

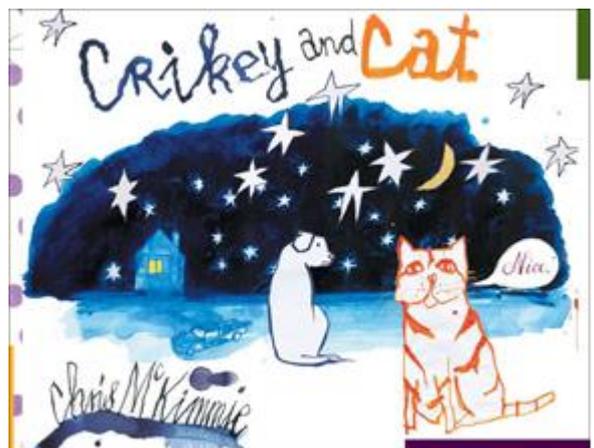
Teachers' Notes (Primary)
by Robyn Sheahan-Bright
Crikey and Cat
Chris McKimmie

ISBN 9781760110031

Recommended for ages 3-6

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INTRODUCTION

Crikey and Cat are worried that the stars have disappeared from the sky. What can they do about that? Reg drives his old ute to the Super-Mart and buys a ladder. He climbs up into the sky and releases a bag of stars into the air... but then a storm comes and chaos descends. Crikey and Cat take refuge with Eve in her caravan. After the storm, the stars appear again and everything is rosy...

STORY SUMMARY

McKimmie views the world through child-like eyes. The wonders of nature assume a topsy turvy perspective and magic is never far from ordinary lives. His images convey the warmth of friendship and love, and depict the balance between chaos and order which is the natural state of things.

Like the seven previous books in Chris McKimmie's whimsical collection, including *Brian Banana Duck Sunshine Yellow*, *Maisie Moo and Invisible Lucy*, *Special Kev*, *Two Peas in a Pod*, *Good Morning Mr Pancakes*, *Alex and the Watermelon Boat*, and *Scarlet and the Scratchy Moon*, this story is astute in its observation of how children might view the world. It tackles a problem, finds a solution and confronts chaos before returning to the happiness of a comforting home. This follows the course of a traditional journey in an evocative marrying of written and visual text which is, as usual in Chris McKimmie's work, a highly emotive and impressionistic work of art.

THEMES

There are several key ideas or themes which flow through this work:

- Pets
- Love and Friendship
- Storms, Chaos and Disasters
- Creativity
- Stars and Astronomy

These themes could be considered in conjunction with the following school curriculum areas.

CURRICULUM TOPICS

1. Study of history, society and environment
2. English language and literacy
3. Visual literacy
4. Creative arts
5. Learning technologies
6. Mathematics

The notes which follow are designed to be used largely in pre-school and lower primary classrooms. Teachers should be able to adapt them to suit the demands of their particular curriculum.

STUDY OF HISTORY, SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT

1) Pets

- *Discussion Point:* Reg clearly lives alone, except for his pets, Crikey and Cat. How do pets make life better for their human owners? Why do we like having pets?
- *Discussion Point:* What pets do you have? Do they have friends who are other pets like Crikey and Cat are friends?
- *Discussion Point:* What sort of pet would you like?
- *Activity:* Read other books about pets. eg *Rex* by Ursula Dubosarsky and David Mackintosh (Viking, 2005) or *Big Pet Day* by Lisa Shanahan and Gus Gordon (Hachette, 2014) or Bob Graham's *Let's Get a Pup!* (Walker Books, 2007).

2) Love and Friendship

- *Discussion Point:* Crikey and Cat are clearly close, but then we find that Reg and Eve are as well. Is this a story about friendship, do you think?
- *Discussion Point:* What pictures in this book demonstrate any acts of friendship?

3) Storms, Chaos and Disasters

- *Question:* Do the stars disappear in the time before a storm? Invite students to observe nature in order to answer this question.
- *Activity:* Research storms and their effects.

4) Creativity

- *Discussion Point:* Reg's solution to the lack of stars is a highly inventive one. How would you have solved the problem? Draw a picture of what you might have done. Display the pictures in your classroom.

5) Stars and Astronomy

- *Activity:* Stars are beautiful things. Invite students to research stars. Then invite them to find words relating to stars and research them as well. eg Galaxy, Milky Way, Supernovae.
- *Activity:* Invite students to draw and then colour stars in the sky using crayons. [See also **Creative Arts** below.]

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

- 1) The **language** in this book is extremely spare and suggestive, with some pages being virtually wordless.
 - *Activity:* Write your own text for the book; i.e. tell the story in your own words.
- 2) **Structure in this book follows the path of a typical narrative journey as a storm brews, strikes, and then dissipates.**
 - *Activity:* Write a simple story using this sort of rising and then falling tension in the narrative, followed by a resolution.
- 3) **Humour** is a hallmark of Chris McKimmie's books.
 - *Discussion Point:* What did you find funny in this book?
- 4) The **Conclusion** of a story should cement its themes.
 - *Discussion Point:* How did this story end? What might have happened next?

VISUAL LITERACY

- 1) Chris McKimmie's **images** of Crikey and Cat's confusion over the disappearance of the stars are **child-like and impressionistic.**
 - *Activity:* Create a picture in a similar style to these images.
- 2) The **Typography and lettering** is hand-lettered like a child's.
 - *Activity:* Invite students to create their own typography for the abstract painting they've drawn above. Combine both hand-lettering and unusual fonts in a caption for the picture.
- 3) **Medium** is described on the back page: "Oil paints on cartridge paper and Arches paper Watercolour Gouache Inks Pencils Coloured pencils Polka dot shirt Butterfly stamp Measuring tape Charcoal Wood Band aid".
 - *Activity:* Collage a scene, in any combination of the media mentioned here, depicting any scene in this book. [See also **BLM 1** below]
- 4) **Emotional impact** is conveyed in the pictures in this book too.
 - *Question:* What feelings were conveyed in the page depicting the Super-Mart?
 - *Question:* What were the feelings conveyed in the picture of Reg climbing the ladder into the sky?
- 5) Chris McKimmie's books frequently include **intertextual references** and visual jokes.
 - *Question:* What other 'sub-texts' did you discover in the images in this book?
- 6) **Colour** plays an important part in Chris McKimmie's images.

- *Activity:* Choose an image and paint it in a different colour. How does that change that image?

7) Design encompasses every aspect of a picture book's construction, and includes the front and back cover image, the endpapers, a dedication page, a title page, 16 double page spreads, and a final imprint or publication details page. The juxtaposition of images and words on each page contributes to meaning in this and in other books.

- *Activity:* Choose a page and discuss how it is designed and how that contributes to meaning.
- *Question:* The **front and back endpapers** depict a baobab tree: and then a rainbow, and they are in different colours. Why do you think these two images were chosen by the artist?
- *Activity:* Examine the **front and back cover of the book**. What meaning do you make from the images? Read the **blurb** on the back cover. Then write your own blurb for the book.

CREATIVE ARTS

This text will encourage students to explore various other forms of creative arts.

DRAMA

- *Activity:* Invite students to act out the story of Crikey and Cat.

MUSIC

- *Activity:* Music consists of noises made by instruments including voices. This book includes sounds such as 'snip snip snippy snip'. Images are suggestive of animal sounds, car sounds etc. Create a 'soundscape' for the book by having everyone in class make sounds suggested by text and images in this book.

CRAFT AND DESIGN

- *Activity:* Cut out cardboard stars and decorate the roof of your classroom with them. Create a ladder to the 'sky' above your classroom, as well.

LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

This book might be used as a tool for investigations on the Internet.

- *Activity:* Explore **website links to related topics** such as:

Stars

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Star>

Stars Astronomy for Kids

<http://www.kidsastronomy.com/stars.htm>

Storms

'Storms' <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Storm>

Drawing Animals

'Category: Drawing Animals' *WikiHow*

<http://www.wikihow.com/Category:Drawing-Animals>

'How to Draw Animals' *How Stuff Works*

<http://home.howstuffworks.com/how-to-draw-animals.htm>

Pets

'Pets' <http://funschool.kaboose.com/formula-fusion/pets/>

'Pet Animals' DLTK's Crafts for Kids

<http://www.dltk-kids.com/animals/pets.html>

MATHEMATICS

Students will find many objects, animals and people to count in this book.

- *Question:* How many times do we see Cat on the pages inside the book? [Answer. 16.]
- *Question:* How many windows are there in Eve's caravan? [Answer: Three.]
- *Question:* How many kangaroos appear in the book? (Answer: One; it appears in three different pictures.)
- *Question:* How many emus appear in this book? (Answer: One.)

CONCLUSION

This work is another whimsical celebration of both human nature, and of the wonders of the natural and man-made world. It is Chris McKimmie's appreciation of children's imaginations which informs this text and makes it so richly resonant.

ABOUT THE WRITERS

CHRIS M^CKIMMIE

Chris McKimmie was the convenor and originator of the illustration program at the Queensland College of Art, Griffith University. He wrote, illustrated and designed a series of 8 children's books in the 70s, and has designed many covers for the University of Queensland Press. Represented in the Graphis Annual, he has worked as a graphic designer and publications designer for the ABC, the National Parks and Wildlife Services and the University of WA Press. He was production designer for the award-winning short film 'Stations' and the feature-length film 'Australian Dream', and wrote the lyrics for the songs in both films. He exhibits paintings and drawings. To see more of his art and read more about him, go to his website at <<http://www.chrismckimmie.com>>

Previous books by Chris McKimmie:

apple to zoo Hicks Smith 1975
Two friends Hicks Smith 1975
The shape I'm in Methuen 1977
The caught bird Methuen 1977
The painted bird Hicks Smith 1975
One day Hicks Smith 1975
One rainy day Methuen 1977
The magic day Methuen 1977

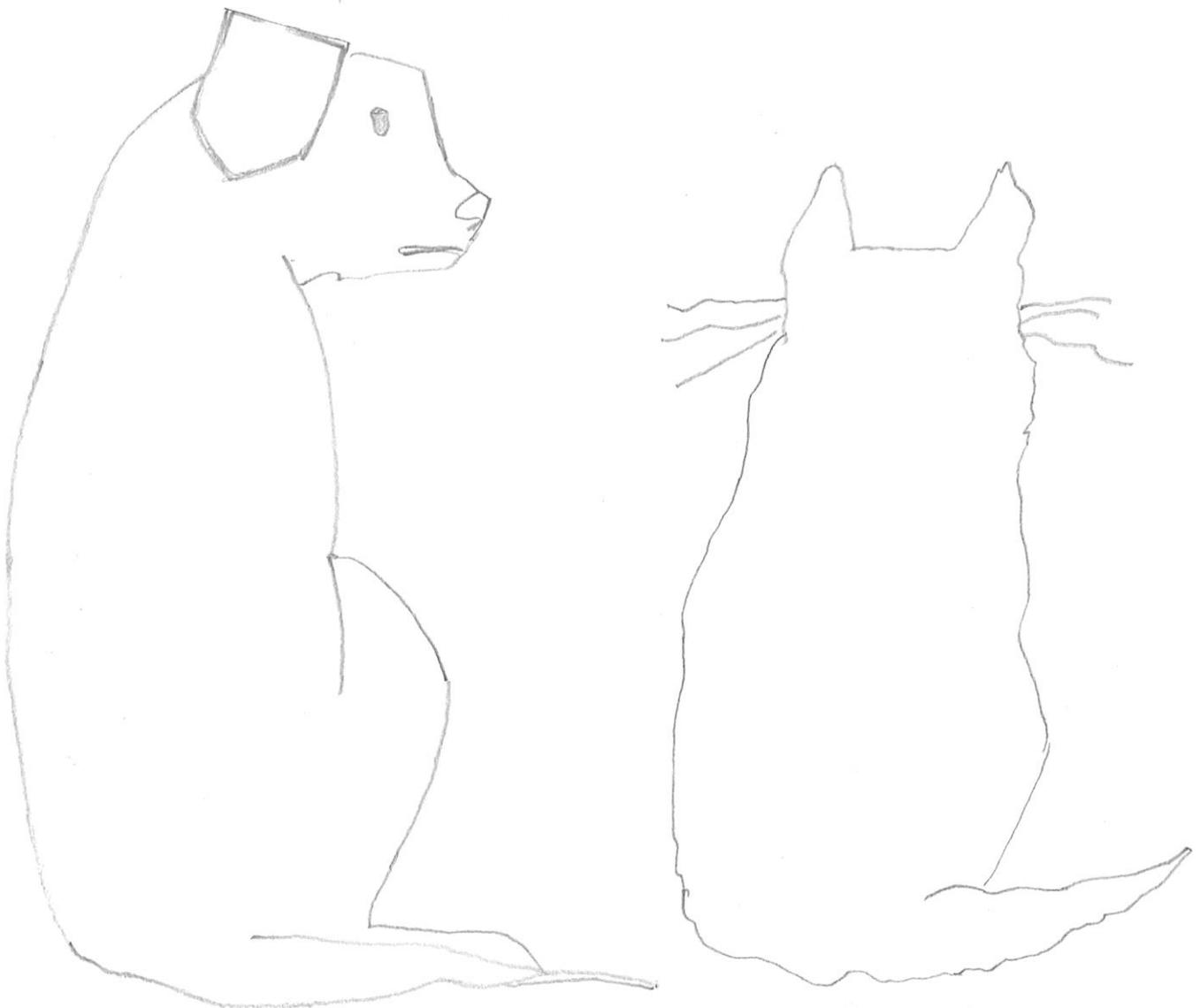
Brian Banana Duck Sunshine Yellow 2006
Maisie Moo and Invisible Lucy 2007
Special Kev 2008
Two Peas in a Pod 2010
Good Morning Mr Pancakes 2011
Alex and the Watermelon Boat 2012
Scarlet and the Scratchy Moon 2013

ROBYN SHEAHAN-BRIGHT

Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright operates justified text writing and publishing consultancy services, and publishes regularly on children's literature, Australian fiction, and publishing history. She was inaugural director of and is a Life Member of the Queensland Writers Centre, and was co-founder of Jam Roll Press. Her publications include *Paper Empires: A History of the Book in Australia (1946-2005)* (2006) co-edited with Craig Munro and *Hot Iron Corrugated Sky: 100 Years of Queensland Writing* (2002) co-edited with Stuart Glover. In 2012 she was recipient of the CBCA Nan Chauncy Award for Outstanding Services to Children's Literature.

CREATE A COLLAGE PICTURE OF CRIKEY AND CAT

Using the rough outline below, create your own image using collage techniques. Cut out pictures from magazines, collect pieces of foil, feathers, lolly wrappers, glitter, buttons, or any other material which appeals to you, in order to create a totally original interpretation of this picture.



BLM 2

PAIRS OF PLACE WORDS

Match these place words with an associated word. (The first two pairs are included in the book.)

Car	1.
Post	2.
Petrol	3.
Shopping	4.
Swimming	5.
Book	6.
Tennis	7.
Yacht	8.
Art	9.
Concert	10.

ANSWERS:

1. Park. 2. Office. 3. Station. 4. Centre. 5. Pool. 6. Shop. 7. Court. 8. Club. 9. Gallery. 10. Hall.

CRIKEY'S QUIZ

Questions:

1. What kind of tree is depicted on the endpapers?
2. What does Cat tell Crikey is missing from the sky?
3. What does Reg go to the hardware store to buy?
4. What does Cat say when Reg tips his paper stars into the sky?
5. Where do Crikey and Cat hide during the storm?
6. Where does Eve work?
7. What was next to the Supa-Mart?
8. In the page where the storm is coming and the text says 'Run! Run! Big rain!', what little bird can you see?
9. What other larger bird can you see?
10. What does Crikey say when the stars appear again after the storm?



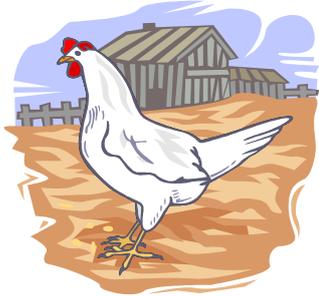
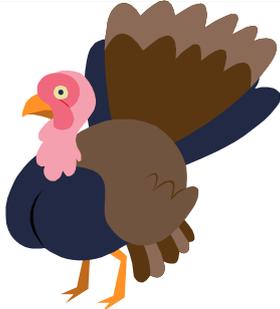
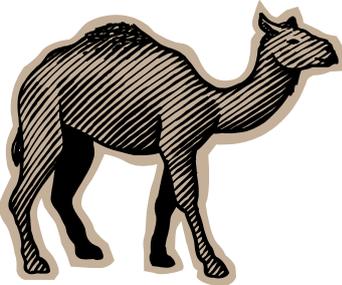
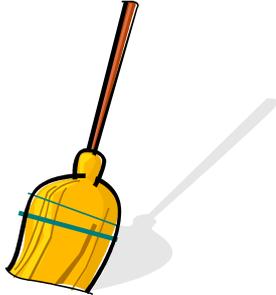
Answers:

1. Baobab tree. 2. Stars. 3. Ladder. 4. Nice. 5. In Eve's caravan. 6. At the 24/7 Supa-Mart. 7. A motel and a petrol bowser. 8. Budgerigar. 9. Emu. 10. Very nice.

BLM 4

CRIKEY & CAT'S WORLD

Images of each of these things appear in the book. Try to find them, some more than once. Write the name beneath them as well.

		
1.	2.	3.
		
4.	5.	6.
		
7.	8.	9.
		
10.	11.	12.

Answers: 1.Measuring tape. 2.Moon. 3.Chicken. 4. Wheelbarrow. 5.Bicycle. 6.Birdbath. 7. Umbrella. 8.Turkey. 9.Bucket. 10.Camel. 11.Ladder. 12.Broom.