FREE BONUS BOOK FOR PRE-PAID SUBSCRIPTION ONLY
A magical tale about the importance of bedtime stories.

In every house, in every bed, a bedtime book was being read ...

But then, one night, all the animals’ bedtime story books start disappearing. One brave rabbit sets out to solve the mystery — and finds that it’s a sad little Snatchabook, a small, magical creature who just wants someone to read to him.

• Stunning, atmospheric artwork by Thomas Docherty, who was formerly shortlisted for the prestigious Kate Greenaway Medal


• A wonderfully original story from a hugely talented husband-and–wife team

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Helen Docherty has spent most of her career as a language teacher. This is her first rhyming picture book. Helen lives in Swansea with her husband, Thomas, and their two young daughters.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Thomas Docherty was born in New Zealand but has spent most of his life in England. His many previous picture books have attracted widespread acclaim. Thomas lives in Swansea with his wife, Helen, and their two young daughters. www.thomasdocherty.co.uk
Synopsis

Engine H One-Ninety-Nine worked on the Wairarapa line, pulling carriages up the steep incline of the Rimutaka Hill. It was a special kind of Fell locomotive, designed especially to go up steep inclines. Even in stormy weather and dangerous conditions, skilful drivers were able to get Engine H One-Ninety-Nine to the summit and deliver people and supplies.

Today the incline is a walking track and trains now travel in a tunnel under the hill. Fell engines are no longer needed and the last remaining model (H One-Ninety-Nine) is displayed in a Museum in Featherston.

Text Type

Hero of the Hill is a delightful children’s picture book which brings the now obsolete Fell engine back to life. Written by acclaimed New Zealand author Joy Cowley, the story is told in rhyme, creating a steady cadence which will appeal to young readers. Beautifully illustrated by Philip Webb, the story takes the reader on a journey through the Rimutaka ranges and explores the little known history of this coal-powered steam engine. A list of fascinating “Fell Facts” is included at the end of the story.

All royalties from this book are being donated by Cowley to the Fell Locomotive Museum at Featherston.

Introducing the Book

Have students study the front cover of the novel and read the blurb.

• Why do you think the book is called Hero of the Hill?
• Based on the illustrations and the blurb, where do you think this story is set?
• Look at the pictures and decide whether the story is set in the past or the present.
• Make a prediction about what the book will be about.

Teacher reads the book aloud. Students follow along in their own books.

• What is the name of the engine? What is special about it?
• Where does the engine do its work?
• Why do you think locomotive engines were important at the beginning of the 1900s and beyond?
• The author describes the mountainside between Summit and Cross Creek as “wild and bleak”. What does the word “bleak” mean?
• Why do you think the engine is able to get up the steep hill even in bad weather?
• The author describes the engine driver as “skilful”. What does this mean? Why is it so important that the driver is good at his job?
• What does the picture of Featherston suggest about when the story is set? Have you ever been to Featherston? In what ways is it different from the illustration?
• What is the train taking up the Rimutaka ranges?
• What do you think the brake-van might be?
• How do you think the train driver feels when he can’t see what’s ahead of him because of the bad weather? What are some of the potential dangers that could befall the engine?
• How does the engine run?
• What is the fireman’s job?
• Why is Siberia such a dangerous place? What difficulties does it present for Engine H-One-Ninety-Nine?
• How do the people at Summit react when they see the engine come through the tunnel?
• What do you think the signalman does?
• How are today’s trains different from H One-Ninety-Nine?
• What is the railway track used for today?
• H One-Ninety-Nine is the last Fell engine in the world. Where is it displayed?
• Look at the map at the end of the story. What do you notice about the new railway route compared to the old one?
• Read “A few Fell facts”. What 3 facts do you find the most interesting and why?

Activities

• Write a letter to the author explaining what you liked about the story.
• Design a pamphlet advertising the Featherston Museum.
• Brainstorm as much information as you can about the setting of the story. Remember to write down information about where (country, town, geographic location) and when (year, season, time of day etc.) the action takes place.
• Choose 5 adjectives to describe engine H One-Ninety-Nine. Use each of these in a sentence.
• Write a paragraph explaining why is important to preserve elements of our past. What do you think we can learn from history?
• Imagine that the Fell engine has just been invented. Design a poster encouraging railway companies to buy it.
• Read “A few Fell facts” at the end of the story. Using a dictionary or the internet, compile a glossary of key railway terms and explain what they mean.
• Write a paragraph explaining why you think Joy Cowley wrote this book.

Notes written by Vicki Ladd
Description

Banjo is a chook dog. Not just any chook dog. He’s the best chook dog the farm has ever had. It’s Banjo’s job to get all of the chooks into the chook yard but there is one pesky chook called Ruby Red who always gives Banjo a hard time. Whenever Banjo has to round up the chooks, Ruby Red just sits on the woodheap and refuses to move. Banjo has to bark and bark, and leap and leap, to get her to move to her perch in the chook shed.

But one morning Ruby Red isn’t sitting on her woodheap. Banjo searches for her everywhere. Eventually he finds her in the woolshed but she is very sick, so he takes her back to his kennel to look after her. For two days he watches over her, wrapping his body around hers to keep her warm. After three days Ruby Red lifts her head and looks out of the kennel. After four days she stands up and pecks at some seeds. After five days she is feeling even better and can go as far as the fence.

Once Ruby Red is fully recovered she no longer gives Banjo any trouble. But she still doesn’t go back into the chook yard. She now has a special place with Banjo, safe and warm in his kennel.

About the Author

Libby Gleeson was born in Young, a small town in south western NSW. As a child, books and reading were hugely important to Libby. She remembers going to the library on a Saturday morning and borrowing five or six books and reading them all by Sunday night.

Libby has been awarded armfuls of Australian Book Awards, including the CBCA Award for best picture book (An Ordinary Day), best book for younger readers (Hannah and the Tomorrow Room) and best early childhood book (Amy and Louis). She is frequently featured on Premier’s short lists and she has also scooped her fair share of International awards, including the Bologna Ragazzi Award.

It is not surprising that in 1997 Libby was presented the Lady Cutler Award for Services to Children’s Literature.

In 2009 Little Hare published Clancy & Millie and the Very Fine House, written by Libby and illustrated by Freya Blackwood. It was also shortlisted for the 2010 CBCA Early Childhood book of the year. Libby works full-time and thinks that the writer’s life is pretty good!

About the Illustrator

Freya Blackwood is a rising star in the international world of children’s books. She was born in Edinburgh and grew up in Orange in NSW, Australia. Freya’s illustrations for Two Summers won the Crichton Award.
in 2004 and the book was shortlisted for the Picture Book of the Year Award in the Children’s Book Council of Australia 2004 awards. Emily Rapunzel’s Hair was shortlisted in the Early Childhood section of the Children’s Book Council of Australia 2006 awards. Her latest book Amy & Louis, which won the 2007 CBCA Picture Book of the Year for Younger Readers, was written by Libby Gleeson and has been published in Australia, the US, Germany, France and Korea. Freya has just illustrated a book written by Roddy Doyle which was published by Arthur A. Levine Books.

Clancy & Millie and the Very Fine House, written by Libby Gleeson was published in October 2009 by Little Hare and has been shortlisted for the 2010 CBCA Early Childhood book of the year. In October 2010 Little Hare published Maudie and Bear, a picture book with renowned children’s book writer, Jan Omerod. In 2011 Maudie and Bear won the CBCA Early Childhood award. Having spent many years living in Wellington, New Zealand Freya now lives in Orange with her little girl Ivy, who was the inspiration behind her picture book Ivy Loves to Give (Little Hare, September 2010).

Freya has a forthcoming title with Libby Gleeson and has recently been awarded the highly prestigious Kate Greenaway medal.
Description

Following on from the success of George’s Dragon comes a brand new adventure by the author of Aliens Love Underpants. “Bring your pet to school” week is approaching, and George cannot wait to show off Sparky, his pet dragon. But Mum’s worried because Sparky is not only huge but also unbelievably clumsy.

Sparky’s mishap gets the school fire alarm going and everyone is evacuated to the swimming pool building where the children are supposed to have their swimming lesson next.

But the heating is off and the water is freezing cold. It looks like only a dragon with impressive firebreathing skills can save the day now!

• A brand new adventure featuring George and his dragon, following on from the success of George’s Dragon

• Brilliantly funny text from Claire Freedman, author of Aliens Love Underpants which has sold over 500,000 copies

• Hilarious antics revolving around “bring your pet to school week” when George takes along his Dragon!

• Warm and humorous artwork from Russell Julian

About the Author

Claire Freedman has been writing for fifteen years and is the author of George’s Dragon (9781407109992) as well as the bestselling Aliens Love Underpants (500,000 copies sold) and Dinosaurs Love Underpants (Simon and Schuster). Claire lives in Essex.
Website: www.clairefreedman.co.uk
Twitter:@clairefreedman

About the Illustrator

Russell Julian is the illustrator of George’s Dragon (9781407109992), Tappity Tap! What Was That? (9781407131689) and Crocodiles Need Kisses Too (9781407109336).
Outline:

Mr Qwerty worries that his ideas might seem strange ... so he keeps them under his hat. But extraordinary ideas refuse to stay hidden for long.

Author/Illustrator Information:

Born in North Queensland, Karla Strambini is the oldest of three sisters. At school Karla was usually found reading, or sitting under a tree inventing stories. After senior year she completed an Honours Degree in English Literature, because she wasn’t able to study Art locally. However, she was passionate about both words and pictures and had always wanted to write and illustrate picture books. When her two children were almost grown up she completed a Diploma of Visual Art, and began work on The Extraordinary Mr Qwerty.

Karla currently lives and works in Victoria as a Teacher-Aide

Karla Strambini on The Extraordinary Mr Qwerty

Mr Qwerty began life as just an image, and a few vague thoughts about the concept of normality. Is there any such thing as normal, and is it really preferable? I wrote the first version of Mr Qwerty’s story in 2008 whilst studying Graphic Design. (You’ll find that date in one of my illustrations.) Study commitments left no time to work on the book until the following year, when I finally abandoned computers forever, and switched to art. My first storyboard formed part of my assessment, and I was lucky to work in a studio-environment with quirky and supportive artists, who either didn’t notice, or didn’t mind that I was weird.

At a literary festival in Marburg I met the author-illustrator Terry Denton, who suggested I show my book to publishers. Neither of the publishers I approached wanted to publish Mr Qwerty, but one of them wrote such a positive rejection letter that I was encouraged to keep trying. At the conclusion of my Diploma course I moved to Victoria full of grand plans to become an author-illustrator.

Even though I was lonely, broke, freezing and beginning to doubt whether my book was any good, I wrote Mr Qwerty a letter of introduction and sent him off to Walker Books to make a name for himself.

He has been re-written at least 17 times since then, and the book has had three or four working titles. The only things which haven’t changed are Mr Qwerty’s name, his clothes and his six fingers. He was originally painted in gouache, and then in sepia pen and ink. But because my editor liked the scribbly pencil illustrations I’d done for the storyboard, I experimented with pencil and small amounts of coloured pencil. However, I found it difficult to stop myself from colouring-in everything, so eventually we decided
that I would illustrate the book in black and white, and that colour would be added afterwards, on the computer! (I think this was also to prevent a new illustrator from panicking too much.) Although it was a relief to start working on the final illustrations, I found the storyboarding process the most fun, because this was where I got to be creative and play with ideas. This was where accidents could turn into Eureka moments. It wasn’t until half-way through the second storyboard that I knew what Mr Qwerty’s “extraordinary” idea was going to be. (I didn’t tell my editor that, of course.) Some of my best and most creative ideas came when attempting to solve design problems in a way which would keep both my editor and me happy, without compromising my vision for the book. Without an editor, the process of writing and illustrating a picture book would be quicker and much less stressful, but the finished book would certainly not be as good.

Discussion Questions and Activities

Preliminary questions

Before reading The Extraordinary Mr Qwerty, view the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:

• The title of the book
• The author
• The publisher
• The blurb.

Based on the cover, what do you think this story is about? How do you think it will begin/end?

Listen to the book being read aloud without looking at the illustrations. Then read the story while viewing the illustrations. Do the illustrations change your understanding of the story in any way? How?

On the front cover, the light bulbs inside Mr Qwerty’s hat are a metaphor. What do they symbolise? Why would he have a light-bulb on the end of his pencil?

Why has the illustrator drawn cogs on the cover, copyright page and throughout the book? What do they symbolise?

On the copyright page, what do you think is meant by the mathematical equation (1 hat + 1 hat > 1 hat)? Keeping in mind the equation, what do you think is meant by the dedication: “with thanks to the many hats who made light work”?

Spread 1
A Picture Paints a Thousand Words

The first double-page spread in the book introduces Norman Qwerty, and is intended to tell you everything you need to know about the character.

By carefully studying the picture of Mr Qwerty’s bedroomworkshop, and making inferences, how many things can you discover about Mr Qwerty? What are his daily habits, activities, skills, interests, likes, tastes, obsessions? What sort of person is Mr Qwerty?

Look at characters in paintings or other picture books, and (without reading the story) try to make similar inferences. Write a short story about the character.

Why does Mr Qwerty have the notebook contraption by his bed? Keep a notebook by your bed and write down or draw a picture of whatever you are thinking when you wake up. It could be something that you dreamed about or a brilliant idea you had when waking up. Bring your ideas to school to share with the class.
Why do the words “Norman” and “Qwerty” start with a capital letter even when they are not at the beginning of a sentence?

**What’s in a Name?**

Where have you seen the word QWERTY before? (Look around your classroom.) Try typing his name on the computer. Can you type it with one hand?

Find out about the story behind the qwerty keyboard. Was the Qwerty typewriter the best model of typewriter?

Why do you think the author has named her character Norman? (Note: Karla’s father is called Norman, but that is not the reason.)

What does the word “norm” mean?

What does the word “extraordinary” mean?

How is Mr Qwerty extraordinary or different to other people? How is he the same?

Typewriters are featured prominently in this book. Why don’t we use typewriters any more? What has replaced them? How is a typewriter different to a word processor on a computer?

**Sixes**

Why do you think the author has given Mr Qwerty six fingers on each hand? (There could be more than one reason.)

How many other things appear six times on the first double-page spread?

In this story, does Mr Qwerty appear to be more or less abled because of his extra fingers?

Discuss people who might consider their differences or disabilities to be a positive strength, a desirable quality, or even an advantage or extra ability?

Find and read other stories (and/or write your own story) about a character with a difference or disability, who is therefore able to do something better than anyone else.

**Spread 2**

**Invention and Creativity**

Apart from the zip-up striped suit for giraffes who don’t want to be spotted, most of Mr Qwerty’s devices have been invented to solve a simple problem which he encounters in his day-to-day life. He has invented a windup mouse-trap to chase the wind-up mice, a machine to stir his cup, a machine which delivers the precise squeeze of toothpaste and a machine to warm his socks.

Think of a problem that you face every day, and draw a picture, or build a model of a machine, to solve that problem.
Spread 3
Where do ideas come from?

Discuss the idea of originality. Are any ideas completely new, or do they build on or adapt existing ideas?

Why is Mr Qwerty drawn on a separate page to the other characters?

How does the illustration on this spread match the text?

Spread 4
Mr Qwerty thought that nobody else in the world thought the way that he thought ... but he was wrong.

Discuss each of the hats on the double page spread in which the characters’ hats change. What would it mean if your mind was like a lighthouse, an abacus, a cage, a merry-go-round, a hot air balloon, a teapot, or a science laboratory?

Draw a picture (or make a wearable hat) which is a metaphor for the type of mind that you have. Is your mind like a mixing bowl, a filing cabinet, a sponge, or a computer? See how many different similes your class can come up with.

Why is Mr Qwerty no longer on a page by himself in this spread? What is the author revealing about the other characters? Do you think Mr Qwerty realises this yet?

Spread 5
Mr Qwerty was afraid that people would think his ideas were strange

Why is the man in the white coat and butterfly net chasing the girl with the blue scarf?

Why is this girl the only character with a mouth at this point in the story? When do the other characters get mouths?

Look inside Mr Qwerty’s head. What does he think will happen to him if he tells anyone about his ideas?

Find and discuss examples of brilliant people throughout history whose ideas were at first considered crazy or wrong.

Make a poster or PowerPoint presentation on one of these historical figures. Why were their ideas rejected, feared, or laughed at? What happened to them as a result? How have their ideas changed the world?

Spread 6
... and he felt completely alone

How does this page make you feel? What is it about the illustration that makes you feel that way?

Mr Qwerty had people all around him. Can you be in a crowded space and alone at the same time? What is meant by “alone” in this context?
What does the image inside Mr Qwerty’s head mean?

**Spread 7**
What do the signs on this spread mean?

What is the author suggesting about the world in which Mr Qwerty lives?

How does the author show that she does not approve of these signs?

Why do these signs have pictures on them rather than words?

**Spread 9**
What is happening to the other characters’ hats? Why do you think this is happening?

**Spread 10**
This spread shows Mr Qwerty’s little idea growing bigger and bigger. Can you think of a small idea you’ve had that got bigger and bigger as you thought about it more?

**Spreads 11-12**
What do you think Mr Qwerty’s extraordinary invention is for? What would you name it?

How does the invention help the other characters?

Why do you think the man with the net has stopped chasing the lady with the blue scarf?

**Spread 13**
How might the world be changed by Mr Qwerty’s invention?

Do you think the author is suggesting that Mr Qwerty’s invention literally enables the characters to fly?

**Spreads 14-15**
... and Mr Qwerty was never alone. That is, unless he needed to be

Why might Mr Qwerty need to be alone sometimes? Do you ever need to be alone?

What is he inventing in his head on spread 15? What problem did he encounter on spread 14 to prompt the invention?

Ice-cream is featured on the last two pages of the book. How does ice-cream bring characters together and also set them apart from one another?

Can you guess the six flavours of Mr Qwerty’s very unusual ice-cream cone? (Parsley, fish, lemon, strawberry, chocolate and chocolate chip). Would you like to eat this ice-cream?

Design a really weird ice-cream of your own, using all of your favourite food flavours. Place the scoops from top to bottom in the order in which you would like to eat them.

What might the author be trying to say about personal taste/difference with this image?

**After Reading**

What do sentences begin and end with? Find examples of these in the book.
How many items pictured in the first double page spread, are used in Mr Qwerty’s big invention at the end of the book?

Can you find the moment in the book where Mr Qwerty first gets his idea to build the enormous bird? Was he inspired by any one else’s ideas? Why do you think so?

Find other books in your school library about imagination and ideas. Have a class discussion about how these books are similar or different to The Extraordinary Mr Qwerty. Which book on this topic do you prefer? Why?

**Hats**

*Hats are used in this book to represent the mind of the wearer.*

Draw a picture of your own hat (or use the bowler hat drawing provided) and then fill the hat with your own brilliant ideas or thoughts.

Why have the other characters got locks on their hats at the beginning of the book?

Are all ideas good? Would it ever be better to lock ideas away? How can we decide which ideas should be heard, and which ideas shouldn’t?

**Colour**

Why has Mr Qwerty’s tie been coloured red throughout the book? What effect does it have?

Can you find the one page where Mr Qwerty is not wearing his tie? Where is the tie on this page?

What is the significance of the blue sky patterns on the curtains and scarf? What emotion does this light blue colour evoke?

What does the use of black and white artwork say about Mr Qwerty’s world?

Look at other books which use black and white drawings, and discuss why the illustrator may have chosen to illustrate in black and white. Do you think it would have been better if they had used colour?

Draw a picture in black and white, with one other colour used for emphasis. What did you choose to emphasise? How effective was it?

**Design**

How does the size and placement of the text on different pages convey meaning?

**Signs and Symbols**

A motif is a recurring element that represents an idea in literature or other artistic works. Identify as many motifs used throughout the book as you can (e.g. traffic signs, hats, etc.) What do you think these motifs symbolise?

**History**

Research a famous inventor. What did they invent? What inspired them to make this invention? Has the invention changed over time or is it still the same as when it was created?
Science
Scientific inventions are used to solve problems that directly affect people’s lives. Pick five objects from your classroom and list what you think may have inspired the inventor to create that item.

How many examples of simple machines (cogs, wheels, pulleys, levers, inclined planes, screws) can you find in Mr Qwerty’s inventions?
THE EXTRAORDINARY

(Your name here)
SYNOPSIS:
One day, Noah Dreary complained so much that his head fell off. Award-winning children’s book author, Aaron Blabey, spins another hilarious tale about the curve balls that life can throw at us. Perfect for readers 6+ years and to be enjoyed by all. It’s an expression we’ve all heard many times, but talented author/illustrator, Aaron Blabey, takes it to another extreme in this hilarious story about a boy who discovers the very real consequences of his continual complaining. And even then, it seems it will only take a catastrophic event to bring Noah back to his senses.

WRITING STYLE
Aaron Blabey’s five previous picture books have received much media and trade attention with their magical stories accompanied by his trademark style of painting.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Aaron Blabey has won a CBCA (Children’s Book Council of Australia) Book of the Year and an AFI Award, and his book The Ghost of Miss Annabel Spoon has been shortlisted in the 2013 NSW Premier’s Literary Awards. Aaron has been included on the Smithsonian Institute’s Notable Book List and was a National Literacy Ambassador in 2012. Visit Aaron on his website at www.aaronblabey.com

EDITORIAL COMMENTS
As always, Aaron has a way of taking a situation we have all experienced or witnessed and manages to turn it on its head with hilarious consequences. But in the end, Aaron’s stories use humour to teach us how we can turn those consequences into something positive in our lives and, more importantly, in the lives of others.

STUDY NOTES/ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHERS

Pre-reading:
• What is meant by a ‘cautionary tale’? Read some examples eg ‘The Boy Who Cried Wolf’, or stories by Edward Lear.
• Why might adults tell children these sorts of stories?
• Can you think of any stories your parents or other adults have told you – eg if you pull faces and the wind changes you’ll get stuck like that

Page 1
• You may have heard people say something like ‘keep going until you scream your head off’, or ‘don’t lose your head over it.’ Do they seriously mean this?
• What is funny about it actually happening?
• What does this page tell us about Noah Dreary?
• What sort of boy do you think he is?
• Why does the illustration make Noah look like such an ordinary boy?
• What does his surname (Dreary) mean?
• How does the meaning of this word add to what you think of Noah?
• How do you think the people around Noah would react when his head falls off? Why?

Page 2-3
• What sort of things does Noah Dreary usually complain about?
• What do you think it would be like to live with Noah?
• Are these reasonable things for him to complain about?
• How does his family react to his behaviour?
• Why does Noah behave like this when it obviously makes other people unhappy?
• Could Noah have solved each of these problems without making such a fuss?
• How do you feel about Noah?

Page 4-5
• How does Noah look when his head falls off?
• What might be surprising about this picture? (He is not complaining).
• How does his mother react?
• What does this tell you about her?

Page 6-7
• Why does the doctor tell Mrs Dreary that nothing can be done to help Noah?
• How do you think she would react to this news?
• Why do you think they are all so calm?
• Is this a surprise?
• How do you think Noah feels on his way home?

Page 8-9
• How do other people react when Noah complains?
• Why do you think they are unsympathetic?
• Do you think they might have cared more if he had behaved differently before his head fell off?

Page 10-11
• Why does Noah go on television?
• How is he portrayed? The sign says ‘The incredible whingeing head’ rather than using his name or talking about how sad it is that he has lost his head. What does this tell you about how people feel about what has happened to him?
• Do you think that Noah has the right to complain now?
• How does the use of dark colours affect how this page makes you feel?
• Why does everyone abandon Noah? Why doesn’t anyone try to help him?
• How might Noah feel now?

Page 12-13
• What sorts of things happen to Noah now that he has no head?
• What other sorts of things might he have problems with? Draw another photo-style illustration of something that happens to Noah now that he has no head.
• How do other people react to his problem?
• Noah asks ‘Why me?’ Why do you think this happened to Noah Dreary?
• Do you think he deserved this to happen?
• How do you think Noah would feel if this had happened to someone else?
• How does the illustration on this page make you feel? Why?
• Do you feel sorry for Noah now that he is all alone?
• What do you think might happen now?

• Did you think this was going to happen?

• How do you think Noah Dreary feels as he falls to the bottom of the ocean?
• ‘But then….’ What do you think will happen next? Will it be a good or a bad thing?

• How do you think these fishermen would have felt when they caught Noah’s head?
• How is Noah’s face different from any other time we have seen him?
• Why does Noah Dreary think he is the luckiest boy in the world?
• How might this change him and the way he behaves?

• How do you think when he hugs his family?
• Why does he hug them?
• How do they react?
• How does this page make you feel?
• ‘And then he got busy….’ What do you think Noah might do?
• There is an expression ‘Get busy living or get busy dying.’ What do you think this means? How might this expression relate to Noah Dreary?

• Why is Noah Dreary a happy person now?
• What sorts of things is he doing?
• Draw another picture of something Noah now does.
• Would you like to be Noah Dreary’s friend now that he is like this?
• In what way is his life better now that he has no head?
• Why might Noah Dreary now be ‘one of those people who seem to get the most out of life’?
• How can a disaster sometimes bring out the best in people?

• Why does Noah Dreary sometimes complain now?
• Who are the other people in this illustration? (Bono and Nelson Mandela). Who are these people?
• What sorts of things do they complain about?
• Is it alright to complain if it is to make a difference in the world and to help other people?
• Is this really complaining?
• When do you think it would be good or acceptable to complain?
• How is this different from the sort of complaining Noah Dreary used to do?

• How does this illustration show that there are always people worse off than we are?
• Why does Noah Dreary do so much to help other people now?

• What sort of person is Noah Dreary shown to be now?
• What sort of life do you think he will have?
• How is his life better now that he doesn’t have his head attached?
**WRITING STYLE:**

Illustrations:
- How does the author use humour in his illustrations?
- Which is your favourite illustration and why?
- Did you learn more from the words or the pictures in the story?

Writing Humour:
- What makes this book funny? Is it the words or the illustrations, or a combination of both?
- Select the page that you think is the funniest and explain why.
- Choose your favourite illustration and explain what you like about it.
- Why do you think the writer has chosen to write about something serious in such a funny way?
- Why are jokes or funny stories often a good way to learn things?

**FOR DISCUSSION:**

- How can something bad happening to a person sometimes be a good thing for them?

- What do you think the moral or the message of this story might be?

- Research a person who had something bad happen that gave them the determination to do something good – eg Helen Keller, Bruce and Denise Morecombe, disabled athletes etc

- Write your own cautionary tale about a child who continued to do something bad or silly and had a dreadful outcome.
Description

Little mermaid Twinkletail’s parents can’t stand any mess at all. They are determined that her birthday party will be incredibly neat — with strictly no games, no friends and no cake! All Twinkletail really wants is a normal party. Luckily her Fairy Godmother rings just in time, and things soon take a very messy turn for the better.

With fabulously detailed illustrations and a laugh-out-loud text, this is a very funny follow-up to the brilliantly feisty Never Say No To A Princess (ISBN 9781407115610).

• Feisty and funny, this is a ‘pink’ book with a difference
• Never Say No To A Princess was shortlisted for the Independent Booksellers’ Book Award 2012
• Kate Leake was runner-up for the 2004 Macmillan Prize for Illustration
• Praise for Never Say No To A Princess: “We were enchanted from start to end” — The Book Bag “All in all, a very lovely book” — guardian.co.uk

About the Author

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About the Illustrator

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