



THE BOOK AND BEYOND:

An educator's guide for exploring children's and YA literature

Title: Mr Tiger, Betsy and the Blue Moon

Author(s): Sally Gardner

Illustrator(s): Nick Maland

The aim of The Book and Beyond is to inspire an interest and passion for books and reading. This section is for your thoughts, questions and notes about different aspects of the book and to consider how you might frame discussion with students.

The book

Physical object

A5 size. Has a shorter novel/chapter book feel in weight and thickness. Paperback, so has a card cover with a soft, matte texture. The pages are vanilla colour and seem thicker than usual, and have a soft, cloth like gentle feel, which ties in with the cover.

Design & cover

Silver stars surround the main image of a smiling moon — personified as a character — it looms large and luminous. Betsy and a tiger (with human legs) climb a ladder, looking upward at the moon. This reflects the plotline — a challenge to turn a moon blue to reverse a malign spell. Simple, bullet points outline plot summary on rear cover. Text is blue 'Dyslexie' font with lots of spacing around the text body to support readers.

Illustration

Illustrations woven throughout frame the pages/text or appear as full/part page plates. Blue line and light wash hand drawings have a whimsical feel and show the characters, island, cafe, scenes. They support the reader, illustrating the story elements as they are introduced. Some drawings have the text in reverse, white against washed out blue for contrast or show the blue sea over the text.

Characters

Many different human and magical characters:
Betsy — the daughter of a mermaid and icecream maker — sweet, thoughtful and ready for adventure.
Mr Tiger—a leader, caring, smart, a mysterious 'fix-it' character.
Mr Glory— imaginative, kind, responsible and a worrier.
Alphabet letters of the book feature and talk about their own importance.

Plot

Betsy, her family and the famous Mr Tiger (magical sidekick) and other fantastical characters save an unfortunate princess frog who has been changed/kickedout of her kingdom by a power hungry sister. They overcome the challenges through working together, being kind and creative to overturn the spell according to the spell's remedy — Gongalong berry ice cream.

Setting

An imaginary (but familiar - albeit old fashioned) world of an island 'left of the world map'. It is idyllic 'charmed', seaside-y, circus-like and a fairy-tale land with giants, mermaids, talking tigers, Princess frogs. It has an unspecified time apart from the 'once upon a time' tradition. The setting is important in the playing out of events - ie the magic, the different lands, the nautral world helps and is a presence.

Theme & message

Message or moral about:
Overcoming obstacles
Courage. The power of words and naming are important - they give you strength. 'Ivan the Timid becomes the Bold'
Friendship and working together
Physical size/appearance is less important than feelings on the inside.

Language

Poetic language features that give the book a rich, musical feel. 'whizzed and fizzed'. 'white-kissed waves'. Letters, phrasing are repeated and strong, appealing metaphors to describe the natural world, characters and action.
Use of idiom that are changed for a playful/amusing effect — 'Wait a minnow!'

Mood & feeling

Whimsical, playful and light hearted. This is felt in the way the characters and plot are developed and roll along to conquer and solve each challenge. The dialogue and language of the characters, like the illustrations are also fun/playful, which adds to the mood. There is a happy / satisfied ending for the villain/baddie too.

Genre & format

Between an early reader and junior fiction or chapter books in format using short chapters and some illustration. It's in the tradition of a fairy-tale with a giant, a mermaid, a princess and a frog character but with a modern take, together with fantasy elements of the physical world and animals, who have human qualities (anthropomorphism).

The inquiry

Rich question(s)

This section is for creating and exploring questions that might guide an overall inquiry for a particular book. These questions might be inspired by ideas in the book section and/or personal responses and/or the NZ Curriculum and/or available resources.

How and why is it important to help others?

What does it mean to be a good friend?

What makes a good leader?

What can fairytales/fantasy stories teach us about the real world?



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Make connections

The aim of The Book and Beyond is to inspire an interest and passion for books and reading. This section is designed to help students use the book as inspiration to share, wonder, question, and explore ideas, possibilities, connections, feelings, experiences and other viewpoints — either alone or together.

Personal

Make - an object from the book

'This is my invention/ It is made from an um'. Part of the story involves Mr Glory inventing and constructing a Gongalong berry picker/ice cream machine. This could be used as a link for setting up a design/constructing activity for any invention machine or an ice cream machine.

List words/phrases

'Sometimes if you ask the right questions, you get the right answers.' pg60
 'All the yeses in the world make no one happy.' pg83
 'Sometimes happiness is a red balloon...Round and big enough to lift you off your feet.' pg41

Explore - Find out about the writer.

Sally Gardner's backstory is interesting to share with students or for them to explore. She is dyslexic and her story of struggling at school, and eventually succeeding is inspiring www.sallygardner.net

Sally's blog also contains a copy of speech she made at a school prizegiving a few years ago and captures the idea of being able to succeed even when you / people have decided you are 'failing' in the traditional ways of reading/writing at age 10 and under.

Read more

● Read the next in the series

In the near future — this is the first and new release in this series of characters/setting/style.

● Read another book by the same author

Wings + Co.: The Fairy Detective Agency - The Matchbox Mysteries and Operation Bunny.
The Magical Children series (6 books) and Lucy Willow

● Read another book with the same idea/topic/ genre

Buckle and Squash: The Perilous Princess Plot and The Land of Giants/ Sarah Courtauld
Fortunately the Milk/Neil Gaiman.

● Listen to an audio version of the book

Get free audio versions of Sally Gardner books at the National Library's Print Disabilities collection www.natlib.govt.nz/collections/a-z/print-disabilities-collection
www.natlib.govt.nz/schools find 'Popular Resources'.

Social (Share your experience)

Co-create

Set up a class/group competition to imagine, design and create ice cream flavours or recipe that 'taste of wishes'. This could be in craft, paint, 3D, with labels, instructional text, or perhaps get hold of an ice cream maker to try it out or link to a simple salt/ice experiment for making ice cream.

What connections can you make to yourself, other texts, the world?

Text to self

Are you creative/kind like the Glory family?

Text to text

This book is like Roald Dahl books where magical elements collide with real life, although with Roald Dahl there is slightly more chaos and adult characters can be ridiculed.

Text to world

NZ Curriculum

This section is intended as a prompt for thinking about how the book might relate to the NZ Curriculum. For example, is it a story about *cultural diversity*? What *language, symbols and text* tell the story?

Learning areas		Principles		Values		Key Competencies	
● English	○ Maths & Statistics	○ High expectations	○ Future focus	○ Excellence	● Community & participation	● Thinking	● Relating to others
● The Arts	○ Science	○ Treaty of Waitangi	○ Learning to learn	● Innovation, inquiry, curiosity	○ Ecological sustainability	● Using language, symbols & text	○ Participating & contributing
○ Health & PE	○ Social Sciences	○ Cultural diversity	○ Community engagement	○ Diversity	● Integrity	○ Managing self	
○ Languages	● Technology	○ Inclusion		● Equity			