
Teachers' Notes

SHADOW PLAY

Kate Forsyth / Rosalie Street

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Reading level: 2 to 5



BOOK SUMMARY

Minnie May was afraid of her own Shadow.

Tied to her heel, it followed her ... everywhere she went.

'What are you afraid of?' asked Ziggy.

'Everything,' whispered Minnie May.

Minnie May is afraid of her own Shadow, but Ziggy will help her through. Even though Minnie May has tried everything to escape her Shadow, she can't. All she wants is to hide from it until it goes away. But Ziggy shows Minnie May all the wonderful things that you can do with your shadow. With a change in perspective, Minnie May doesn't want to hide from it anymore.

THEMES

Anxiety • Bravery • Friendship • New Perspectives

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**Kate Forsyth is available for author talks and workshops.
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*Shadow Play Teachers' Notes can be used in schools
(independent learning, small groups, and whole classes); at home
with caregivers; and as part of mental health support programs
facilitated by counsellors, psychologists, children's charities, etc.*



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Dr Kate Forsyth is an award-winning author, poet, and storyteller. Her most recent novel is *Psyche*, a reimagining of the ancient Greek myth of 'Eros and Psyche'.

Other historical novels include *The Wild Girl*, the story of the forbidden romance behind the Grimm brothers' fairy tales which was named Most Memorable Love Story of 2013 and *Bitter Greens*, a retelling of 'Rapunzel' which won the 2015 American Library Association award for Best Historical Fiction.

Books for children include *The Impossible Quest* fantasy series, shortlisted for a KOALA Award and a YABBA Award; the Aurealis- award winning historical adventure series *The Chain of Charms*, and *The Puzzle Ring* which was short-listed for the 2009 Aurealis Award for Best Young Adult Novel. Kate's non-fiction books include *Searching for Charlotte: The Fascinating Story of Australia's First Children's Author*, co-written by her sister Belinda Murrell, which was longlisted for the 2021 Readings Non-Fiction Prize.

Kate has a Doctorate of Creative Arts in fairy tale studies, and is also an accredited master storyteller with the Australian Guild of Storytellers. You can discover more about her at www.kateforsyth.com.au

Kate's other title with Wombat Books is *Once*.



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ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR



Rosalie is an accomplished fine artist and illustrator based on the Mornington Peninsula with over 20 years experience in the creative arts.

Her style is emotive and thoughtful and her diversity crosses many mediums including oil painting, picture book illustrations and pet portraits.

Rosalie holds a BA in Fashion Design from RMIT where she excelled in fashion illustration and life drawing. In her 20's she designed evening wear and at one stage had her own children's fashion label called 'Bud'.

She has studied Costume and Set Design at NIDA and worked in theatre wardrobe departments such as *Beauty and the Beast* – Princess Theatre.

Rosalie had her first solo painting exhibition in 1997 and has since exhibited her paintings in many group and solo shows, her artworks are in local and international collections.

With a love for storytelling, researching and inventing characters, Rosalie moved from theatre into illustrating and creating children's picture books – the world of publishing. Rosalie now works full time from her home studio where she continues to oil paint and illustrate for children's books.

She lives with her husband, three daughters and many pets (dogs, bunnies, chickens)

ILLUSTRATOR NOTES

Shadow Play first began as a series of 3 illustrations I painted back in early 2000 at the start of my illustration career. I was creating new art for my very first illustration portfolio. There was no story at the time, I just drew a feeling and mood. I felt a deep connection with the illustrations, like I had tapped into my inner child or subconscious. The images were popular and a favourite in my folio, but I wasn't sure what to do with them because I didn't have a story.

I won an ASA writing mentorship program to help me turn the Shadow illustrations into a picture book. Ann James and Erica Wagner were my mentors and we had around 4 or 5 meetings together. We discussed ideas, I made mood boards and lots of rough sketches. They suggested it worked well as a quiet book with no words but I became confused writing a story with no words, I felt it needed words but my mentorship time was up.

In 2007 *I Am* was published, the first picture book I illustrated written by Kate Forsyth. I still haven't met Kate in person, but at the time she mentioned to me in an email that she would happily write a story for my Shadow illustrations. I was excited by the offer, the smart and sensible me should have jumped at the offer straight away, but I had just had my second child, I was tired and a part of me desperately wanted to write it myself one day, I just needed to become a confident writer.

15 years later and the poor Shadow book has been archived in the shadows all this time! I have my first interview with literary agent Jacinta Di Mase. I believed she liked one of the book ideas I had emailed and I was about to have my first break as a writer, but no, she wanted to see my art folio. She plucked out my Shadow illustrations and said these are perfect for a book. I mentioned I had hit a brick wall trying to write the book, but Kate Forsyth had once offered to write it. I emailed Kate again and she said yes. Thanks to Kate *Shadow Play* came to life with perfect words, and she introduced Ziggy who I just love.

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REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

Shadow Play gently displays fears and anxieties in children and assists them in reframing them and coming forward with new perspectives. It also demonstrates the importance of blossoming friendships and how that can give us bravery and strength. Coupled with evocative illustrations, *Shadow Play* provides children with the tools to confront their own fears.

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

Curriculum Areas and Key Learning Outcomes.

This uses Australian Curriculum V9

FOUNDATION

English, Visual Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

AC9EFLE01	AC9EFLA02	AC9EFLA06	AC9EFLE02
AC9EFLA03	AC9EFLA07	AC9EFLY02	AC9EFLE03
AC9ADFD01	AC9ADAF01	AC9ADAFE01	
AC9HSFS03			

YEAR ONE

English, Visual Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

AC9E1LA01	AC9E1LA06	AC9E1LE02	AC9E1LY02
AC9E1LE03	AC9E1LA03	AC9E1LY05	AC9E1LE01
AC9E1LE05			
AC9AVA2E01	AC9AVA2D01		
AC9HS1S04			

YEAR TWO

English, Visual Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

AC9E2LA01	AC9E2LA03	AC9E2LA02	AC9E2LE03
AC9E2LY01			
AC9AVA2E01	AC9AVA2D01		
AC9HS2S04			

TEACHING POINTS AND ACTIVITIES

This book may be used in whole class, small group or independent learning activities in schools.

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.

KNOWLEDGE AND LITERAL UNDERSTANDING

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. Show the cover to the class and ask the students what they think the book might be about.
2. Read the back cover blurb. Does this give them more of an idea of what the book could be about?
3. Ask students if they can recognize the setting of this story from the cover image.

AFTER-READING QUESTIONS

1. Ask students if any of the characters reminds them of anyone they know: a friend, a sibling, themselves perhaps.
2. Ask students what their favourite illustration spread of the book was, and why. Discuss the feelings that the illustrations evoked in them.
3. Minnie May and Ziggy develop a great friendship. As a class discuss how Ziggy's support of Minnie May helped her throughout the story.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

GENERAL

- *Shadow Play* has some wonderful illustrations. Look at the illustrations and investigate the following:
 - how does the illustrator use colour and light to make things scarier or happier?
 - is there some kind of theme or image that comes back again and again throughout the book? What might that mean?
 - how do the illustrations make you feel? Is there a change throughout the book? How do you think the pictures made you feel that way?

ANXIETY

- What are some of the anxieties and fears within the story? As a class discuss your own fears and anxieties and reflect on how that makes you feel.
- Minnie May is introduced to coping with her fears in a number of ways. Write down the ways Ziggy teaches her to cope. What are some other ways she could have learned to deal with her anxieties?
- Have you ever felt anxious or afraid? Can you describe the feeling?
- What things have made you anxious or afraid before? Was there someone like Ziggy there to help you? How can you help others cope with their anxieties?

BRAVERY

- What are some other words for bravery?
- Find some interesting stories of bravery or role models for bravery. These people can be modern or from history, Australian or from overseas. Some examples: Vida Jane Goldstein, Fred Hollows, Caroline Lillian Archer, David Unaipon, Delta Goodrem, Simone Biles, Malala Yousafzai, Xiuhtezcatl Roske-Martinez.
- Share these tales with your class. What made this person brave and how did they overcome challenges.
- Ziggy helps Minnie May feel brave. Are there some things that help you feel brave? Maybe it's a pep talk, or a friend coming with you. Write down all the things that help you and share as a class.

FRIENDSHIP

- In what ways is Ziggy a good friend to Minnie May?
- Making new friends can be hard, how did Ziggy make it easy for Minnie May to become friends?
- How can new things be made easier by having friends?
- What about social support helps us with things like being brave, trying new things, making changes?
- Ziggy and Minnie May share all kinds of things together. What are some of the best things to share with friends?

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NEW PERSPECTIVES

- What is a 'perspective'? Can you explain what a perspective is, and what it can look like?
- What is Minnie May's perspective? How does it change over the book? Why does it change?
- Is looking at other people's point of view a good thing? Why?
- How did Ziggy's perspective impact Minnie May?
- As a class come up with some topic ideas, things that you might have an opinion on (the best ice cream flavour, going camping, is it fun to wake up early) and then get into pairs. In your pair choose some topics and share your perspective on it. If you have different perspectives try to explain why you think the way you do, and be open to listening to why the other person thinks the way they do.

ACTIVITIES

EVERYDAY BRAVERY

Each person in the class must write a story or draw a picture of themselves doing an everyday act of bravery - maybe it's eating something new, introducing themselves to someone, or trying something they might be scared of. Create a display in the class to put all the stories and pictures.

FRIENDSHIP YARN CIRCLE

Gather everyone into a circle. Give someone a ball of yarn and have them take one end of the string. That person must toss the ball to someone else in the circle, and as they do say something they like about the person they tossed it to. Have everyone stand in a circle with the first person holding a ball of yarn.

The person catching must take hold of the string connecting them to the person throwing before throwing it themselves to another person, and also saying something nice about the next person catching. This should continue until everyone in the circle has had a turn to toss and catch!

FEAR-CONQUERING BINGO

Have you ever played bingo before? Well, this is a special kind of bingo. Using a blank bingo card, choose some challenges for yourself to conquer some fears or anxieties. Maybe it's making a new friend at school, learning a new song on an instrument, making a speech, or playing a sport you're not sure of. As you conquer these challenges, you can mark them off till you hit bingo!

CREATE A FRIENDSHIP FLOWER GARDEN

Draw a big flower on a sheet of paper. Make the petals nice and big so you can write on them. Write a characteristic of being a good friend onto each petal and colour them in. Is a good friend fun? Or loyal? Or honest? Or caring? Jot it down!

After you're finished you can either hang them up in a banner or put them on a popsicle stick to create your friendship garden!

ACTIVITIES ON THE NEXT PAGE

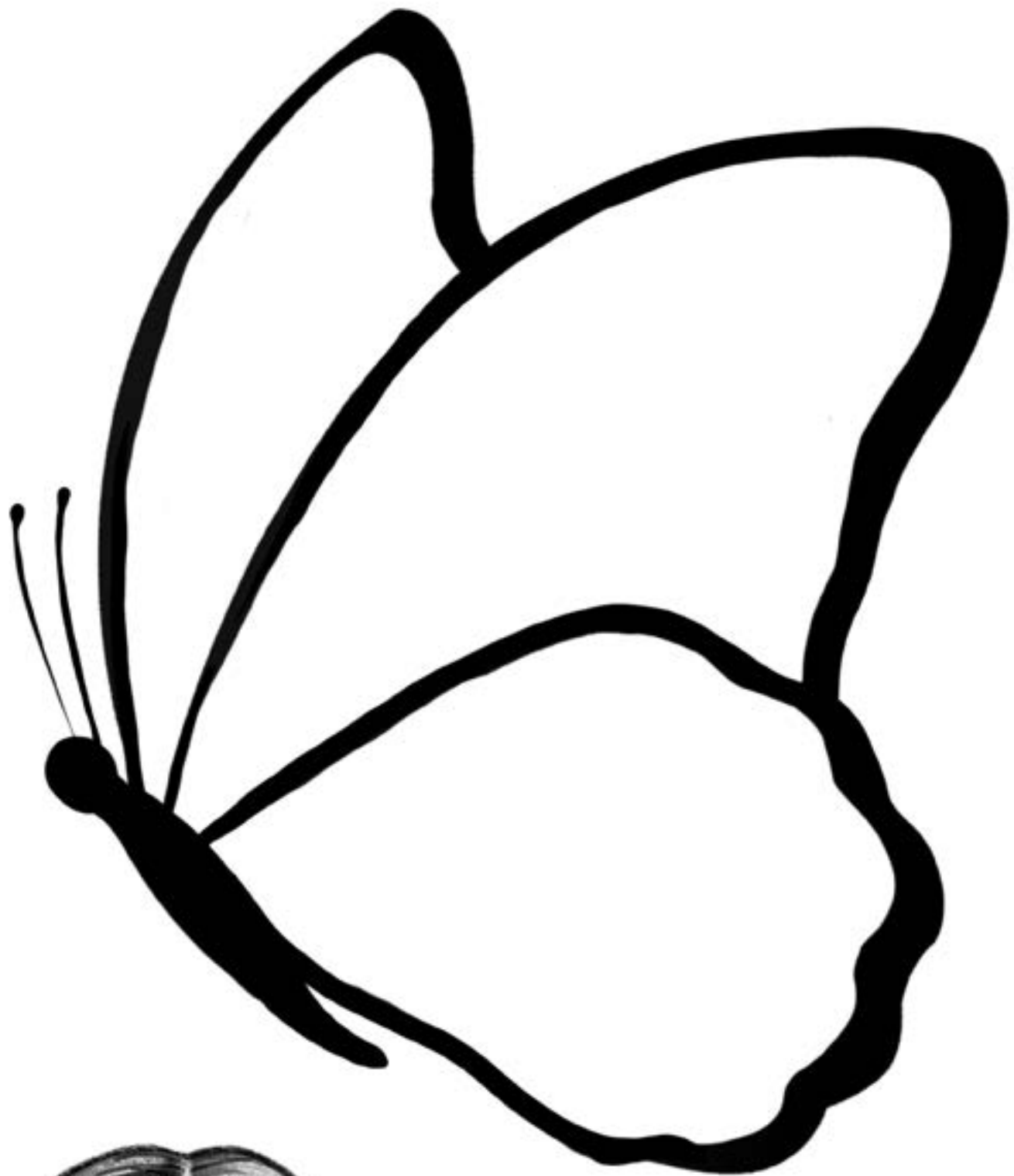
On the next few pages are some fun activities.

- For the first one choose Minnie May or Ziggy. Around their bodies write some times you felt brave on one side, and times you felt scared on the other.
- On the second, in the bird or the butterfly answer the following:
 - Do you feel more like Ziggy or Minnie May?
 - How can you work on your feelings like Ziggy and Minnie May?
 - Do you have to feel brave all the time?
- The third activity is to write the characteristics of a good friend around Ziggy and Minnie May!

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What makes a good friendship?

