants, Trolls, Witches, Beasts** is a collection of ten popular myths and legends from around the world, told in graphic novel/comic book format. The work that has gone into this production is fantastic. The illustrations are enormously appealing and the presentation makes the book easy to read. The author/illustrator, Craig Phillips, is a highly acclaimed rock-poster artist.

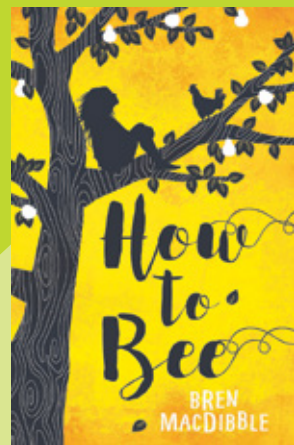
The Bad Guys are back! In Episode 5 of Aaron Blabey’s best-selling series, **Intergalactic Gas**, the Bad Guys have to save the world. All they have to do is travel to space and turn off the Cute-Zilla Ray. If anyone can do it, it’s this gang of anti-heroes.

**Looking Up** is a lovely junior novel by Sally Murphy. In this story, a young boy called Pete loves to study the stars and planets. He’s hoping his mum will give him a telescope for his birthday. Then Pete receives a birthday card in the mail—from a grandad he didn’t know existed. Pete is excited and confused. Why hasn’t his mum told him the truth?

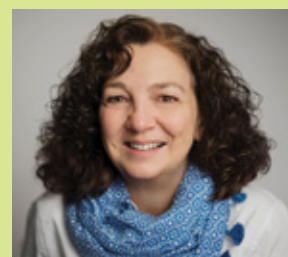
**Our Race for Reconciliation** is a new title in the *My Australian Story* series. Written by Anita Heiss, the story is about ten-year-old Murri girl, Mel, who loves to run and wants nothing more than to be like her hero, Cathy Freeman. The year is 2000 and when Mel learns she and her family are going to Sydney, she hopes she will meet Cathy. Instead, Mel learns more about her personal heritage and about the history of Australia’s Indigenous people since settlement, the stolen generations, and the impact these events still have on people today.

Happy reading.

*Brenda*



FEATURED BOOK:  
**HOW TO BEE**  
BREN MACDIBBLE



FEATURED AUTHOR:  
**BREN MACDIBBLE**  
Author of **How to Bee**

For information about our featured book and author, please visit: [www.australianstandingorders.com.au](http://www.australianstandingorders.com.au)

**POLLY & BUSTER: THE WAYWARD  
WITCH & THE FEELINGS MONSTER**  
SALLY RIPPIN

**THE ADVENTURES OF PELLE NO-TAIL**  
GÖSTA KNUTSSON, STEPHANIE SMEE  
& ANN-MARGRETE SMEE

**SHALLOW IN THE DEEP END**  
TIWI COLLEGE ALALINGUWI  
JARRAKARLINGA

**TO THE LIGHTHOUSE**  
CRIS BURNE

**MY DOG GETS A JOB**  
ELIZABETH FENSHAM

**SUPER CON-NERD**  
OLIVER PHOMMAVANH

COMING NEXT ISSUE

## HOW TO BEE

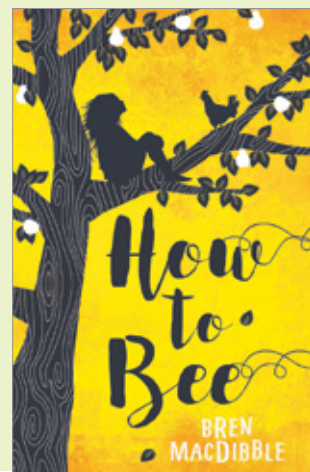
BREN MACDIBBLE

In a world without bees, flowers are pollinated by children with feathery wands. Peony just wants to be a Bee. Never mind that she's only nine years old and Bees are supposed to be ten, she knows all there is to know about being a Bee if Foreman would just give her a chance. Peony's mother has other ideas. She wants to drag her off to the city, to a fine house to work for a rich family. But how can Peony leave her beloved sister, grandfather, best friend Applejoy, and the orchard behind?

Themes include: family, loyalty, community, climate change, bees.

**RECOMMENDED READING LEVEL: Upper Primary (some mature themes/domestic violence)**

**SCIS: 1799310 | ISBN: 9781760294335 | RRP: \$16.99**



### STUDY NOTES

- Before reading, research the subject of bees. Break your class into groups and assign one of the following areas to each: the role bees play in nature; theories relating to why bees are becoming extinct; how and why Chinese farmers in Hunyuan are pollinating their crops; what we can do to help slow the rate of bee extinction.
  - Once research is complete, ask one person from each group to present a short talk to the rest of the class on their subject.
- After the last talk is presented, ask students to answer the following questions:
  - Why are bees important?
  - Name three things that might be causing bees to become extinct.
  - What do Chinese farmers in Hunyuan do to replace bees?
  - What can you do to help keep bee populations alive and healthy?
- Imagery: Read the paragraph on p 14 beginning, 'The farm's full of circles. Bees, flowers, fruit. Pests, chooks, eggs...'
  - Ask students to draw a circle and explain how each of these elements relies on the element before it to survive.
    - What word could you use to replace 'poison' in this paragraph?
    - Ask students to explain, using the circles they have already drawn, how 'poison' disrupts the food cycle.
- Similes: Explain what similes are and that authors use them to help a reader understand a scene, characters or events. Now ask students to find examples of similes in the chapter entitled, 'The Raggy People' (pp 51-54) describing (a) the city, (b) the mob of people surrounding Peony's car, (c) Ma pleading to Nico.
- Informal language: 'You's brave and you's strong and you's gonna do stuff that's important.' (p 114) Ask students to describe the way Peony speaks in the novel and to think about how the way she speaks might influence the way they picture her.
- Characterisation: Choose three adjectives to describe Peony. Now find a scene in the book to illustrate each word you chose. For instance, you might choose the word 'smart' to describe a scene or scenes in the novel where she demonstrates her intelligence.
- Empathy: In a whole class discussion, invite students to describe their feelings about Peony's mother. Write down some of the key words used to describe her on the whiteboard. Next show the following image to illustrate that there are two ways of seeing many things: <http://bit.ly/2nqLAtE>. (Ask students if they see an old or a young woman at first and then encourage them to keep looking and find the alternative image.) Now return to the discussion about Peony's mother and ask students if they can name good things about her and some reasons why she may have been forced to become horrible to Peony.
- Comparison: Describe to your students in basic terms a beehive's social structure (see <http://bit.ly/1RBv9nl>). Emphasise that all bees have a specific task to perform and by performing their task the beehive grows and thrives. Ask your students if they can see any similarities between a beehive and the workers described by Peony on pp 38-39.

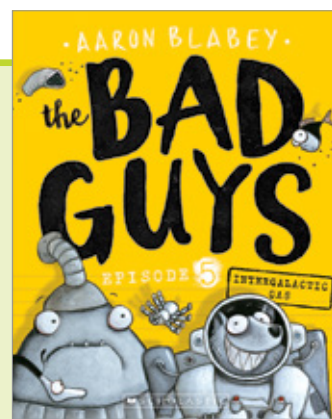
## THE BAD GUYS EPISODE 5: INTERGALACTIC GAS

AARON BLABEY

The bad news? The world is ending. The good news? The Bad Guys are back to save it! Sure, they might have to 'borrow' a rocket . . . And there might be something nasty in one of the spacesuits . . . And Mr Piranha might have eaten too many bean burritos . . . But seriously, how BAD can it be? How bad?! SUPER BAD. It's one small step for the Sort-Of-International-League-Of-Good-Guys-Guys. It's one giant leap for The Bad Guys.

**RECOMMENDED READING LEVEL: Mid Primary**

**SCIS: 1799292 | ISBN: 9781760279479 | RRP: \$14.99**



### STUDY NOTES

- Before reading each chapter, read the chapter title. Guess what is going to happen based on the chapter title and see how close your guess is once you've read each chapter.
- Do some research into why rockets have so many boosters and why they lose them during take-off.
- Discuss the layout of *Intergalactic Gas*. What sort of a book would you classify it as? Is it a graphic novel/comic book? Is it illustrated fiction? Is it a long picture book? As a class, talk about the categories we generally organise books into.
- Watch astronaut Chris Hadfield's videos on gravity and how it affects life in space, starting with this video of him making a burrito <http://bit.ly/2lVuZRC>.
- Class activity: cook some burritos!
- The author, Aaron Blabey, uses animals that are usually perceived as 'bad' such as sharks, snakes, tarantulas, piranhas and wolves as they try to turn their image around and be 'good guys'. Contrastingly, the villain in the book is an adorable little guinea pig. How does this make you think of perception and reputation, and not to judge a book by its cover?
- As a class, brainstorm all the bad things you know about sharks, snakes, tarantulas, piranhas and wolves. Then split into groups and do some research into why these animals have these reputations (eg, sharks only bite surfers because they have bad eyesight and they look like seals from below). Do these animals deserve their bad reputations?
- The Bad Guys travel to the moon to turn off the Cute-Zilla Ray. How long would it actually take to get to the moon? Do some research and look into the 1969 moon landing by Apollo 11.

## A DIFFERENT DOG

PAUL JENNINGS

The story opens with a boy who doesn't speak setting out to compete in a fun run taking place on a cold wintery day. Conditions are bleak and when hail sets in, they become thoroughly dangerous. The boy is passed by a car with a dog sitting in the front passenger seat. Minutes later, he hears the car plunge over a guard rail to the mountain forest floor far below. Clambering to the wreckage, the boy discovers that the driver has been killed and the dog thrown from the vehicle uninjured, but acting very strangely. Eventually the boy realises this is a 'performing' dog that has been trained to act out key words. Together, the boy and dog set out on a perilous journey home.

**RECOMMENDED READING LEVEL: Upper Primary**

**SCIS: 1799304 | ISBN: 9781760296469 | RRP: \$14.99**



### STUDY NOTES

- Chapter One: How does the author show us that the boy is poor? What does the boy's encounter with Skinny Luke tell us is different about the boy?
- Chapter Two: Why does the boy say that the dog is like him?
- Chapter Three: Why do the boy and Chase need to cross the railway bridge? Why do you think the boy remembers Skinny Luke's words as he is about to cross the bridge?
- Chapter Four: How might the boy's story explain why he can't speak?
- Chapter Five: In your own words, describe what happens when Chase finds his own voice. What is the significance of the final sentence in this chapter?
- Chapter Six: Would you describe this chapter as a 'happy ending'? Explain.
- Chapter Seven: In your own words explain why some people might describe this chapter as having a 'twist'.
- Language: 'He fell back and sprawled on the damp earth, screwing up his eyes, mumbling to himself, trying to block out the sight ... Finally he found the dog'. (pp 19-20) Find an example of each of the following literary devices in this extract: simile; metaphor; repetition; alliteration.
- Characterisation: Make a list of words to describe the boy in the story. Give examples of things he said or did in the story that made you think this about him. How does the boy change by the end of the story? Why do you think we are never told the boy's name?
- Theme: Finding your voice is an important theme running through the story. What do you think 'finding your voice' means? What happens in the story to help both the boy and Chase find their 'voice' by the end?
- Plot twist: Define the term 'plot twist' and explain if you think the ending in *A Different Dog* is a plot twist.
- Title: The final chapter of the story helps explain the title *A Different Dog*. Explain why you think the story is called that. Can you come up with an alternative explanation for the title? (Hint: something to do with Deefer.)

## GIANTS, TROLLS, WITCHES, BEASTS: TEN TALES FROM THE DEEP, DARK WOODS

CRAIG PHILLIPS

Diverse myths and legends from around the world, from Iceland to Poland to Japan, are retold in easy-to-read, glorious full-colour comic-book form. Stories include: Thor going on a quest to steal a chalice from a frost giant; Momotaro defying the ogres to return the stolen treasure to the good people of Japan; the polar bear king losing both his skin and the loyalty of his fellow bears, and many more.

**RECOMMENDED READING LEVEL: Mid to Upper Primary**

**SCIS: 1800239 | ISBN: 9781760113261 | RRP: \$24.99**



### STUDY NOTES

- Ask students to define the term 'fairytale' and to name some of the most famous fairytales. Discuss the idea that fairytales might be a means of teaching morals to children. Choose a fairytale that all students know and talk about the lessons taught in that particular story.
- Before reading 'Vasilisa the Brave', explain to students that some books rely on words to tell the reader everything and some rely on images alone, but comic books rely on text, images and the reader's knowledge of the world. After reading the story, ask the following questions and encourage students to think about where their answer came from: the text, the images, or whether they worked it out from their own knowledge.
  - How does the enchanted hut move at night and what happens to the forest animals when it does?
  - What scary things decorate Baba Yaga's hut?
  - What happened to Vasilisa's real mother?
  - What sort of person is Vasilisa's stepmother?
  - What creatures live with Baba Yaga?
  - Who (or what) are Baba Yaga's servants?
  - What does Vasilisa do with the light after her stepmother and sisters leave? Why do you think she does this?
  - What part of the world do Vasilisa and her family live in? (Hint: the dress on the doll and the girl's name will help you.)
- The tales in this collection may not be as well-known as some that students have seen in films or read in books. However, they do share common elements, for instance the brother and sister in 'The Nixie in the Well' are quite similar to those in 'Hansel and Gretel'. Divide students into pairs to find other examples of famous fairytales similar to those in this collection. What is it about fairytales' nature that might help explain these similarities?
- The monomyth (or hero's journey) is a literary theory that states that a huge percentage of stories from around the world fit one simple pattern: a hero ventures from a normal world to a supernatural region, where they encounter fabulous forces, have a decisive victory and return to their world with new powers or wealth. The films in the *Stars Wars* series, for instance, fit this pattern. In a class-wide discussion, ask students to come up with other films or books that follow this same pattern. Now ask students to choose one story in *Giants, Trolls, Witches, Beasts* and explain in detail how it fits the monomyth pattern.
- Read the story of 'The King of the Polar Bears' to your class. Once finished, ask students to find an example of each of the following visual techniques being used in this story:
  - *Chiaroscuro*
  - *Close-up* shot for dramatic effect
  - *Colour* for conveying physical or emotional changes
  - *Font* to convey a key moment.
  - *Breaking the frame* to convey power.

## LOOKING UP

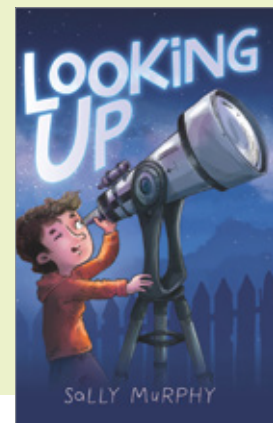
SALLY MURPHY

Pete loves to study the stars and the planets and he is desperately hoping for a telescope. There's nothing he wants more for his birthday. But when a mysterious card arrives in the mail, what Pete wants is turned upside down. Pete discovers that he has a grandfather. Why has his mother hidden the truth from him? Pete is determined to meet his grandad and find the answers.

Themes include: family, grief, astronomy, friendship and forgiveness.

**RECOMMENDED READING LEVEL: Mid Primary**

**SCIS: 1799297 | ISBN: 9781925164572 | RRP: \$14.99**



### STUDY NOTES

- Use three adjectives to describe your first impressions of the characters Pete and Mum. How do they seem similar/different to one another? How would you describe their relationship?
- 'Why would his mother not want him to meet his grandfather? . . . What could Grandad have done that was so terrible?' (p 43) In groups of four, brainstorm a list of ideas about why Mum lied to Pete.
- Have you ever told a lie? Why did you do it? How did it make you feel? Guilty? Anxious?
- Has someone ever lied to you? How did this make you feel? Sad? Angry? Did you forgive them?
- How does Pete and Mum's relationship change after she discovers he visited Grandad? Do you think Pete should have gone without her permission? Why is it important to talk about things that upset us?
- Do you think it was Mum's or Grandad's fault that Grandma died?
- What does the word 'regret' mean? Can you think of a time where you have made a mistake and wished that you could go back in time to change it?
- How are the themes of family, friendship and forgiveness represented in this book? Write a paragraph describing a situation when you have forgiven someone who really upset you. How did you feel afterwards? Relieved? Glad?
- Space jargon: Pete wants to use a telescope to 'see which were really stars, and which were planets, to make out the clusters of stars which to the naked eye masqueraded as one.' (p 6)
  - o What do the words 'cluster' and 'masquerade' mean?
  - o What is the difference between a star and a planet?
  - o Pete sees a rare comet on his birthday. What is a comet?
- Curious constellations: What is a 'constellation'? Can you name some famous constellations? Where and why did they get their names? Can you spot any of them in the night sky? (Hint: remember most are only visible at certain times of the year.) What is 'light pollution' and how does it affect stargazing?
- Telescopes: Who invented the telescope and how does it work? (Link: <http://bit.ly/2nbTSrE>)

### Earth and Space Sciences

- Astronomical advertising: Grandad tells Pete he was an astronomer before he retired. Research what this job involves and create a persuasive poster encouraging students to study astronomy. Do you think you would like to do this job when you grow up?

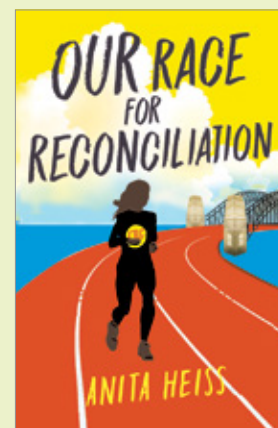
## OUR RACE FOR RECONCILIATION

ANITA HEISS

For Mel, a ten-year-old Murri girl growing up Queensland, 2000 is a year that she will never forget. Mel has always loved running and yearns to be a famous Indigenous athlete like Cathy Freeman. To her, it seems that 2000 will be the most amazing year ever, for not only will the Olympics be in Sydney, but Cathy is a favourite to win gold. But Sydney is also the site of Corroboree 2000 and the inaugural National Walk for Reconciliation across the Sydney Harbour Bridge. When Mel discovers she and her family are travelling to Sydney to take part, she can hardly believe her luck. For Mel, this will be a year of wonders. She will learn more about her personal heritage and history. By the end of her trip, Mel knows she will be spending her life racing not just to a finish line and a medal, but as part of something larger—racing to reconciliation for her people and for all Australians.

**RECOMMENDED READING LEVEL: Mid to Upper Primary**

**SCIS: 1800247 | ISBN: 9781760276119 | RRP: \$16.99**



### STUDY NOTES

**Note:** Please be aware that the linked video footage in some of the below activities may contain images and voices of people who are no longer living. It is recommended that teachers view all footage before showing it to students, and use their discretion when choosing activities in order to ensure that all students feel that they and their families are respected.

- The concept of reconciliation is an important one in both the novel, and to Australia. As a class, discuss the meaning of reconciliation. Include the following:
  - o The dictionary definition of the word.
  - o What reconciliation means to Australia.
  - o What reconciliation means to the different characters in the book.
  - o What reconciliation means to you.
- What is National Reconciliation Week and why is it important to all Australians? Individually or in small groups, research National Reconciliation Week and prepare a PowerPoint presentation or a poster to share with the class. Some questions you might want to answer include:
  - o When was National Reconciliation Week first celebrated?
  - o What is the significance of the dates that fall during National Reconciliation Week (May 26 and June 3)?
  - o How is National Reconciliation Week being commemorated in your local community?
- When telling Mel and Sam about National Sorry Day and why they will be travelling to Sydney, Mel's mother talks about the 1997 report 'Bringing them Home'. As a class, investigate and discuss this report. Teacher resources can be found at the Australian Human Rights website: <http://bit.ly/2nCTdN8> and a pdf of the report can be downloaded at <http://bit.ly/110bUNE>.
- As a class, discuss NAIDOC week, how and why it started and why it is relevant to us all. Information about NAIDOC week can be found at: <http://www.naidoc.org.au>.
- Plan some activities for NAIDOC week. They can be for your class or for your whole school. Try to involve your local community in your activities.