

The Curiosities

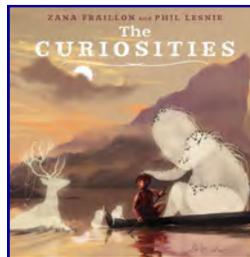
By Zana Fraillon & Illustrated by Phil Lesnie

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With the *Curiosities*, a whole world of wonders and possibles awaits... Miro wakes one morning to find the world isn't quite the way he thought it was. When the *Curiosities* choose Miro as the one they nest on, Miro is led to discover all the marvels waiting in the shadows where no-one else looks. Sometimes though, the *Curiosities* can make Miro feel alone and invisible in the darkness. But perhaps Miro isn't as alone as he thinks... A beautiful celebration of disability, diversity and pride in who you are, from one of Australia's most loved and awarded writers for children.



Teacher Notes have been based on those supplied by the publisher. A full version is available on our website.

Themes:

- Disability, neurodiversity and difference
- Philippine (Filipino) culture and beliefs
- Tolerance and empathy

Discussion Questions and Activities

- 'I hope that *The Curiosities* can encourage all of us to embrace and celebrate diversity. People are disabled not by their impairment or their difference, but by the way they are treated by society. We are, all of us, differently abled in different ways. Be proud.' (Zana Fraillon, p 30) The sentiments in this statement lie at the heart of this book. Discuss this with your students.
- 'Miro had never noticed all the oddments and snippets before, all those wonders and possibles waiting in the shadows where no-one else looked.' (p 7). Discuss this quote with reference to aspects of students' own lives and observations of the world and people around them.
- Examine the pictures in this book. What do they tell you about the lifestyle, living conditions, work, leisure, and culture of the Philippine people?
- 'Using [the Babaylan] to inspire me to paint Zana's story, I find it impossible not to wonder what it would be like for Miro to grow up in a place where brain differences actually afford one political power, and where his tics, his *Curiosities*, are viewed as a communion with magic, essential in the life of a community.' (Phil Lesnie, p 31) Research the Philippine cultural beliefs which Phil Lesnie refers to at the end of the book and try to identify the spirit figures he depicts in this work.
- 'But sometimes, the *Curiosities* were so loud and strange that people couldn't help but stare.' (p 10) Do you think that staring was an appropriate response? How do you think this might have made Miro feel? What might be a better response in this situation?
- Think about the world we live in and how accessible it might be for others. For example, consider how accessible art galleries are. What height are the artworks usually hung at? What might this mean for someone in a wheelchair? Or for children? Students could also look at the school environment. Are there places to help children with sensory issues? Or where people can go if they are feeling overwhelmed? This could lead to a discussion about neurodiversity, and the way in which environment can affect all our moods.
- Test your students' comprehension by asking them questions about the written and visual text (worksheet attached).
- Create a model of one of the village houses which appear in this book using a cardboard box, straw and other materials. Create a cardboard cut-out figure of Miro to stand in front of the model.

WORKSHEET - WORDS AND MEANINGS

Invite students to write the meaning of each of these words (which appear in this book) and then write a sentence containing the word.

WORD	MEANING	SENTENCE
nesting		
blended		
nuzzled		
tingle		
murmuring		
chirp		
oddments		
snippets		
wonders		
possibles		
confusion		
brilliant		
furious		
yowling		
pleaded		
tamed		
hurtling		
fragile		
invisible		
cartwheeled		