



# BILLY BOBBAROONI

## and the Mystery Words

Lisa Keskinen

**Mystery, history, riddles and rhyme.  
Will they crack the code or run out of time?**

‘A novel with a compelling mystery and a rich world, celebrating the power of storytelling and the spirit of community – such important messages for kids and adults alike.’

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Recommended for readers 8+ years old

## Teacher and Parent Notes

Drawing on her knowledge as a teacher and education consultant, Lisa has produced these Notes to use before, during and after reading *Billy Bobbarooni and the Mystery Words*.

They are designed for teachers, home-schooling communities and parents.

They include:

- A vocabulary list for each chapter
- Information on themes and curriculum links
- Discussion points with extracts from the story
- Critical literacy questions
- Engaging extension activities
- Further learning reference links.



### A message from Lisa

I offer these ideas to you. Feel free to do some, none, or all of them. Most importantly, be guided by the children. There are many more possibilities, not included in this document. For example, the words *mammatus clouds*, in Chapter 7, ignited students’ interest in clouds. During reading workshop, these students engaged in ‘reading for research’ and presented information to the class about different cloud types.

My wish is for you to enjoy *Billy Bobbarooni and the Mystery Words* and to dive into some meaningful, related activities along the way.

Visit [laplandproductions.com](http://laplandproductions.com) to buy copies of *Billy Bobbarooni and the Mystery Words*.  
Visit [lisakeskinen.com](http://lisakeskinen.com) for information about Lisa’s education services.

# Themes

Most of these themes are embedded in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) Australian Curriculum.

- **Community**
- **Friendship**
- **Storytelling**
- **Connection**
- **Mystery**
- **History**
- **Environment**
- **Place and Space**
- **Change**
- **Multiculturalism**
- **Immigration**
- **Identity**
- **Diversity**
- **Civics and Citizenship**
- **Conflict Resolution**
- **Value of Elders**
- **Relationships - to self & others**

# Riddles

Riddles feature in *Billy Bobbarooni and the Mystery Words*. Riddles often include multiple meanings, metaphors, shifts of perspective and ambiguities that encourage creative thinking and problem solving. The benefits of trying to solve riddles are many, however if the answer is revealed too quickly those benefits may be lost.

## **Discussing and solving riddles together:**

- improves metalinguistic awareness because riddles manipulate language and require us to look for hidden meanings and interpret text by ‘reading between the lines’, thinking about context and working through layers of meaning
- develops children’s problem solving, logic and creative thinking skills
- improves brain dexterity.

You may wish to present each riddle before reading, perhaps even the day before, giving your students, or your child, beneficial thinking time. Riddles are capitalised in the book so readers can easily find them. Refer to each chapter section in these Notes to help you plan to present each riddle before reading the relevant chapter.

# Vocabulary and Word Work

A word list is offered for each chapter. These are not the only words you may wish to discuss. They are selected to provide opportunities to:

- expand vocabulary
- look closely at word meanings, and etymology
- explore word bases and word building.

For example:

## **propelled**

- verb (past tense)
- to drive or push something forwards.  
‘the boat is propelled by the paddles’
- to drive into a particular situation.  
‘fear propelled him out of his frozen state’

## **Word building:**

propel	propels propelled propelling propeller propellant monopropellant bipropellant sapropel
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<https://www.etymonline.com>

## **Douglas Harper’s Online Etymology Dictionary**

### **propel (v.)**

mid-15c., *propellen*, “to drive away, expel,” from Latin *propellere* “push forward, drive forward, drive forth; move, impel,” from *pro* “forward” (see **pro-**) + *pellere* “to push, drive” (from PIE root \***pel-** (5) “to thrust, strike, drive”). Meaning “to drive onward, cause to move forward” is from 1650s. Related: *Propelled*; *propelling*.

# Chapter 1 First

## Vocabulary and Word Work

propelled

conquered

surveyed

muscular

sculpted

momentum

impulsive

methodically

### This chapter:

- is told from Billy's point of view.
- introduces us to the main character, Billy, and other main characters.
- describes the setting of the story.
- includes a riddle on page 7 – I am tall when I am young and short when I am old.  
What am I?

### Setting

#### Discussion question:

What do we know about the setting of this story?

- Students sketch or map Billy's run from the school to the playground. Label landmarks. As he runs along his street, what is described on Billy's left and right sides?
- Make lists of landmarks and wildlife referred to in first chapter.

### Characters

#### Discussion question:

What do we know about the main character, Billy Bobbarooni?

- Chapter heading 'First'. Why did the author choose this as the chapter heading? Is it just because this is chapter number one? Or does it tell us something about Billy?

### Shared reading excerpt for insight into Billy

(Pages 10-11)

Billy laughed along. But he secretly wondered why everyone kept saying he needed to slow down and think before he spoke. Why? ...

He thought the world, and all its people, should speed up to match his pace. Life in the fast lane of Billy's busy brain was great! His mind raced with abundant thoughts and creative ideas. He was a fast thinker. He was smart. He was able to store heaps of information in his mind, quickly. He loved learning and collecting new information. Data. Processed quickly and filed methodically in his brain. Why would he want to slow all this down?

**Discussion questions:**

- Who are the other characters? What do we know about them? Make a list of the characters introduced in this chapter. Lumi, Jake, Kavi, Professor Porterman and Asad (absent, but introduced).
- From what you know of the characters so far, who would most likely be your closest friend? Why?

**Excerpts for discussion**

(Page 9)

‘Just because someone doesn’t talk a lot, it does not mean they are stupid,’ said Professor Porterman. ‘We have two ears and one mouth. Perhaps that means we should listen twice as much as we speak.’

(Page 12)

Professor Porterman also entertained Billy and his friends with stories of his golden olden days. Billy’s mum said his stories were local histories, carried in his heart and lovingly shared, like precious gems.

# Chapter 2 Billy's Story

## Vocabulary and Word Work

scampered

nurture

fascinated

vivid

regretful

incident

retirement

thunderous

### This chapter:

- is told from Professor Porterman's point of view.
- includes an embedded narrative, sectioned by a *dinkus* – a typographical device to divide text ( ✱ ). The dinkus is used throughout the novel to indicate a change in point of view, style or time.
- the embedded narrative is presented in a different font.
- includes a riddle on page 15 – What is so fragile that saying its name breaks it?

### Setting

#### Discussion question:

What more do we know about the setting of this story?

- At the beginning of this chapter, Professor Porterman describes his view from the top of the hill. Read and visualise the scenery.
- Students can add this information to their sketches or maps. Label new landmarks.

### Characters

#### Discussion question:

What more do we know about Asad and Professor Porterman after reading this chapter?

#### Shared reading excerpt for insight into Professor Porterman

(Page 14)

The professor loved his community. He had lived there for many years, too many to count. He taught for years at the local school. He always ensured that his colourful classroom buzzed with joyous learning. The professor felt it important to nurture hearts, and not just minds. He believed in fun. Laughter. Connection. Singing. Dancing. Storytelling. Poetry. Art.

He missed those busy, noisy, fun teaching days. At his retirement event, the mayor declared the professor a much-loved, local living legend, to thunderous applause.

#### Discussion question:

What was the purpose of Professor Porterman's story for Billy?

# Chapter 3 Sticky Situation

## Vocabulary and Word Work

sambusa

intentionally

reassured

consequence

Signora

abundance

mesmerised

fixation

### This chapter:

- is told from two points of view – first Billy’s, then Professor Porterman’s, sectioned by a dinkus.
- includes an embedded poem, sectioned by a dinkus and written in a different font.

### Setting

#### Discussion questions:

- What, in the school setting is familiar to you?
- Do you enjoy wet-day timetables? Why? Why not?

### Characters

#### Discussion questions:

- Signora Rossi is Billy’s teacher. What does Signora mean?
- In this chapter, what did we learn about Asad?
- How would you describe Asad’s immigration experience so far?
- If Asad was new to our community, how could we help him feel welcome? What actions could we take to help him?
- What do you know about Somalia? Find the country on a map and research information about Somali landscapes, climate and culture.

### Shared reading excerpt – writing idea

(Pages 24-25)

Billy was with Asad when he first discovered the miracle of the glue stick. Asad was totally mesmerised. Sticky, solid, incredible pillars of glue. Asad was fascinated with these cleverly designed containers. They allowed you to magically roll the glue pillars up and down as needed. He rolled them up and down, for ages, saying how amazing they were. Billy keenly observed Asad’s fixation on something that he took for granted. Glue sticks, just a regular part of daily school life, transformed into a modern-day miracle through Asad’s response.

- What other everyday items can be described in this way? Staplers, sticky tape dispensers, liquid paper, stamps, pencil sharpeners, scissors, tissue boxes, erasers?
- Choose an item and inspect it as though you've never seen it before. Find the 'miracle' of this invention.
- Write a paragraph to describe the 'miracle' item.

### **Shared reading of poem 'Sticky Situation'**

(Pages 30-32)

- Asad learnt the poem 'off by heart' through reading it many times. Can you learn all, or part, of it 'off by heart' too?
- During shared reading, look at the poem's text structure, including rhyme, rhythm and questions. List rhyming words and discuss spellings.

### **Excerpt for discussion**

(Page 21)

Signora Rossi started a discussion from the story.

'How free should we really be to speak our true thoughts?' she asked.



# Chapter 4 Goat in a Boat

## Vocabulary and Word Work

inundated

commotion

Himalayan

literary

reminiscing

calligraphy

intricate

encrusted

### This chapter:

- is told from two points of view – first Professor Porterman’s, then Kavi’s, sectioned by a dinkus.
- includes an embedded narrative poem, sectioned by a dinkus and written in a different font.

### Characters

#### Discussion questions:

- In this chapter, what new characters are introduced?
- What do we know about Ms Franson?
- Vanessa is the antagonist in this story. How does Kavi describe her?
- Who is Evie? What do we know about her so far?
- In this chapter, what more do we learn about Kavi? Read excerpt below.

#### Shared reading excerpt – about Kavi

(Page 36)

She was born in a Himalayan village called Pokhara, in Nepal. Her father named her Kavi, meaning wise poet in Nepali, her first language. He told her that he recognised her wisdom the first time he looked into her eyes. They were shiny and deep. He said she carried the wisdom of all the ancestors with her into this life. That she would bring peace and love to others, using her words. Kavi wondered if he had any idea then, that life would bring an opportunity for travel to Australia. That she would start her schooling in another country. That her words of peace and love would be shared in another language. English.

Kavi believed in the power of words to make a difference in the world. She chose her words carefully. Some of her poems rhymed, some did not. She read them slowly and carefully, looking for how they could be improved.

- What do you know about Nepal? Find the country on a map and research information about Nepali landscapes, climate and culture.

### **Read aloud – writing idea:**

- Lumi loves writing lists. Read page 37 and discuss. Some of Lumi’s lists are on display in the classroom. Her list of favourite colours has been turned into a poem.
- Model writing a list and, on another day, model writing a poem, using the list as a reference.

### **Shared reading of poem ‘A Goat in a Boat’**

- During shared reading, look at the poem’s text structure, including rhyme, rhythm, and the narrative poem style. List and discuss rhyming words and spellings.

### **Excerpt for discussion**

(Page 46)

‘Can we have a riddle before you go?’ Evie asked Professor Porterman.

Kavi wondered if Evie was trying to lengthen the chat time. She told Kavi that she had heard about Professor Porterman’s stories and riddles. That she wished to join ‘the playground gang’. Evie said she wanted to run wild with Lumi, Kavi and the others. She wanted to pat Mr Evans and hear the professor’s stories. She said it looked like so much fun. But because Evie was Vanessa’s ‘best friend’, she was forbidden to join in the fun, she was forbidden to hang out with Vanessa’s enemies.

- What would you do in Evie’s situation?

# Chapter 5 BBAD AS

## Vocabulary and Word Work

contortions

manoeuvres

zabaglione

bruschetta

and other Italian words

### **This chapter:**

- introduces the mystery of the story – the mystery words.
- includes a riddle on page 49 – What can you hold in your left hand and not your right?
- is told from three points of view – first Billy’s, then Kavi’s, then Mr Martin’s, sectioned by a dinkus. They are all telling the story of the same moment in time, from three different classrooms.

### **Discussion questions:**

- The chapter is told from three different points of view because one character can’t be in all three places at once. What did we find out about Mr Martin? Who is in his class?
- What were the different scenarios in each classroom? Similarities? Differences?
- How would the same scenario play out in your classroom?

# Chapter 6 Rossi Ferrari

## Vocabulary and Word Work

retrieved	inherited	adoring	boasted
assertively	anonymous	gondolas	pronunciation

### This chapter:

- is told from Billy's point of view.

### Characters

#### Discussion questions:

- Who is Signora Ferrari? How does Billy describe her?
- Who is Steve? What important work does he do at the school?
- In this chapter, we find out that Lumi is Finnish. How do you pronounce Lumi? Google 'lumi Finnish pronunciation' to check the word meaning and to hear the correct pronunciation.
- What do you know about Finland? Find the country on a map and research information about Finnish landscapes, climate and culture.

### Excerpt for discussion

(Page 57)

'Such is the power of a silent person who suddenly speaks.'

# Chapter 7 Rock Stars

## Vocabulary and Word Work

astride	deception	longingly	auburn
rambling	blond	signalled	fidgets

### **This chapter:**

- is told from Billy's point of view.

### **Discussion questions:**

- At the start of this chapter, Billy cleans the kitchen. What jobs do you do around the house? Are household chores equally shared?
- Each of the five kids had a favourite rocker. Did the author choose the rocker for each randomly? Or was there some connection behind each match? Discuss.
- How did Jake and Billy react to Vanessa's interruption? What does each reaction tell us about them?
- Do you think the mystery is about a planned surprise for the students?

# Chapter 8 Thunder

## Vocabulary and Word Work

fogey  
proximity

utterly  
reassuringly

anticipating  
ferocity

mammatus  
jitterbug

### This chapter:

- is told from Billy's point of view.
- includes an embedded poem, sectioned by a dinkus and written in a different font.
- takes us back in time – Professor Porterman shares some personal history.
- marks a turning point in Billy's personal growth.

### Excerpt for discussion

(Page 68)

‘... I have never seen anyone happy and angry at the same time,’ said Professor Porterman.  
... ‘My mother says that where there is anger, there is often pain underneath.’

- Is it possible to be happy and angry at the same time?
- Does anger relate to pain, embarrassment, sadness or fear?

### Discussion questions:

In this chapter, what more do we learn about Professor Porterman's personal history?

- What is the jitterbug?  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rf55gHK48VQ>  
Watch the jitterbug dance video. Can we learn the jitterbug? Dance together (no lifting).  
Discuss – fashion, live music style, dance moves, black and white footage etc.
- What is the twist?  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETX03Zjtarc> (Twist demonstration footage, 1961)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x1W3a2SO858> (Peppermint Twist song, 1961)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Ace2eDMr44> (How to do the Twist! | DANCE at The Children's Museum of Indianapolis, 2017)  
Watch the twist dance videos. Can we learn the twist? Dance together. What are the differences between the jitterbug and the twist?

- The history of dance. Dance through the decades.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uqHt2VeYJN4>  
Watch the 'Evolution of Dance' video - from the 1920's - 2000's. What is your favourite 'decade of dance' and why?
- Bing Crosby and the Andrews Sisters 'Don't Fence Me In'.  
How is this song significant to Professor Porterman and his late wife, June? Discuss the lyrics, meaning, mood and style of this song.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMnLoOnrwbG>

### **Discussion questions:**

- In this chapter, what more do we learn about Billy?
- How does the thunderstorm relate to Billy's emotional outburst?  
'He could feel his anger building. Like a storm.' (Pages 74-75)  
'Billy felt as though he had been struck by a lightning bolt.' (Page 76)

### **Excerpt for discussion**

(Page 77)

Billy gazed out across the parklands, to the heavy clouds and lightning streaks in the distance. It was very atmospheric, up there on the hill. The group stood in silence, as if they all felt the importance of this moment.

- What was the significance of this moment? What do you expect will change for Billy, from this point?

### **Shared reading of poem 'Thunder'**

(Pages 78-80)

- During shared reading, look at text structure, including rhyme and rhythm. The last two stanzas look to the future, expecting change/growth.
- List and discuss rhyming words and spellings.
- Does Professor Porterman's poem help Billy?

### **Writing Idea:**

- Billy and Professor Porterman shared a fear of thunderstorms. What scares you?
- Write a poem, inspired by 'Thunder'. You can use the same structure if you wish.

For example:

When I hear thunder I scramble under My bed at night In the dark	If I see a snake I shiver and shake And I sprint Until far away
When I hear thunder I nervously wonder Whether lightning will strike In the park	If I spot a snake And it's real, not fake I depart Without delay



# Chapter 9 The Elders

## Vocabulary and Word Work

elder	subsided	clan	accent
awkwardly	hermit	society	recluse

### This chapter:

- is told from Billy's point of view.
- includes a riddle on page 87 – What goes up but never comes down?
- includes word play.

### Discussion questions:

- What does Billy learn, from Asad and Kavi, about respect for elders?
- How do Asad and Kavi show respect to their community elders?
- Billy creates an awkward and humorous moment in greeting Francesco. In what ways might Billy show his respect to elders?

### Excerpt for discussion

(Page 87)

‘...Erik is a man. He is not a hermit, a recluse, a loner. He is Erik. Not a weirdo, a hobo, or a lone wolf. These are all labels, judgements. Erik is a beautiful man, with his own life story. He is wise, with a big heart. He is our friend.’

- In our own lives, how might we label or judge others? Why do some people feel the need to label, categorize and judge others?
- Discuss the saying, ‘never judge a book by its cover’ in relation to the above extract.

### Writing/Word Work

(Pages 82-83)

‘Let's work on the mystery words...Let's make a list of all the words we can make with those letters.’

### BBAD AS MIJAVI

- Make a list on your own or with a partner. How many words can you make out of the mystery words?
- Can you put the list words together to form sentences that may give you clues?

# Chapter 10 Trouble

## Vocabulary and Word Work

escalated	erasable	mission	scenic
magnificent	asphalt	veranda	pondered

### **This chapter:**

- is told from Billy's point of view.

### **Discussion questions:**

- What do you think the mystery words mean?
- Who do you think is responsible for this 'triple trouble' and why?

# Chapter 11 Francesco's Garden

## Vocabulary and Word Work

subdivision	orchardists	aromas	wondrous
miraculous	prosper	kaleidoscope	bountiful
foliage	sensory	hues	gazebo

### This chapter:

- is told from Kavi's point of view.
- includes an embedded poem, sectioned by a dinkus and written in a different font.
- includes local history information.
- can be used to link with the Australian HASS curriculum – to 'develop historical understandings, to study identity and diversity in local communities and to develop understandings about the heritage of your local area.'

### Discussion question:

- How do you imagine your local area looked 100 years ago? 200 years ago? 1,000 years ago? Find your local historical society online and look at photos, paintings and maps of your local area, from long ago.

### Shared reading of poem 'My Garden'

(Page 99)

- During shared reading, look at text structure including rhyme, rhythm, shape.
- Discuss 'the miracle of the seed'.
- Can a garden be loving and kind? Discuss.
- On the third line, are the words 'water' and 'weed' nouns or verbs? How do we know?
- How did Professor Porterman's poem affect Kavi? What was the important truth revealed to her? How did the poem affect the way Kavi viewed Francesco's garden ('with fresh eyes')?

### Excerpt for discussion

(Page 101)

'Ah, you, young ones, amazing! So much pay attention. So much heart. The world will be good in your hands. Learn from nature. Learn from garden. Work hard with your hands. Live with mostly heart and hands, a little bit from head,' said Francesco, tapping his temple. 'Use your head a little bit, your heart and hands a lot. Life will be good.'

Kavi smiled. It felt good to hear of Francesco's faith in them. She soaked up his praise. He believed the world would prosper in their hands. One day, they would lead with their hearts, and a little bit from their heads. She felt that this was a most important day in her life. One to remember. One to inspire a poem.

- What is Francesco's basic advice for living a good life?
- Francesco praised Kavi and Billy for their interest in history and the photos and poem on his walls. How did Francesco's words of praise affect Kavi?

### **Art ideas**

Kavi reminisced about her family and early years in Nepal. She described the Himalayan scenery, from the lake Phewa Tal. (Page 98)

- Visualise the scene, from her description. Use the image link below to discuss the double image of the Himalayan mountains. Draw or paint the scene, recreating the upside-down image of the Annapurna Ranges, reflected in the lake's clear waters.  
<https://www.traveller.com.au/pokhara-gateway-to-the-himalayas-go36hx>

- Read and visualise Kavi's description of Francesco's garden.  
(Pages 101-102)

Begin at 'After reading Professor Porterman's garden poem, Kavi stepped onto the back deck with fresh eyes.' (Page 101)

Finish at 'What a scene! Paradise' (Page 102).

- Underline key words to assist illustration. Draw, collage or paint Francesco's garden, creating the 'kaleidoscope of colour' described by Kavi.

# Chapter 12 Erik

## Vocabulary and Word Work

salivating

salmoriglio

operatic

crescendo

rousing

rotary

delirious

rendition

### This chapter:

- is told from Billy's point of view.
- includes an embedded song, sectioned by a dinkus and written in a different font.
- introduces Erik.
- includes many Italian words.

### Discussion questions:

- 'Erik' is the chapter title. What were Billy's impressions of Erik? How did Billy describe Erik? Was Erik the man Billy imagined?
- Why does Billy suspect Erik had something to do with the mystery words?
- Professor Porterman, Francesco and Erik have been friends for sixty years. Not all friendships last a lifetime. What is the meaning of the saying, 'you may have friends for a season, a reason or a lifetime?'

### Shared reading of the song 'What's for Dinner?'

(Pages 107-108)

- During shared reading, look at text structure including rhyme and rhythm.
- Create a melody. Sing together in 'big, bold, operatic voices.'
- Gather musical instruments and create a performance in small groups or as a whole class.
- Read the lyrics and compare with the story told about the creation of the song. Look for elements of the story.

### Family Trees

(Pages 110-111)

Erik tells the story of the river camping trip. He names all attendees. Can you draw the family trees and add the latest generations? Teachers/adults to demonstrate drawing a family tree for each family mentioned. Students may wish to draw these or try drawing their own family trees.

# Chapter 13 Hearts Amiss

## Vocabulary and Word Work

amiss	restraint	divulging	suspects
confession	parliament	publicly	culprit

### This chapter:

- is told from Billy's point of view.
- includes three riddles on page 126:
  1. If you break me, I do not stop working. What am I?
  2. What is both a shape and a symbol that we literally cannot live without?
  3. It's not in your tummy  
But it's somewhere above.  
It's often thought of  
As a symbol of love.
- includes historical information about how the elders saved the parklands from development.
- can be used to link with the Australian HASS curriculum points such as 'develop understandings of place, space, environment and interconnection.' and 'develop an understanding of democracy as rule by the people (democracy, laws and citizens). Students explore how individuals, participate in and contribute to their community (citizenship, diversity and identity).'

### Discussion questions:

- 'Hearts Amiss' is the chapter title. 'Their hearts are amiss.' What does Erik mean?
- This chapter tells us the history of the community effort to save the parklands. Why are these local stories important to us and what do they teach us?
- What are the important stories in your local area?
- Who are the community members involved in building, preserving or creating local places of significance? (Libraries, statues, parks, trails, reserves, monuments, clubs etc).

# Chapter 14 Sunday Funday

## Vocabulary and Word Work

illuminating	relished	vocalisations	submerged
protruding	harmonising	descending	ascent
vexatious	alliteration	insightful	sarcastic

### This chapter:

- is told from two points of view – first Billy’s, then Kavi’s, sectioned by a dinkus.
- includes river safety information.
- explores ideas about adventure, danger and risk-taking.
- includes a riddle on page 139 – What becomes wetter the more it dries?

### Discussion questions:

- At the beginning of this chapter, we learn more about Billy’s connection to the river. What do his descriptions of ‘place’ reveal about his feelings for the river and its bush surrounds?
- What do Billy’s safety checks reveal about his knowledge of the river and his sense of responsibility to his friends?
- What are some of the important river safety tips we learn from reading this chapter? Why did the author include this information?
- Kavi pushed through her fear, with the support of her friends, and jumped from the swing rope. Can you think of a time when you pushed through a fear and took a risk? How did it turn out for you? Would you be brave enough to follow Kavi’s jump?
- In this chapter, Billy reveals his responsible side. He does the safety checks and stays out of the confrontation with Vanessa. What is his feedback to his friends? Does this chapter mark another growth point for Billy? If so, how?
- ‘Just wait until tomorrow!’ yells Vanessa. What do you think is going to happen at school the following day?

# Chapter 15 Author's Chair

## Vocabulary and Word Work

upholstery	collective	catalogued	preference
courageous	enchanted	vocabulary	adorn
complement	humiliate	compassion	empowered

### This chapter:

- is told from Kavi's point of view.
- includes an embedded advertisement, embedded story ideas and poems, sectioned by a dinkus and written in a different font.

### Discussion questions:

- Kavi listened to the 'before school music' and 'secretly wished they would select some traditional Nepali music.' Should schools play a range of music, representing the many cultures of their communities?
- What is traditional Nepali and Somali music? Listen together and discuss.  
Nepali: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSfB-Tx0ysI>  
Somali: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=luSmuB\\_ore0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=luSmuB_ore0)
- 'Author's Chair' is the chapter's title. Do you have an author's chair in your home or classroom? If so, you might like to send the author a picture.
- Vanessa's behaviour during author's chair share time can be described as disrespectful, rude and lacking empathy. Why does Kavi feel sick when she realises Evie is about to publicly confront Vanessa? Why did Billy smile and rub his hands together?
- Moving forward, what do think is going to happen to Evie and Vanessa's friendship?

### Shared reading:

- Billy's poem. (Page 146)  
Read together and brainstorm possible story and poem ideas.
- Kavi's poem, 'My Garden – Part Two'. (Page 148)  
Read together and discuss vocabulary, rhyme, rhythm, shape. Compare with the original, 'My Garden', written by Professor Porterman. What is your special place? How has Kavi used the original text structures to create her sequel?



- Advertisement, 'Compassion Juice'. (Pages 150-151)  
Read together 'in strong, dramatic, radio voiceover voices' and discuss persuasive text elements. What key messages did Evie's advertisement contain? Was this a good way for Evie to communicate her feelings towards Vanessa? Why does Kavi feel sorry for Vanessa?

### **Writing ideas:**

- Billy's 'Book of Advice for Surviving Primary School' is described by Kavi as a 'humorous account of his primary school years, with words of wisdom and advice for the reader.' If you were to write such a book, what would you include? You may wish to write to that prompt. You can choose your preferred text type – narrative, instruction, list, poem, comic strip etc.
- Billy wants to write an imaginative, fictional narrative. On pages 142-145, he asks his writing community to help him choose his topic and gives them a 'taste' of each possibility. Which of the five story options appeals most to you? Why? Perhaps you can choose one option and write that short story. Share from the 'author's chair.'
- Kavi's poem, 'My Garden – Part Two'. (Page 148)  
Read Kavi's poem together and discuss the text structure, vocabulary, rhyme, rhythm, shape. Compare with the original, 'My Garden', written by Professor Porterman. How has Kavi used the original text structures to create her sequel? Does that help to create your own? Model writing your own version, demonstrating how to innovate on the original text.
- Can you use the same text structures to write, 'My Garden – Part Three', 'My Home', 'My Family', 'My Bedroom', 'My Cubby', 'My Forest' or 'My Beach'? What is your special place?
- Evie's advertisement, 'Compassion Juice'. (Page 150-151).  
Can you use the text structure of Evie's advertisement to write your own? What product will you sell? What do you believe is needed in our world?

# Chapter 16 Mr Miller's Office

## Vocabulary and Word Work

triangular	incidents	hunches	spiralled
acknowledging	co-accused	deliberate	strategy

### This chapter:

- is told from Billy's point of view.

### Discussion questions:

- At the beginning of this chapter, Billy studies the map of the world in Mr Miller's office. He looks at 'Africa, a continent with so many countries he had never heard of.' What do you know about Africa? Perhaps you can 'read' a map of Africa during shared reading. List countries for partners to research during reading workshop time. Students can present information about their allocated country, building class knowledge of the continent, Africa.
- What do you think of the mystery words' code? Read together and discuss.
- Who do you think put the anonymous note in the letterbox?
- Billy falls silent and freezes in response to the anonymous note. Why doesn't he stand up for himself? Do Mr Miller and Ms Franson realise that he doesn't know what he is agreeing to? How might they all have handled this situation more effectively?
- Do you believe that Billy is innocent or guilty? How would you feel in his situation?

# Chapter 17 Action Plan

## Vocabulary and Word Work

embedded

brainstorming

witnesses

assign

invasion

privacy

anxious

(page 164 ) uncomfortable, uncertain, unimpressed – discuss meaning of prefix *un*

### **This chapter:**

- is told from Billy's point of view.

### **Discussion questions:**

- What do you think of Billy's action plan?
- The next chapter's title is 'Guilty'. Who do you think is guilty? Why? What would you consider to be a satisfying resolution?

# Chapter 18 Guilty

## Vocabulary and Word Work

scenarios	adrenaline	twilight	oxygenating
wellbeing	solemnly	injustice	accusations
undoubtedly	smugly	vulnerable	geriatric

### **This chapter:**

- is told from Billy's point of view.
- resolves the problem, the mystery.

### **Discussion questions:**

- In the beginning of this chapter, Billy's mind raced. He needed to clear his head. What was his top wellbeing strategy? What effect does it have on his body and mind? Do you have a wellbeing strategy for difficult times?
- 'Dressed to impress,' Billy arrived at the office for the meeting. He didn't know whether he would be able to clear his name. How would you feel, in Billy's position?
- All the kids seemed to have their parents' full support. How would it feel if not even your family believed you were innocent?
- Are you satisfied with the confession, the explanation, the outcome, the resolution? Why? Why not?

# Chapter 19 Finale

## Vocabulary and Word Work

pranced

communities

priority

hesitation

chortled

exultant

pirouetted

tremendous

(page 183) discuss alliteration ‘delightedly drove that delirious dolphin’

### This chapter:

- is told from Professor Porterman’s point of view.
- includes a riddle on page 189 – What is always in front of you but can’t be seen?
- includes an embedded poem sectioned by a dinkus and written in a different font.

### Excerpts for discussion:

(Page 183)

Professor Porterman was dizzy with joy. Building community was high on his priority list. He believed that strong, connected communities make the world a better place. June would have loved this. This scene, of a buzzing, happy community, sharing food, stories, and laughs; it was everything the professor wished for. He was in a state of pure bliss!

(Page 185)

The crowd erupted into applause. The professor was filled with great joy. He was so impressed with young Billy’s confidence. He prepared his surprise speech well. He held everyone’s attention. Strong and in control, Billy had transformed into a young man. No more Silly Billy. What an honour it was, to be part of their lives. The youngsters.

(Page 186)

Kavi stepped up onto the bench. Shy, quiet Kavi. She too had transformed over the last few months. Kavi was now a confident youngster. Almost ready for high school. Professor Porterman could not imagine her standing before a crowd like this even a short while ago. She had memorised her poem and performed it perfectly, with energy and expression.

### Shared reading:

Kavi’s poem. (Pages 186-187)

- Read together and discuss vocabulary, rhyme, rhythm.
- What is the main message of Kavi’s poem?
- In her poem, Kavi names the main characters of the story. What key words and lines include

everyone?

- How do Kavi's poem and Billy's speech enhance the celebratory community event?

**Discussion questions:**

- How does the author create a sense of joy and celebration in this final chapter?
- How have Billy and Kavi changed during the course of the story?
- How have other characters changed?
- How does Professor Porterman honour the past, present and future in his speech?
- The author chose to end the book with one final riddle. What do you think she may be hinting?

