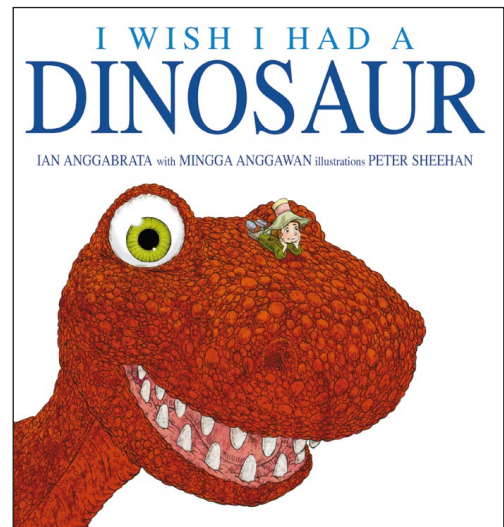


I Wish I Had a Dinosaur

**Written by Ian Anggabrata with
Mingga Anggawan
Illustrated by Peter Sheehan**



◀ The Back Story ▶ with Mingga Anggawan

What was the reason for writing *I Wish I Had a Dinosaur*? Who or what inspired you to write this book?

My nine-year-old son Ian [Anggabrata] doesn't like steak! He simply wished for a dinosaur to help him finish his steak. He doesn't like meat and calls himself a vegetarian. I simply saw an idea there.

What processes or studies, if any, did you put into place to achieve your goal of being a writer?

Ian has had no formal training in writing. I just felt the 'urge' to type the idea I had in mind. I started typing my first stories probably when I was in Year 6 at school, and continued to type whatever ideas I had, without really planning to be a writer.

How did you personally plan when writing *I Wish I Had a Dinosaur* – themes, plot summary, structure, characters, setting and style?

The book came out of its very first line. Ian thought about all the things a dinosaur could do, including helping him slide down from the balcony and taking him and his twin brother Ivan to school. We needed more lines and ideas to make a book. Originally it came in two manuscripts, separated into a wish for a Diplodocus and a wish for a Tyrannosaurus Rex.

What were your sources of information?

Ian knows that a T-Rex loves meat, and the logical conclusion was that the T-Rex could have Ian's meat at dinnertime. Ian's knowledge and love for dinosaurs was the major source of inspiration.

Did the book turn out just the way you imagined it would?

We really love the way the book turned out, but in his head Ian thought the girl would be a boy and the dinosaur would be green, not red. Ian saw the 'I' character as himself. His first comment when he saw the finished book was 'I am not a girl!' We told the illustrator Peter Sheehan this when we met him, and Peter quickly drew a boy character on the cover of our copy for Ian.

◀ with Peter Sheehan

Why did you choose to illustrate this book?

I liked the story and it allowed me lots of room to play with ideas in the illustrations.

Where did you get the inspiration for the people and places in the book?

Because the book is about a dinosaur in a modern world, I wanted to create a world that had a feel that was both ancient and modern. In my original roughs there were many more volcanoes. The book's editor and I decided that it would be better if the volcanoes were just suggested. As for general inspiration, I have loads of favourite illustrators but Maurice Sendak and Dr Seuss are two I like very much.

What processes or studies, if any, did you put into place to achieve your goal of being an illustrator?

Ever since I can remember I have been drawing things; in my free time, drawing to relax, drawing little maps and diagrams to sort out any problems I may have. Even so, I didn't seriously consider illustration until I had left high school. I've never been to university but I once did a course in life drawing at Julian Ashton's art school and I went to The Ensemble acting school for three years. Knowing how to act has helped my drawings come alive.

Did you do any special research in preparation for illustrating this book?

I love researching things. I know my local library back to front and the Internet is becoming more and more interesting. Going into the Mitchell Library in Sydney is always a special treat, and I made a reference to this in *I Wish I Had a Dinosaur*.

About the authors:

Ian Anggabrata and Mingga Anggawan

Mingga: My husband, two sons and I were all born in Indonesia. We lived in Jakarta and came to Australia in 1999. The boys were only four then and spoke no English when they started school several months later. They are now in Year 5. We currently live in Narwee, NSW.

Ian loves playing the computer and other games on the Internet. I love reading and listening to music. Both Ian and I love to write for young children. I particularly love picture books – I just love how the story and the pictures become one; a complete piece of art. Ian already has an idea for another book. He believes his brother Ivan may write a book one day too!

About the illustrator:

Peter Sheehan

I was born in Sydney and grew up at The Entrance, right opposite where Tuggerah Lakes flows in and out of the Pacific Ocean. It is still a magical place for me. I currently live at Bondi Beach, Sydney.

I've illustrated over 500 stories, poems and articles for *The School Magazine*. Also there is *Tatterhood*, by Margrete Lamond, *Spider!* and *Rollercoaster* by David Metzenthien, the *Captain Cat and the Umbrella Kid* series by Paul J. Shaw, *The Island* by John Heffernan, and I am currently illustrating the *Fair Dinkum Histories* series by Jackie French. I have written two books which haven't yet found a publisher, and I've also written a few plays – one is currently being considered by producers. Fingers crossed!

Teaching Ideas ✓

Before Reading ✓

- Ask students to bring in books of dinosaurs. As a class, go to the school library and use the library catalogue or computer system to access similar books. Demonstrate to the students how to find books in the library – asking the librarian, finding the books by numbers, catalogues and computer access. Display the books on a table in the classroom and give students the opportunity to browse through them.
- Have students read the book's title. Discuss what it would be like to have a pet dinosaur.
- Look at the author and illustrator's names. Discuss why there might be two authors' names on the front cover. Do students think it would be easy or more difficult to write a book with another person?
- Encourage the students to do some research about dinosaurs. Find out when they lived, different types, what they ate, how they were named, how they became extinct, etc.

Activity

Cover design

Design your own pet dinosaur. Choose its shape, personality and colour. Use different types of materials to give texture to your dinosaur. Give it a name. Make a collage of all the dinosaurs in the class.

During reading ✓

■ Read the book aloud, giving plenty of time for students to look at the detailed illustrations. Discuss the events that occur in the book using the following questions as a guide:

- What are some ways the dinosaur helps the narrator?
- What are some problems the narrator encounters with her dinosaur?
- The story takes place in a variety of locations. What are they?
- What country do you think the zoo is in and why?
- What do you think are the narrator's three favourite things to do with her dinosaur?

■ The author mentions deciding between two types of dinosaur – the Diplodocus and the T-Rex. Ask students what they know about each of these types of dinosaur, and encourage them to do some research to find out more.

Activities

Shape poems

'I could slide right down from my balcony.' Look at the way these words are written (curving down the page) in the text. Make up some sentences/short poems and write them in the shape of what they are or what they are describing. Find other examples of this in the book.

Playground fun

Think of as many activities as you can that you could do on your dinosaur in your school playground. Draw them or write them. Make them fun!

After reading ✓

■ When the book has been read discuss it as a class. Use the following questions as discussion points and prompts:

- What did you like about this book?
- How would you describe this book to someone else? Would you recommend it?
- Would you like to read any more stories from these writers and this illustrator?

■ The author was surprised when he saw the finished copy of his book. He was surprised the narrator was a girl. Discuss with the class if they were surprised it was a girl wishing for a dinosaur. He was also surprised that the dinosaur was red. Why do students think the illustrator chose this character and this colour?

■ What questions would the class like to ask the authors Ian Anggabrata and Minggu Anggawan, or the illustrator Peter Sheehan? Compile a list.

Activities

What's on your plate?

Ian Anggabrata chose to write about a dinosaur because he didn't like steak! What animal could you choose if you wanted it to eat your vegetables? Make a list of animals and divide them into three columns – those that only eat meat (carnivores), those that only eat plants (herbivores) and those that eat both (omnivores).

Lights, camera, action

The illustrator mentions that knowing how to act helped his drawings come alive. In small groups choose a scene from the book and put it into action. Choose a pose for your group to create a snapshot 'freeze' of your scene.

BEHIND THE BOOK TEACHER'S NOTES

I wish I had a ...

Choose a different type of animal (make it as unusual as possible) and in the same style as the author, write your own story 'I Wish I had a ...'. Swap your story with a friend and have them do the illustrations for you and you for them. Did it turn out the way you expected?

Plus/Minus/Interesting

In three columns write the positive things about having a pet dinosaur (Plus), the negative things (Minus), and in the third column write down any interesting points in having a pet dinosaur.

Literature study

Discuss the following questions with the aim of encouraging the students to read and to increase their understanding and enjoyment of *I Wish I Had a Dinosaur*.

- Does it surprise you that the main author of this book is only 9-years-old?
- How does the way the text has been set out affect the story?
- How do the illustrations affect the overall look of the book? Do you think that these illustrations complement and add to the text? What might the effect be if the illustrations were in black and white?
- The illustrator says he likes Maurice Sendak and Dr Seuss as illustrators. Can you find any books by these illustrators? What are the similarities and/or differences between their styles?
- The illustrator loves the library and uses it in his illustrations. Do you like libraries? What is it about them that you like?