

Type of Text

Picture book

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

English Literacy

The Arts

Writing

Social Science, PE

Science

Music

Maths

THEMES

- child parent relationships
- domestic, family violence, child abuse
- childhood fears, facing fears
- family, perseverance
- emotional hurt
- love, hope, building emotional resilience
- the importance of initiating change, finding your inner strength

Publication Details

Published: September 2018

Author: Dimity Powell

Illustrator: Nicky Johnston

Publisher: [EK Books](#) \$24.99 RRP

ISBN: 9781925335767

Format: Hardcover 32pp

Ideal for: 4 – 7 year olds and lovers of picture books

These notes may be reproduced free of charge for use and study within schools and other educational institutions, but they may not be reproduced (either in whole or in part) and offered for commercial sale

SYNOPSIS

Flick is just like any other youngster. She loves to chase butterflies and jump in autumn leaves. But life at the end of Holyrood Lane is often violent and unpredictable due to the constant storms that plague her home, causing her to cringe with dread and flee whenever they strike. Visually arresting, emotionally incisive, and ultimately uplifting, this beautifully crafted picture book provides a sensitive glimpse into one aspect of domestic violence and how it can affect young lives.

AUTHOR BACKGROUND

Award winning children's author, Dimity Powell loves to fill every spare moment with words. She writes and reviews exclusively for children and is the Managing Editor for Kids' Book Review, one of the world's leading review sites for children's literature. She is a seasoned presenter both in Australia and overseas and believes picture books are food for the soul, to be consumed as often as possible. She regularly relishes creating her own including *The Fix-It Man*, released in 2017. *At the End of Holyrood Lane* is her second title with EK Books and Nicky Johnston.

WRITING STYLE

At the End of Holyrood Lane is a metaphorical glimpse at one aspect of domestic violence and how it affects young lives. It is a tale of anxiety shown through the eyes of a small being with an intense dislike for thunderstorms, a fear shared by many young children. The use of allegorical correlative to evoke a gentle awareness in young readers who may be suffering their own domestic torment but are too scared or unsure of how to seek help and shelter from their storms is deliberate and meant to provide a connection with them. The duality of meaning ensures young readers who are not afflicted by family violence may also relate to and enjoy the story. Each word used intends to illustrate this double meaning and provide a launch pad for Nicky's emotionally incisive illustrations.

Few picture books available today address this volatile and woefully prevalent aspect of society without overt explicitness or didactic overtones. *At the End of Holyrood Lane* does so in a sympathetic, non-threatening way.

ILLUSTRATOR BACKGROUND

Nicky Johnston is an educator, speaker and children's book author and illustrator. She is a mum to four boys and lives in Melbourne, Victoria. She works at home in her art studio and is fulfilling her lifetime goal of being an artist. She is passionate about promoting emotional resilience in children and her love of teaching (and all things creative) sees her visiting lots of schools inspiring young writers and artists.

ILLUSTRATION STYLE

Nicky's illustration style is often described as being whimsical, emotive, nostalgic and moving – a perfect match to Dimity's lyrical words. The illustrations are done using watercolour and pencil, soft tones, with specific colours representing emotions and events throughout the book. Every pencil stroke has been meticulously performed, with every detail a conscious one.

SELLING POINTS

- Zero – 100-year readership. Victims of home abuse, family violence, domestic violence and their extended families. In addition, those who work and care for children dealing with life crises be they school counsellors, grief support organisations, psycho-educators and or psychologists.
- Universal appeal relating to youngsters in general who may or may not have dislikes, fears and anxieties (of things like thunderstorms) that cripple their mental and physical well-being.
- Addresses those directly affected (by domestic / family violence / child abuse), secondarily affected, supporting those who are affected and those passionate about raising awareness and changing society's views about it.
- Australian author and illustrator – second book together tackling tricky topics with sensitivity and hope.
- Endorsed by leading mental health industry and psycho-educating professionals along with teacher librarians throughout Australia, including Rize Up, Act for Kids, Paradise Kids and Think Equal.
- Non-didactic, touching, relevant subject matter portrayed with sensitivity and realism.
- The first picture book of its kind embraced by a traditional ANZ publisher.
- Tender, expressive illustrations reflecting vulnerability and dread in a way which moves, heartens and ultimately encourages hope.
- Poignant, impassioned language providing a sympathetic yet dramatic narrative.
- Allegorical correlatives used to depict the relationship between a child's violent abuser and fearful thunderstorms provide subtle yet powerful relatability and connection for those in similar situations.

- Employment of metaphorical elements and symbolism ensures general appreciation of this story no matter what a child's situation or experience i.e. can be readily appreciated by audiences of every frame of reference.
- Deliberate use of meaning-filled terminology and numerical symbolism to inject multiple levels of significance. 'Holyrood Lane', '5 beechwoods' 'Flick's name diminutive for Felicity – happy', for example.

AUTHOR INTERVIEW

1. Why did you write the book?

From the moment Deirdre Hanna, founder of a leading children's charity and crisis centre approached me to write a picture book about domestic violence, I was filled with agitation. This was after all not your everyday topic for an entertaining children's book. It was, and still is, however an ongoing horrifying reality of society regardless of culture or creed. She declared that what we (children's welfare charities like [Paradise Kids](#)) needed was a picture book addressing domestic violence from a child's point of view that was not instructive nor moralistic. And so, this story became my challenge, my tormentor and eventually one of my ultimate favourites. The more time and passion I invested in Flick's story, the more I wanted to share her demise, her fears and her ultimate courage with the world.

2. What was the most rewarding part of this project?

The rewrites; searching for the perfect word combinations to portray as much meaning, strength and significance as possible. It was challenging but incredibly enriching and invigorating, as well. Working with Nicky and EK Books was also a blessing (again). It is great feeling being part of such a valued team.

3. What was the most challenging part of this project?

Ironically, fine-tuning the manuscript to ensure each word delivered as much emotion as possible. The first few attempts were well met by publishers but too raw. By shifting to a more metaphoric look at the subject, I was able to create broader story appeal whilst still focusing on Flick's torment. After many vigorous rewrites, the resultant story was more powerful, more meaningful and one of the ones I'm most proud of.

ILLUSTRATOR INTERVIEW

1. Why did you illustrate the book?

I connected with this book immediately. I love the dual story (storm/domestic violence) making it relevant to any child who experiences fear, insecurity and the feeling of being unsafe. It is such an important book for teachers/parents/anyone working closely with children to be a conversation starter and identify feelings otherwise not discussed

2. What was the most rewarding part of this project?

I always love seeing the advance copy and still being in love with it as I was when I did the illustrations. The team at EK Books always endeavour to make the book the best it can possibly be. Of course this is only possible with the eloquent and evocative language used by Dimity to tell this story. I dedicated the book to my husband, his surprise reaction was very rewarding.

3. What was the most challenging part of this project?

Working on a book about such a difficult topic brings with it the skill of making it engaging without making it too dark. To create the illustrations I used watercolour, acrylic paint, pencils and pastel. It was a process to tell the dual story in a subliminal way. There are lots of little bits and pieces (like the negative and positive images used in the storms) that some readers will identify with, and hopefully it extends the story to another level.

TEACHING POINTS & ACTIVITIES

This book may be used in whole class, small group or independent learning activities in schools, with caregivers or as part of emotional psycho-educational programs facilitated by children's charities or counsellors. It is easier to appreciate the emotional meaning and overall essence of this story with a whole class. Focus on specific causes of abuse and home violence may be better addressed in independent one-on-one situations or in small groups where coping strategies may be explored and shared.

Please note, the following suggestions and activities are suited to a variety of year levels spanning Foundation to Year 6 primary aged children. Some activities may be applicable to early secondary school students, as well. Where possible, [Australian Curriculum goal codes](#) have been included which address Foundation to Year 2 curriculum learning outcomes and apply directly to the targeted audience intended for this book, (4 – 8 years).

Knowledge and Literal Understanding

- Before Reading (Interpreting, analyzing, evaluating / [ACELY1660](#))
 - Show the cover to the class and ask the students what they think the book might be about.
 - Read the back cover blurb. Does this give them more of an idea of what the book could be about?
 - Ask students to define what an emotion is.
 - Ask them to name a variety of emotions and how they make them feel.
 - Do they think it's important to share / show emotions? Why?
 - What do they understand about fear and fears?
 - Ask them to identify a fear they may have, eg. Scared of the dark, dogs, thunderstorms, spiders, getting lost etc.
 - Encourage them to question why they fear that particular thing. How might they overcome their fear?
- During Reading
 - Ask students if they know of someone like Flick who may be scared of storms or experience conflict within their family unit.
 - What is their first impression of Flick? Do they regard her as a brave girl or weak because she cowers from violence?
 - What changes does Flick experience during the story?
 - Do students recognize that the storm might represent something or someone else?
 - What behavior triggers the most violent reaction Flick has ever experienced?
 - Do students think that Flick causes the storms and that they are her fault? If so, why? Why not?
 - Ask students how they perceive Flick's situation. Do they think she is happy at home? If not, what actions show she is not happy?

Inferential and Critical Thinking

- After Reading (Responding to literature / [ACELT1783](#), [ACELT1582](#), [ACELT1578](#))
 - Ask students how they think Flick views her father and her mother at the end of the story.
 - What are the students' impressions of her father? (If they identify him as a character)
 - Are they relieved that the metaphorical storm has passed?
 - Do they find the ending: satisfying, confusing, hopeful, predictable, a surprise, or a relief?

- Gently enquire if any of the students have ever experienced something so frightening and fearful that they were too worried to share their anxieties with anyone. Discuss how it made them feel.
- What did Flick do to change things? Do they think it worked? Discuss what students would do or have done to make themselves feel less frightened? Whom do they think they could / should turn to for help in times of great anxiety?
- Ask students what they think symbolism means. Get them to describe how symbols can show the relationship between real physical things and emotion and ideas. In groups, pairs or as a whole class, brainstorm some everyday common examples of symbols.
- What are some of those used in the story? Storm clouds, lashing wind, rainbow ribbon, trees, family portraits etc.
- Examine these and their metaphorical correlation between a physical storm and emotional and physical violence and how each parallels the emotional distress, the feeling of helplessness, the terror, pain, dread, hopelessness, and anger.
- Whom do students regard as the main character of the story? Who are the sub or secondary characters?
- Why are the sub characters important to the story?
- How do they support Flick and help her deal with her situation?
- Using the [WORKSHEET 2](#), get students to label each of Uni's hoofs and horn with the name of people they can go to if they ever feel scared or unsafe. E.g. Another parent, carer, older sibling, teacher, friend's parent, school principal, help line counsellor, or relative.
- Discuss the fact that not all uncomfortable situations at home are domestic violence situations. Acknowledge that occasionally adults fight and negative feelings displayed but they do not result in violence. Explain the difference between a normal home environment and an unhealthy one so that students are not confused or alarmed by the story. Encourage questions about this.

CROSS-CURRICULAR DISCUSSION AND IDEAS

ENGLISH LITERACY SKILLS

Vocabulary

(Language for interaction/ [ACELA1462](#))

- Alliteration – give examples from the story.
- Onomatopoeia – where and how is it used to emphasis feelings

Grammar

(Expressing and developing ideas / [ACELA1786](#), [ACELA1451](#), [ACELA1462](#))

- Why do they think the main character in the story is named Flick?
- Enquiry whether students think Flick is a nickname or a real proper noun? If they agree it's a pet name (diminutive), what do they think it is short for? (Felicity) Discuss the meanings associated with some names. Do students know what their name means?
- Investigate the meaning of Flick's name. Why could this been viewed as ironic?
- What type of punctuation used shows despair, helplessness, shock, drama, fear, dread?
- Do certain words and adjectives link to the facial expressions and emotions depicted in the illustrations? If so, which ones?
- Identify some of the metaphors and similes the author uses and discuss their meanings. For example, ; '*thunders and fumes*', '*bellows and booms*', '*seethes and snarls*', '*melts like butter*'.
- What other adjectives could replace those used?
- Some narrative phrases have more than one possible meaning. Ask students what they think the phrase '*it never storms anymore*' on the last page refers to.
- There is no dialogue shown in this story. Why do students think this is? Does it make the story easier or less easy to follow?

Comprehension

(Wellbeing / [ACPPS005](#), [ACELT1581](#))

- Research and discuss the meaning of the title. Explore the possible reasons the author chose to include the term, *Holyrood* in the title.
- Get students to name the sequence of events in this story. Attempt this via:
 - Listing them as a group
 - Writing out key sentences from the story, cutting them out and then getting students to arrange in order
 - Illustrating scenes in correct order of occurrence
- Discuss how it would affect the feeling and outcome of the story if it began at a different point in time, i.e. in the middle of a violent storm.
- Do the illustrations follow the story? Do they enhance it, if so, how?
- At which point or points do Flick's emotions change? How many times does this occur?
- Were students able to predict what would happen next? Name the clues – in the text and pictures? If not expected, how did it make them feel? Were they ever anxious about what could happen next?
- What do they think happens after the storm leaves?

- Make a list of the various emotions and the adjectives that relate to them that Flick is experiencing.
- Discuss whether students feel this is a sad story, a scary one or a happy one and encourage them to give reasons based on the words and images used.
- Get students to [match Flick's emotions](#) to her facial expressions using the [WORKSHEET 3](#).

Writing (Examining literature / [ACELT1584](#))

- Identify whose point of view (POV) the story is written in.
- Attempt to write the story from a different POV: Flick's mama, her toy unicorn, a friend.
- Get students to choose a scene and rewrite it using dialogue.
- Ask students to work in groups or pairs to create an Acrostic Poem using emotion words such as: HAPPY, SAD, WORRIED, HOPEFUL, LOVE, STORM, FEARS, ANGRY. Share with the class and compare.
- Write a book review of the story using the [WORKSHEET 1](#).

Literature and Media (Responding to literature / [ACELT1582](#), [ACELT1583](#))

- Enquire whether students have ever seen information, advertisements, or news reports about domestic violence on television. What other media have they encountered that reports on this topic? How do they feel when they hear domestic violence stories like these?
- Ask students to name cartoons or movies that have similar themes to *At The End of Holyrood Lane*.
- Ask them to list fairy tales that may incorporate this theme.
- Define which ones stick most in their memories and discuss why? Is it because of the way they make them feel, for example.
- Consider how they end. Do all violent or emotional stories have bad endings or is there always a promise of hope to come?
- Which have the better endings? Which ones do students prefer most? Debate what makes a good ending and why that is important.

VISUAL LITERACY (Expressing and developing ideas / [ACELA1453](#))

- Search for the visual clues the illustrator includes in the story to show a change of:
 - Emotion
 - Time / situation
- How do the end pages make students feel? What do they project about this story?

- How do the illustrations depict the personalities of the characters and what they are experiencing? E.g. position of Uni, Flick's rainbow ribbon, swirling storm clouds, costumes she wears, family portraits.
- Examine the perspective and angles used in the illustrations, e.g.; we cannot always clearly see the abuser's face. Why do students think this approach is used – is there more meaning in what you *don't* see than what you can see?
- What direction do most of the illustrations flow to and from? When does this direction change? How does this influence the story and what does it tell us about the main character?
- How do certain colours make students feel? How can they apply these feelings to this story?
- Discuss the use of colours to project or symbolise emotion in illustrations and in this story. (used with [Visual Arts and Craft](#))
- Identify the predominant colour palette, and then list emotions to match those colours. Use their location in the story and the associated text to help identify matches.
- Ask students to identify one of Flick's main sources of comfort (her toy unicorn). How does his presence make Flick feel? How does it make them feel? What is most appealing about Uni's appearance?
- Ask student to draw their own favourite toy (or comforter) and get them to list how they feel when this toy is with them. What is special about this? Discuss how it is important to know what makes us feel better, safe, and more confident. (used with [Visual Arts and Crafts](#))

MATHEMATICS **[ACMNA035](#)**

(Probability/Chance, Shape, Numbers and Patterns ([ACMSP024](#), [ACMMG042](#),

- Chance and Probability
 - Explore the likelihood of storms occurring relative to the time of year and seasons.
- Shapes
 - Identify the geometric shapes and symbols used throughout the illustrations.
 - Count them and examine their use in the illustrations. Is it deliberate or incidental?
 - Discuss how certain shapes could produce certain emotions.
- Count the number of times Uni the unicorn appears in the story. Then on the end pages. Use multiplication to arrive at the answer, as well. Discuss the presence of patterns.

- Do students know what numerology is? Discuss the use of numeric symbolism. How many beech wood trees are at the end of Flick's lane? What does the [number five symbolize](#) – research this if necessary. What is the significance of this?
- What street number does Flick live at? Why do you think [the author chose this number](#)?
- Can students spot the numerical differences in the illustrations? The number of family members shown in the paintings, the number of roses in the vase, for example.

THE ARTS

VISUAL ARTS / CRAFT (Visual Arts / Communicating ideas [ACAVAM108](#))

- Make a dance ribbon wand! Use the [instructions included online](#) or [in this video link](#). Experiment with different lengths, colours, and thicknesses of ribbons.
- Instead of a full-length ribbon wand to dance with, try creating a smaller version to use as bookmark, as party decorations or as gifts, using small colourful sticks and curling ribbon.
- Using [colouring in templates and worksheets](#), found online and throughout these notes, use colours to show emotion in the various scenes.
- Invite students to name their favourite colour and why. (use with [Visual Literacy](#))
- Ask students which page (spread) of the story they feel is the saddest or most climatic one and how it makes them feel? (This is known as the Blue page in picture books) What part of the story does this page occur?
- Which spread do they consider the scariest?
- Which do they deem is the happiest page?
- Ask student to draw their own favourite toy (or comforter) and get them to list how they feel when this toy is with them. What is special about this? Discuss how it is important to know what makes us feel better, safe, and more confident. (use with [Visual Literacy](#))

MUSIC (Communicating and interacting, wellbeing, Music [ACPPS020](#), [ACAMUM082](#))

- Listen to and watch the [Book Trailer](#) for this story. What type of music is used? How does it make students feel?
- What types of instruments suggest scary feelings? Anger? Joy? Does the pace of the music dictate the feeling of this mini movie?

- Do students think background music is important for relaying the feel of the story and suggesting what it could be about? Do they think instrumental background music is enough or if a song with lyrics should be used instead; what would they choose?
- Can music trigger certain memories? Ask students if they have a particular song that elicits strong memories, good or bad. (use with [Science](#))

DRAMA

(Language for interaction, Drama [ACELA1787](#), [ACADM027](#))

- Using sock puppets get students to re-enact the story. A small stage could be rigged up to facilitate this.
 - Enlist someone to be the narrator.
- Get students to experiment with how to manipulate the puppets to show the different emotions and voices used in the story. Cover:
 - Body Language
 - Stage position
 - Influence of music to the performance – when to use it to inject drama or relief for the audience.
- Re-enact the story with students but not using words or a narrator, just music to accentuate the:
 - 'light and shade' moments of the story
 - Show scene changes
 - Mood changes (use with [Music](#))

SOCIAL SCIENCE

(Social Health [ACPPS005](#), [ACELA1787](#), [ACPPS020](#))

- When is fear healthy? When is it not?
- Discuss the notion, '*love should feel safe – always.*'
- Talk about trust. Do students understand this concept and can they identify people in their lives they can trust? Get them to name them. (use with [Inferential and Critical Thinking WORKSHEET 2](#))
- Discuss the meaning of empathy.
- Get students to imagine they have a friend who is experiencing violence at home. Perhaps that friend is experiencing abuse in some other part of their life. Then get them to design and write a card to show that friend they are thinking of them. What words or images would they use to convey empathy for their friend's situation? What else could they say to help their friend?

- Discuss the difference between *taking action* and *telling-on someone*. Explain why it is important to speak up and do something if you find yourself or someone you care about in a situation that is unsafe, makes you feel uncomfortable or makes you feel afraid.
- Ask how students feel when something makes them feel afraid. Get them to list some of the ways or things that would help them feel safe. Explore ways to cope with bad feelings: writing / drawing them down, stepping back and counting to ten, meditation, talking about them, engaging in your favourite activity, burning energy, crying, telling jokes, sharing your fears with someone you trust... and so on.
- Discuss why speaking up about your feelings is important.
- Enquire whether students know where or whom to turn to for help when worries or feelings become too much for them. List their suggestions and research other avenues together. (use with [WORKSHEET 2](#) above and see links below)

SCIENCE

(STEM)

- What is a beech wood? Where are they likely to grow?
- Discuss the various types of storms.
 - What are the differences / different names used in different hemispheres?
 - Do students understand the elements of thunder and lightning and their causes?
 - What makes storms seem scary?
- Why can people be like storms?
 - What makes storms so loud and destructive – wind, electricity, rain, unpredictability?
 - What makes people like this? A life event? They're born that way? A mental illness?
 - Yes. Physically – Emotionally. Discuss.
- Consider the five senses and how music, smells and words can stimulate and trigger memories.
 - Hypothesize why they think this is and then research the answer.
 - Locate words and phrases the author uses in the story to add sensory detail and evoke the reader's senses. Discuss how this could enrich the story telling experience.
- Introduce the term *petrichor*. Enquire if students know what this term means. After giving the definition (the smell of rain often after dry weather) see if they can connect the meaning with any sensory memories they might have of this smell.
- Experiment with different materials to make a dancing ribbon then in groups or pairs, test which designs perform the best. (used with [Physical Education](#) and [Arts and Craft](#))

- Which designs 'swirl' best? How could they be improved?
- How long should the ribbon be? What about the handle?
- Is longer better?
- What action is required to produce: tight circles, large circles, cascades etc.?

PHYSICAL EDUCATION(Health and Wellbeing / [ACPPS005](#), [ACPPS020](#))

- Dancing is a fun physical activity that makes you laugh, move and feel good – useful in times of stress and despair. What other physical activities could positively improve mental wellbeing? (Hint: there were some in [The Fix-It Man!](#))
- Which clues in the story suggest Flick likes dancing? (Hint: search both the narrative and the pictures)
- What other activity might Flick have liked that could involve a dance ribbon?
- Practice swirling and twirling dance ribbons individually or groups. Is it possible for two people to dance with one ribbon?
 - Practise tossing ribbons into the air and catching them again. Try it with one hand. Or just using your feet!
 - Attempt some gymnastic movements with your ribbon: cartwheels, somersaults, flying splits, jumps, twirls.
 - Is it better to keep the ribbon always moving? Why?
- Flick hid to escape the fury of the storm. When is hiding ok?
 - Suggest a game of hide and seek. What are some creative ways to hide rather than just in a physical place? Eg. Disguises, camouflage etc.
- Have fun!



LINKS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND SUPPORT

Click on links or images below to access sites

Helplines

If you are in immediate danger call **000**.



[1800Respect](#)



[Act For Kids](#)



[Paradise Kids](#)



[Rize Up](#)



[Think Equal](#)



[Domestic Violence Protection Centre \(QLD\)](#)



[Kids Helpline](#)



[Kids Matter](#)



[Lifeline](#)

[White Ribbon](#)

[Our Watch](#)

[Relationships Australia](#)

[Department of Child Safety \(QLD\)](#)

Events

[Domestic and Family Violence Prevention month held annually in May.](#)

[#dosomething](#)

[International Day for Elimination of Violence against Women 25th November UN](#)

Related Matters

[Bryon Biblio Therapy](#)

[Brave Danny by Robyn Adolphs & Nicky Johnston](#)

[The Salvation Army](#)