

Title: Scaredy Book

Subtitle: It's not always easy to be brave!

Author: Devon Sillett

Illustrator: Cara King

Publisher: EK Books

Price: \$24.99

ISBN: 978-1-925335-68-2

Publication date: May 2018

Audience age: 4–8

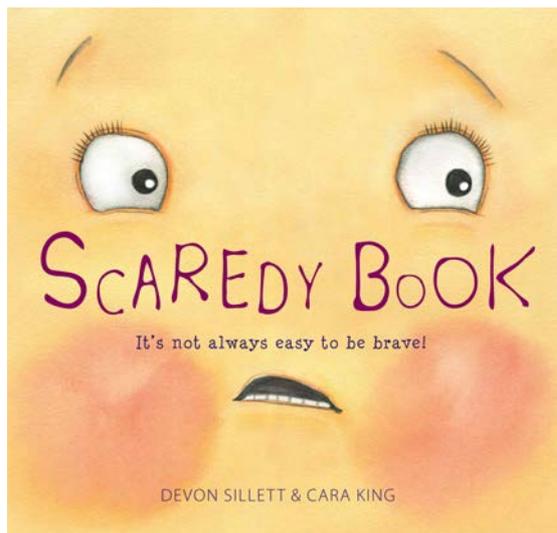
Key Curriculum Areas:

English

Health

The Arts

Writing



SYNOPSIS:

Book lives at the library and desperately wants to go outside but is intimidated by all the things that might happen 'out there'. A page might get torn. Book's cover might get dirty. Book might never be returned to the library! Meanwhile, Emma loves visiting the library and delights in the many adventures to be had in the stories she finds there. When Emma meets Book, they find they are just what each other needs. Together, Book and Emma move out of their comfort zone to try new things, meet new people, and enjoy a few quiet adventures - climbing trees, laughing in the rain, and even cheering along at a soccer match. Along the way, they discover that 'out there' needn't be scary if you just take it one step at a time.

Children and parents alike will enjoy this story about being brave, taking risks, and living to tell the tale!

THEMES:

Books, courage, libraries, adventure, friendship, kindness, anxiety, comfort-zones, changing routine.

SELLING POINTS:

- A fun, metafictional story about finding courage to go outside one's own comfort zone.
- Classroom activities provided across curriculum areas of English and Writing.
- Encourages children to explore and embrace the possibility of 'befriending' books.
- Gently explores the obstacles faced by those who feel anxiety and nervousness during childhood.
- Illustrations are whimsical, evocative, fun and imaginative.
- Non-didactic yet encouraging.
- Empathetic characters
- Stimulates dialogue between teachers/parents/caregivers and children regarding anxieties, fears as well as the opportunity to encourage and support others who experience these feelings.
- Highlights the benefits of friendship between individuals who have different strengths yet complement each other because of their differences.

WRITING STYLE:

Metafictional, non-rhyming and whimsical. Includes personification throughout.

ILLUSTRATION STYLE:

Soft and whimsical, touches of fun mixed with watercolour and pencils.

AUTHOR MOTIVATION:

Engaging with the imagination of little people and constructing a world that has never before been created! The astounding capacity children have for using their imagination allows me to run wild with ideas, and I am so very grateful for it.

AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR BACKGROUND:

Devon Sillett is a former radio producer, turned writer, reviewer and creative academic. Born in the US, Devon has had the pleasure of calling Australia home for the past 21 years, even though she still gets asked about her 'American' accent on a daily basis!

She is currently completing her PhD on children's picture books at the University of Canberra. In 2013, Devon was awarded the Australian Postgraduate Award for her research into YA speculative fiction.

In her spare time, Devon can be found building Lego superheroes and playing with trains alongside her the tiny lights of her life, sons Aaron and Jay.

Cara King is an Illustrator and Graphic Designer. She has a background in publishing and marketing as well as travel and hospitality. On school holidays, she enjoys teaching cartoon workshops for kids.

Cara illustrated a book, *Mummy and Mumma Get Married*, by Captain Honey Publications in 2016 and is currently working on illustrations for another EK Book for 2019.

She lives in Melbourne with her handy and delightful husband and 2 young adventurous boys, 5 chickens, a toy poodle and a Yabbie called Tim Pinchin

INTERVIEW:

AUTHOR

What is the inspiration for this story?

Visiting the local library and imagining all the wonderful adventures that the books would get to have when they were chosen by inquisitive and excited children. When we are young, some of our best friends are stories and I absolutely wanted to explore this idea through a book personified.

Also, having children who enjoy routine got me thinking about the challenges many children face who struggle to deviate from the expected because of fear of the unknown. It's not uncommon, and it's a challenge for kids and parents alike!

In a nutshell, *Scaredy Book* is a marriage of these situations.

What was the most rewarding part of this project?

Every single part of it was rewarding. But I have to say, seeing Cara's illustrations bring Book and Emma to life in a way that far exceeded my imagination. The colour palette, Emma's hair style, Book's sweet but timid face. Goodness me, I could go on about it.

What was the most challenging part of this project?

How to write a book about a book named Book! Book represents so many things and keeping it simple, fun and engaging whilst bringing all the different elements into the story.

ILLUSTRATOR

What media do you use to create your illustrations? Briefly describe your process.

I like to sketch the illustration in grey lead pencil then add some watercolour and finally finish it off with coloured pencils (in some parts) over the top of the watercolour. Sometimes, I'll create the backgrounds separately and then combine the images together in photoshop.

What was the most rewarding part of this project?

This was the first time I've drawn a book as the main character and it offered endless creative possibilities. The story was so delightfully adventurous, it was a pleasure to dip into my pencils and see what appeared from out of those wonderful words.

What was the most challenging part of this project?

I think the most challenging part of the story was being able to create an illustrative narrative that the author and its readers would like portrayed. I hope I have managed to achieve this.

TEACHER ACTIVITIES/NOTES:

Prior to reading: Examine the cover of the book. Based on this, predict what *Scaredy Book* is about. What about the cover leads you to think this?

Afterward reading: Who was right?

Discussion topics:

1.
 - a) What sorts of words might describe what Book is feeling in the beginning of the story (eg. *Afraid, anxious, nervous, worried, scared*).
 - b) Why does he feel this way?
 - c) Have you ever felt this way? When?
 - d) Did you overcome it? If so, how? If not, is this something you still want to work on? Is there a way your classmates and/or teacher can help?
2. What sort of person do you think Emma is? What tells us this?
3. What is it about Library that Emma likes so much? How do we know?
4. Do you have a 'happy place'? Somewhere you can go to feel safe, cosy and imaginative? If so, where?
5. Why do you think Emma chose Book?
6. Why doesn't Emma keep Book at the end?
7. What is happening in the last illustration of the book?
8. Emma helps Book, but Book also helps Emma. Explain how.
9. Talk about a time when a friend helped you overcome your fears. What was it that they did which helped you to find courage?
10. Do you like how the story ends? Why or why not? What would you change?
11. What sorts of things do we learn from the pictures that the words don't tell us?
12. Do you have a favourite character? If so, which one? What do you like about them?

Activities:

1. Using a dictionary, define the following:
 - Potential
 - Pizazz
 - Gumption
 - Courage
 - Nook

2. a) Next, look up the definition for 'Personification'.
b) Based on this definition, in the story *Scaredy Book*, what 'thing' or 'things' have been personified?
3. Create your own narrative using personification.
First, decide what 'thing' you will personify.
Next, write a brief outline of the story. Finally, write your story! Make sure to include:
 - An attention grabbing opening line!
 - A problem that is being experienced by the main character.
 - Something exciting that happens before the end. Usually this includes some action or conflict.
 - A resolution. How does your story end? Is everything resolved or are things left up in the air?
4. What do you think 'sprucing up' means? Use the surrounding words to work it out.
5. After finishing the story, use words to describe 'Book'. How does this list compare to your first impressions of Book?

HEALTH:

Discussion:

1. How does this story make you feel? Why?

Activities:

1. Imagine your favourite book was alive. Now draw his or her cover based on what his or her personality would be like. Consider what sorts of colours match the tone of the story (eg. Blue can = sad, red can = angry, yellow = happy). However, feel free to think outside the box!
2. *Roleplay with a partner!* Imagine that you overhear a discussion between Emma and Book during their first meeting. Emma is trying to reassure Book that it will be OK to go beyond the doors of Library. What sorts of things do they say to one another? After roleplay: What obstacles did Emma face when trying to convince Book? How did your version of Emma overcome these? What sorts of things did she say that was reassuring? When you were pretending to be Book, how did you feel?

EK BOOKS TEACHER NOTES



ART:

1. What are Endpapers? Draw your own endpapers for *Scaredy Book*.
2. Imagine a brand-new adventure for Book to experience. Consider where he is, what he is doing and how he feels. Keep in mind how colours reflect feeling and tone, draw Book on his brand-new adventure!
3. Think of the last book you borrowed from the library. Did you take that book on any adventures? If so, draw a picture of you with the book on one of your adventures. If not, where would you like to take your next book? Don't let reality hold you back! (Think: outer space, under water in a submarine etc. The sky is no limit!)