

No!  
Never!

Libby Hathorn  
and  
Lisa Hathorn-Jarman

A CAUTIONARY  
TALE

illustrated by  
Mel Pearce

**TEACHERS RESOURCES**

# No! Never!

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# INTRODUCTION

*'No! Never!'*

Such a response is often simply a way that a child asserts his or her feelings and individuality. In this book, Georgie has clearly decided that the only way that she can express herself and command her parents' attention is to resist! This entails refusing to participate in the daily events which have formed the enjoyable pattern of their lives as a family. But there is also a hidden agenda here as there is a new baby in the house. Perhaps Georgie is trying to divert attention from the younger sibling as well? A series of tantrums evolve until her parents decide to turn the tables on their feisty toddler and to take charge of the situation.

Told in the style of a traditional cautionary tale by Libby Hathorn and Lisa Hathorn-Jarman, with frenetic and hilarious illustrations by Mel Pearce, this book will remind any parent of the complexity of interactions with young children, and of the need for careful but firm responses to a child's demands that encourages them to re-consider their own feelings and to engage in a different way. It is a joyous exploration of the everyday negotiations which make parenting so challenging and so very rewarding.

## THEMES & CURRICULUM TOPICS

Several themes are covered in this book which might be related to the Australian Curriculum, including:

### STUDY OF HISTORY, SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT

#### **PARENTING, POWER, AND OBEDIENCE**

**ACTIVITY:** Georgie's family's daily routines are upset when she becomes defiant and refuses to participate in anything her parents suggest. Make a list of the things she is asked to do. Are there any other things you do with your parents which might have been included in this list? Add another series of questions to the text.

**DISCUSSION POINT:** Does anyone in your family act like Georgie does? Do they have a favourite saying, like 'No! Never!'?

**ACTIVITY:** Georgie's parents respond to her repeated 'No! Never!' with the same words, by declining Georgie's requests to play with friends or to enjoy the new book her daddy brings home. How else could a parent have responded?

**DISCUSSION POINT:** This story is about communication and power. Georgie is striving to make her feelings heard. And, for a brief time, she assumes power. But the natural order of things is restored when her parents take control again and she is able to enjoy family life with them once more. Why is Georgie so happy now that she is their 'sweetest ever' again?

## FEELINGS OF INDEPENDENCE AND SELF-EXPRESSION

**DISCUSSION POINT:** Many picture books draw on children's needs to express themselves and their growing need to be independent, as this book does. Other such titles include *I Do It* (ABC Books, 2007) by Andrew Daddo and Jonathan Bentley and *Hark, It's Me, Ruby Lee!* by Lisa Shanahan and Binny (Hachette, 2017). Read and compare to this book.

**DISCUSSION POINT:** Even though Georgie learns that it's more fun to do what her parents ask her, there is also an underlying message here that sometimes we need to stand up for ourselves, so that our own needs aren't forgotten. Can being naughty actually be useful sometimes? Is a 'tantrum' simply a child's way of being noticed?

**DISCUSSION POINT:** What other ways do children express their independence apart from being uncooperative, like Georgie is?

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

The text of this book might be studied in relation to the following aspects:

**ACTIVITY:** This book draws on the literary tradition of the 'cautionary tale' which has a long history in children's literature. From the Victorian tale Heinrich Hoffmann's *Der Struwwelpeter* (1845) to later works such as Hilaire Belloc's *Cautionary Tales for Children* (1907) to Maurice Sendak's *Pierre* (Collins, 1962) to Roald Dahl's subversive *Revoltin' Rhymes* (Jonathan Cape, 1982) and Andy Griffiths' *The Bad Book* (Pan Macmillan, 2004) illustrated by Terry Denton. Such tales have been teaching children to mind their manners or to obey their parents or to learn by their mistakes for centuries. Many traditional folk and fairy tales were cautionary as well, eg, *Little Red Riding Hood* or Hans Christian Andersen's *The Emperor's New Clothes* or *Henny Penny* (also known as *Chicken Licken* or *Chicken Little*). Invite students to choose a subject or to write from personal experience their own cautionary tale.

**ACTIVITY:** This is also a **cumulative tale** in structure. Georgie is asked a series of questions and her repeated response is 'No! Never!'. This culminates in a turning point which leads to the climax and resolution of the story. Discuss cumulative tales and how they work.

**ACTIVITY:** 'Cautionary' or 'morality' tales are part of Aboriginal storytelling culture. Read and share with students some Indigenous stories. [See **Bibliography**.]

**ACTIVITY:** This is a rhythmical rhyming text. Make a list of the rhyming words. Then find other words to rhyme with them.

**ACTIVITY:** Test your students' **comprehension** by asking them questions about the written and visual text. [See **Worksheet 2** below.]

## **VISUAL LITERACY**

The visual text of a book combines with the written text to tell the story using the various parts of the book's design and illustrations, as explored below:

**ACTIVITY:** The **cover** of a book is an important part of its message. Discuss what this cover suggests about the contents of the book. Then design your own cover for this book.

**ACTIVITY:** The **endpapers** contain images of a lion. Why is this?

**DISCUSSION POINT:** The title page suggestively depicts a rubber duck lying plaintively on the page. What does this image relate to?

**DISCUSSION POINT:** The **format** of the book is varied with some pages containing a series of images like comic pages and others in a more traditional picture book format. Choose a page and discuss with students how the format works to convey the story.

**DISCUSSION POINT:** How does the **layout of the storyboard** and the **format and design** of the book influence your reading of it?

**ACTIVITY:** Creating characters entails studying **facial expressions and 'body language'**. How would you describe Georgie's body language? Or her parents'?

**ACTIVITY:** The **medium or style** employed is pencil drawing then digital colouring. [See **Illustrator's Notes** below.] Draw your own portrait of Georgie in this style.

**DISCUSSION POINT:** The **colours** used in this book are ochre and sepia in tone with splashes of other pastel colours. What mood or atmosphere does this colour palette convey?

**ACTIVITY: Subtext** in a picture book is often visual. Perhaps Georgie's habit of demanding her parents' attention may stem from the arrival of the new baby we see in each frame. This is never remarked on in the written text but is a clearly visible message. What else did you notice in this visual text? For example, what image features often in Georgie's room decor, or her clothes, etc.? What other details did you notice?

**ACTIVITY:** Invite students to **draw a scene** to accompany the cautionary tale they wrote above. Create a classroom display using all the images. [See also **Worksheet 1** below.]

**ACTIVITY:** Create a graphic novel/comic version of a scene in this book. [See **Bibliography.**] [See also **Worksheet 4.**]

## CREATIVE ARTS

There are many creative activities suggested by this text:

1. **Create a Papier Mâché hand puppet of Georgie.** [See **Bibliography.**]
2. **Make a Library Bag** using stencils of some of the images (contained in these notes) which relate to the book.
3. **Create another interaction between Georgie and her parents** in which she responds 'No! Never!' and draw a picture to go with it. Create a gallery of these images.
4. **Create a poster** to advertise this book.
5. **Create a Book Trailer** to promote this book. [See **Bibliography.**]

## LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

**ACTIVITY:** Research the topics above online.

**ACTIVITY:** Research the author and illustrator online. [See **Bibliography.**]

## MATHEMATICS

**ACTIVITY:** Have fun counting things in the text.

**ACTIVITY:** See **Worksheet 3** below for mathematics activities.

## FURTHER TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

- Research the work of Libby Hathorn. Compare this to her other books.
- Research the work of Mel Pearce in other mediums. (This is her first picture book!)
- Students might research this book in comparison to reading other cautionary tales or cumulative picture books such as those listed in the **Bibliography.**
- Investigate any other topic not covered in these notes which you consider is suggested by this picture book.

## CONCLUSION

This is a delightful reflection on the memorable moments that occur between parents, grandparents and children. Children say such surprising and precious things and can prompt parents to reconsider their own perspective on a particular event. This book stemmed from the authors observing a child using the words 'No! Never!' and then creating their story exploring that response.



## AUTHOR'S NOTES

'Inspired by the sharpness of Lego pieces on the floor, and a small child's response when asked to pick them up, this story is our first-time mother-and-daughter picture book. Georgina, the inspiration for our main character, drew herself up to full three-year-old height and answered 'No! Never!' setting off a chain of ideas for other such possible scenarios. We decided it would be a cautionary tale when Georgie says one 'No! Never!' too many, and came up with a satisfying ending for parent and child alike. With its repetitive and rhyming text, we planned it as a read-aloud-many-times kind of book. Our publisher discovered the inimitable Mel Pearce, who was the perfect illustrator for this hilarious tale.'

**Libby Hathorn and Lisa Hathorn-Jarman**

## ILLUSTRATOR'S NOTES

'It was fun coming up with the design for Georgie. I always kinda knew what Georgie would look like features-wise but I wanted to get her naughtiness just right, so I must've spent hours researching a lot of pictures of pouting and tantrum-ing children, which gave me a lot of laughs. However, after almost a whole book of drawing disobedient little Georgie, it was tricky to change gears and depict her as happy and friendly! It makes me happy when kids laugh at Georgie's various tantrums, but what makes me really happy is when someone says I've nailed the parents' desperation in the drawings! That was much harder to depict and I wanted to make sure I captured the highs and lows of raising a toddler in their expressions.'

**Mel Pearce**

From: *Kids' Corner*, May 2021

<<https://www.cbcansw.org.au/kids-corner/>>



## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Libby Hathorn** is an award-winning author and poet of more than 70 books for children, young adults, and adult readers. Translated into several languages and adapted for both stage and screen, her work has won honours in Australia, the United States, Great Britain and Holland. In 2014 she won The Alice Award, a national award given to 'a woman who has made a distinguished and long-term contribution to Australian literature'. In 2017 she won the Asher Award, a peace prize, for *A Soldier, a Dog and a Boy*.

Her first young adult novel *Thunderwith* has enjoyed 30 years in continuous print and was made into a Hallmark Hall of Fame movie. Two of Libby's picture books, *Grandma's Shoes* and *Sky Sash So Blue*, have been performed as operas, with a third, *Outside*, with music composed by Elena Kats-Chernin, on its way.

Libby is a keen educator who has lectured part-time at Sydney University and is devoted to being an ambassador for poetry anywhere and everywhere. In 2012 she was a National Ambassador for Reading and travelled to many country towns to talk about Australian literature. Libby acts as a judge for various literary prizes, including the NSW Premier's Literary Awards.

For more information, free writing tips and teaching resources, go to [www.libbyhathorn.com](http://www.libbyhathorn.com).

See also: 'Interview' *paperbarkwords. blog*.

<<https://paperbarkwords.blog/2020/04/29/no-never-by-libby-hathorn-lisa-hathorn-jarman-illustrated-by-mel-pearce/>>

**Lisa Hathorn-Jarman** created *No! Never!* with her mother after stepping back from her role as the Executive Producer of News & Entertainment Online at Seven Network to follow creative pursuits, including motherhood. A deep connection with literature and design provides constant inspiration – as do her children, who inspired her first children's book.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

**Mel Pearce** is a WA-based visual artist and children's book illustrator, known for her distinctive scratchy, scribble style. She loves computer games, manga, childhood nostalgia and ink, amongst other things. Her first book *No! Never!* (Hachette Australia) was released in 2020. Mel lives in Perth's northern suburbs with her dingo-dog Sunny.

See also: 'Meet the Illustrator: Mel Pearce' *Alphabet Soup*

<<https://alphabetsoup.net.au/2020/05/13/meet-the-illustrator-mel-pearce/>>



# WORKSHEETS

## WORKSHEET 1. FINISH THIS IMAGE OF GEORGIE

Create a scene in which some action relating to the story is happening by filling in the background to this drawing.



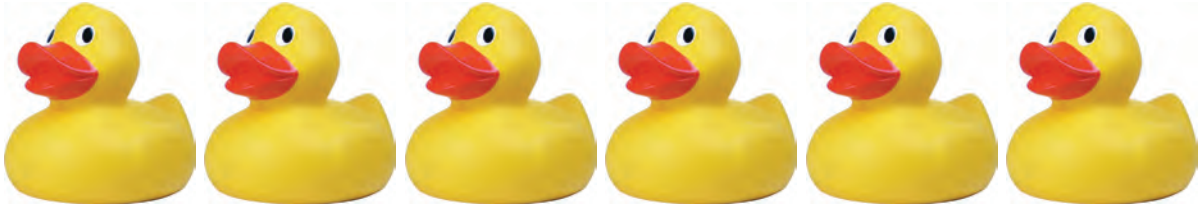
## WORKSHEET 2. COMPREHENSION

1. How is Georgie described on the opening page?
2. What does Georgie wear?
3. Who asks Georgie to play in the park?
4. What was the title of the new book Daddy shows to Georgie?
5. What does neighbour Mehmet bring to play with Georgie?
6. On page 16 we see Georgie taking something from someone. What is it?
7. On the same page she resists when her mother tries to help her with two things. What are they?
8. On the same page she ignores someone who tries to say hello. Who is that?
9. What is daddy holding in the final frame in the book?
10. What does Georgie like at the end of the story?

**Answers:** **1.** 'The sweetest ever'. **2.** A pinafore top over a t-shirt and shorts. **3.** Her best friend. **4.** *The Magic Feather*. **5.** His puppy. **6.** She takes a toy rabbit from the baby. **7.** Sitting on the toilet and being strapped into her car seat. **8.** An elderly lady on a walking stick. **9.** A picnic basket. **10.** 'The smiling sound'.



## WORKSHEET 3. COUNTING



1. How many ducks do you see above?



2. If you multiply these lions by two, how many lions are there?



3. If these dolls were divided by two, how many would you have?



4. There are seven books in each pile. How many piles of books are there?

5. And how many books in total?

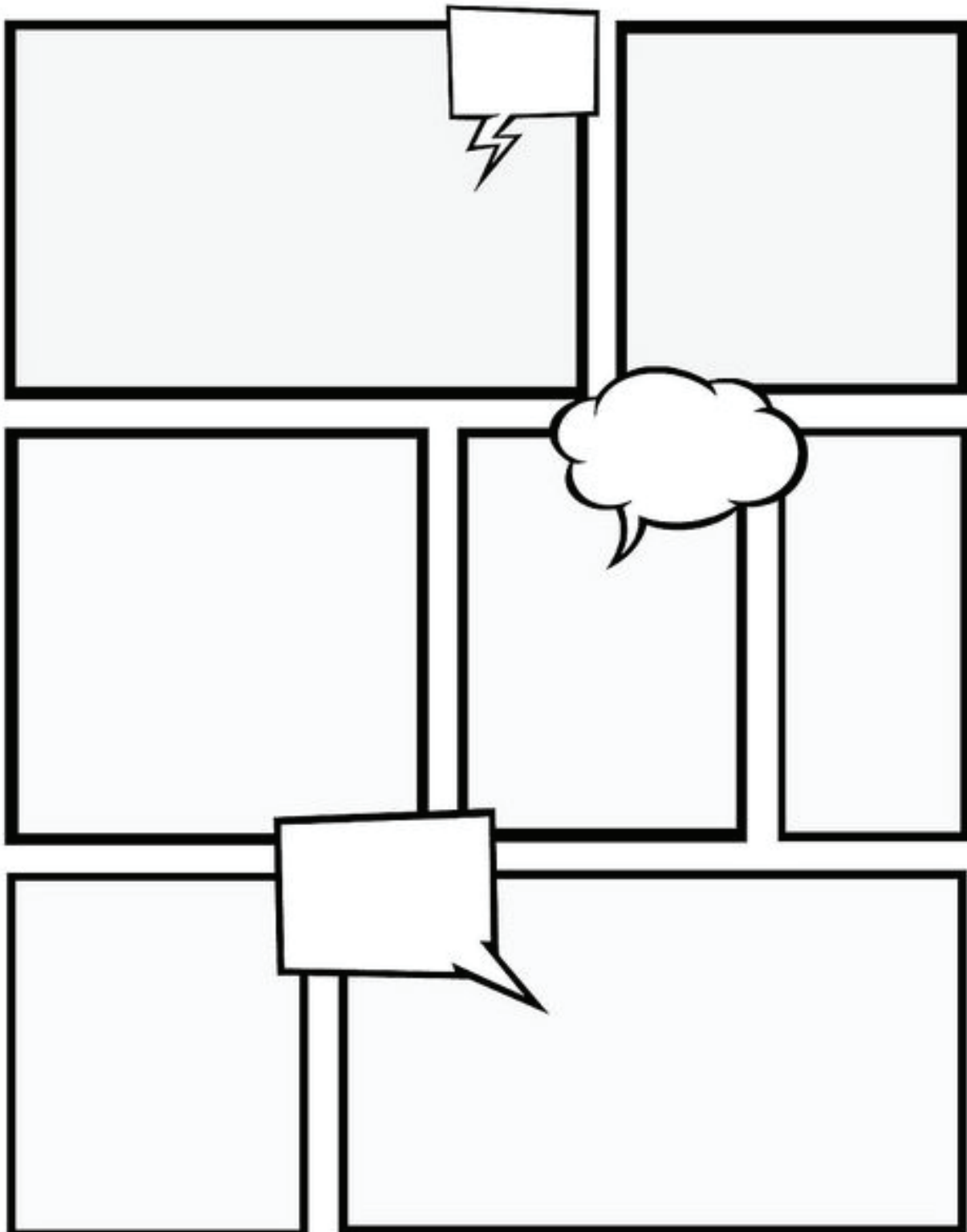


5. You can see three full stars on the front of each of these four balls. How many stars are there?

**ANSWERS:** 1. Six. 2. Eight. 3. Three. 4. Seven. 5. Forty-nine. 6. Twelve.

## WORKSHEET 4. GRAPHIC STORYTELLING

Create a graphic novel/comic interpretation of one of the scenes in this book. Use the layout below as the storyboard for your comic. Enlarge on a photocopier to give you more space.



Comic Book Template viewed at:  
<<http://www.pinterest.com/pin/365706432212821426/>>

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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

**Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright AM** operates justified text writing and publishing consultancy services, and is widely published on children's literature, publishing history and Australian fiction. In 2011 she was the recipient of the CBCA (Qld Branch) Dame Annabelle Rankin Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Queensland, in 2012 the CBCA Nan Chauncy Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Australia, and in 2014, QWC's Johnno Award. In 2021 she was appointed a member of the Order of Australia.

