

LUCY'S BOOK

Natalie Jane Prior

Cheryl Orsini

Teacher's
Notes



Lucy's Book by Natalie Jane Prior and Cheryl Orsini

Teachers' Notes by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

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Introduction

'On Monday, Lucy started reading it all over again.'

This very charming picture book celebrates the love of books. It's about finding that book that is 'special' to you. It's about reading, and re-reading, and re-reading again.

It's about sharing a favourite book with friends. It's also about losing that special book, and how bereft that might make you feel. It's about libraries, and how they can 'open doors' to books for young readers.

Natalie Jane Prior has infused this text with her own childhood love of books and libraries, which inspired her as a writer. Cheryl Orsini has illustrated the text beautifully in an effervescent and deliciously whimsical style.

Together they have created a work that celebrates the child's love of words, images and texts, and the 'haven' that a library provides.

Themes

Several themes are covered in this book which might be related to other curriculum topics.

Books, Reading and Libraries

DISCUSSION POINT: Reading is one of the most pleasurable experiences. Invite students to discuss the appeal of reading. Does it take a special book to make a person a reader?

DISCUSSION POINT: What places do students associate with reading? e.g. libraries, bookshops, other?

DISCUSSION POINT: Natalie Jane Prior was once a librarian, and in her blog <<http://nataliejaneprior.com/blog/>> she writes about how she used to wonder where books had been while they were out on loan. What is the strangest, or most remote, place you've ever taken a library book to?

ACTIVITY: Write an imagined story describing a library book's journey into foreign places.

ACTIVITY: Lucy's library is built in a traditional grandiose style, supported by columns (typical of the Andrew Carnegie-funded libraries in the US). Look at the picture of Natalie Jane Prior's childhood library on her blog. <<http://nataliejaneprior.com/blog/>> What does your library look like? Draw a picture of it.

ACTIVITY: Design an advertising campaign (badges, posters, stickers etc.) promoting libraries. [See also BM 4.]

[See also English Language and Literacy below.]

Sharing

DISCUSSION POINT: Lucy enjoys her friends reading her favourite book as well. How easy is it to share your favourite things? Are you a person who shares things easily? What would you find hard to share?

Friendship

DISCUSSION POINT: Lucy likes reading with her friends. What other things do you enjoy doing with your friends?

Curriculum Topics

This picture book touches on the themes above and might be used in conjunction with curriculum topics (for primary school students) in the following areas:

- **Study of History, Society and Environment**

Communities

DISCUSSION POINT: The library is a community centre. What role does it play in a community?

DISCUSSION POINT: The Market Day depicted in this book demonstrates that social cohesion is often created by shared places and activities. People of all ages gather in the square in front of the library to attend the regular market day. What events bring your community together?

DISCUSSION POINT: What other places are depicted in this book where people gather as a community, or as a family?

- **English Language and Literacy**

The text of this book might be studied in relation to the following:

ACTIVITY: Author of *Lucy's Book*, Natalie Jane Prior's favourite book as a child was *The Tree that Sat Down* by Beverley Nichols. Her experiences as a child wanting to borrow this book every time she went to the library are described in her blog here: <http://nataliejaneprior.com/blog/lucys-book-cover-and-public.html> Read this blog with students and then discuss.

ACTIVITY: Illustrator of *Lucy's Book*, Cheryl Orsini says of her favourite book as a child that: 'We didn't have a lot of books as children, the few we had were read often and dramatised for the pleasure of my long suffering parents, grandparents and extremely large extended family. *The Man Who Didn't Wash His Dishes* by Phyllis Krasilovsky and Barbara Cooney was a favourite, and I suspect a deliberate cautionary tale purchased by our mother. I have appropriated the family copy of this book and it has pride of place in my studio. We also had a few classic Richard Scarry titles. I attribute my deep love of mapping and labelling to his *Busy, Busy World* and *What Do People Do All Day*. He busts open walls and floors to reveal the inner workings of factories, houses, boats, towns - a true celebration of the day to day. His books are always amusing to me, also something I aim for in my own work.'

ACTIVITY: Invite students to bring their favourite book to class. Ask them to tell the class why they like it. Share the books and ask other students to review or respond to one of their classmates' choice of book. Make a list of the class's favourite books and keep them in a classroom 'library' while you conduct this exercise.

ACTIVITY: Read other authors' discussions of their favourite books and how they were inspired to write them. Read, for example, *The Book That Made Me* edited by Judith Ridge (Walker Books, 2016).

ACTIVITY: Finish this sentence: 'My library book is late because I...' Come up with creative reasons why you haven't returned a book!

ACTIVITY: Finish this sentence: 'The book I would most like to take on holiday is ...' Explain why this book is a good one to read on holiday.

ACTIVITY: This book contains a number of verbs which relate to libraries, and borrowing books. e.g. 'returned, loaned, extended, borrowed'. What other verbs relate to libraries? Make a list of all you can think of.

Activity: Test your students' comprehension by asking them questions about the written text. [See also BM 2.]

• Visual Literacy

The visual text of a book combines with the written text to tell the story using the various parts of the book's design and illustrations, as explored below:

ACTIVITY: The cover of a book is an important part of its message. This front cover contains a picture of Lucy reading a red-coloured book with white drawings on it, sitting on the floor of a library with bookshelves behind her; it is a double page spread that extends to the back cover as well. Design another cover for this book.

ACTIVITY: The front and back endpapers depict books. Create your own pattern like this. [See BM 1 below.]

DISCUSSION POINT: The half title page depicts a library trolley with Lucy's book on the top shelf. The title page has Lucy reading standing up. How do these two images relate to each other?

DISCUSSION POINT: The book's format is a large portrait format. (Picture books can be landscape, portrait, or square.) Picture books generally have 32 pages and this one conforms to that convention. Discuss format and design. Then write a brief original story and create a storyboard for it based on something which has occurred in this book. e.g. Aunt Sophie and Uncle Dentist's Wedding OR Market Day OR Lucy's Holiday. [See BM 3 Storyboard.]

ACTIVITY: Study the way the artist uses perspective, employing aerial views, close-ups etc.

ACTIVITY: Cheryl Orsini says of the medium in which she works that: 'I work with watercolours, gouache, and a smattering of acrylics when needed. I switch between different manufacturers with my paint, it really depends on the colour. My paper is from the oldest operating paper mill in Europe - Fabriano Artistico, 640gsm hot pressed and very smooth. Heavenly!' Discuss the choice of medium with your students and experiment with Cheryl's techniques.

ACTIVITY: The colours are pastel shades of the rainbow. Encourage students to create an image using this colour palette.

ACTIVITY: Lucy reads in several different places. What is your favourite place to read? Draw a picture of you in that place.

DISCUSSION POINT: What do you think Lucy's favourite book is about? What clues appear in the visual or written text?

ACTIVITY: Students might be encouraged to use critical literacy skills to unearth meaning in this text. Question: What cultural festival is Li-ya participating in, when she visits China? Answer: The Dragon Dance, which is often danced at celebrations such as Chinese New Year. Question: Where does Tom McGarrigle read? Answer: Under the covers in this bedroom with a flashlight.

ACTIVITY: Lucy is sad when she discovers her book has been discarded from the library (pp 26-27), and she is depicted on a double page spread with many other books around her. Invite students to give a title to some/all of these books based on the images on the covers.

ACTIVITY: Create a graphic novel/comic version of a scene in this book. Read other such books as a guide to style and approach. [See Bibliography.] [See also BM 5.]

• Creative Arts

Students might engage in many creative activities suggested by this text.

1. Create a classroom mural which shows you and your friends reading in your favourite places.
2. Write, direct and act a play scene based on any incident in this book.
3. Design a Book Trailer based on this book. Visit sites such as: 'Book Trailers' Insideadog <<http://www.insideadog.com.au/teachers/book-trailers>> for advice.
4. Organise a classroom display featuring some of the writing and illustration students have done for this unit with books or texts they have read as a group.
5. Create a diorama of Market Day using a cardboard box.
6. Visit websites that depict libraries in different places. Invite students to design a library that suits their favourite interests.

• Learning Technologies

ACTIVITY: Study any of the topics suggested by this book and notes online.
[See Bibliography.]

• Mathematics

ACTIVITY: Count how many books appear on the endpapers in the hardback of this book?
(Answer: 60.)

ACTIVITY: When Aunt Sophie and Uncle Dentist go on their honeymoon they meet a beachside vendor (p 25). Count and name all the tourist gifts on his stall. (Answer: 1 model ship, 4 hats, 1 ball, 1 swimming ring, 2 whirlygigs, 2 bags, 5 drums, 2 folding postcards, 5 necklaces, 3 ukeleles, a pair of maracas, and the vendor is holding a hanging mobile.)

ACTIVITY: How many people (including babies) can you see in the picture of the Market Day (pp 28-29)? (Answer: 32 people, 2 dogs and 1 cat.) Count other things on this page, too.

Further Topics for Discussion and Research

- Research the work of Natalie Jane Prior and Cheryl Orsini. Compare their other books to this one.
- Read other picture books about loving reading and compare to this one.
[See Bibliography.]
- Visit the 'It's Your Story' calendar of the current Australian Children's Laureate, Leigh Hobbs <<http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:http://www.childrenslaureate.org.au/project/leigh-hobbs-its-your-story-calendar-2016/>>
Share with your students some of these fabulous reading ideas.

Conclusion

This is a glorious celebration of the ardent attachment a child often develops to a favourite book. We all have memories of 'that book' (or comic or story or play or film) which 'turned us on' to reading. Lucy's story resonates with that wonderful feeling of having discovered a book which is special just for you!



About the Author

NATALIE JANE PRIOR was born in Brisbane, Australia, in November, 1963, a momentous month in which President Kennedy was shot, C.S. Lewis died, and *Doctor Who* started on British television. Her father cherished vain hopes that she would grow up to take over his engineering business, but at a tender age she apparently told him that she did not want to be 'a dumb old engineer', and decided that she wanted to be a writer instead. She has never seriously wanted to be anything else, and considers herself extremely blessed that she has been able to turn her childhood dream into a reality.

Natalie is the author of numerous books for children and young adults. Her work includes the classic picture book *The Paw* and its sequels (illustrated by Terry Denton), the internationally successful fantasy series *Lily Quench*, which has well over half a million copies in print, and which was broadcast on BBC Radio in 2006, and *The Minivers*, a four book series published by Penguin Australia and Scholastic UK. Natalie has collaborated many times with Sydney based illustrator, Cheryl Orsini, most recently on the picture book *PomPom* (Penguin, 2013) and story book *The Fairy Dancers* (ABC Books, 2015) and *The Tales of Mrs Mancini* (2016).

Natalie's books have won the Aurealis Award (for fantasy and science fiction), the Davitt Awards (for crime writing), and have been Honour, shortlisted and Notable Books in the Children's Book Council of Australia Awards. She lives in suburban Brisbane with her husband, teenaged daughter and two long-haired red miniature dachshunds called Theo and Jasmine. When not writing she likes reading, gardening, knitting and sewing. Visit her website: <<http://nataliejaneprior.com/>>

About the Illustrator

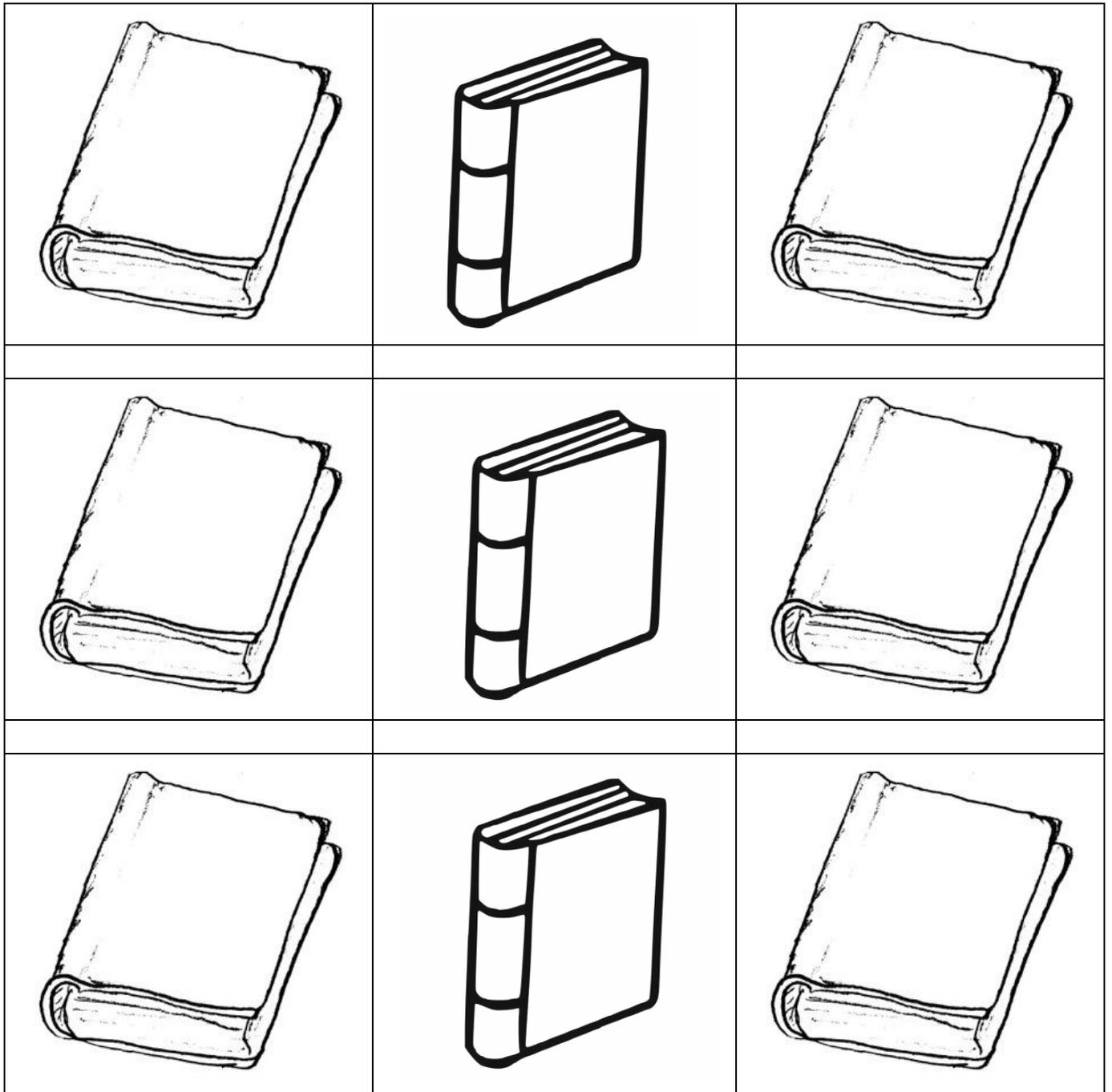
CHERYL ORSINI taught herself to draw as a little girl. She grew a little taller, studied Visual Communications at UTS in Sydney and finally, when she could grow no more, she started illustrating children's books, magazines and decorating a great many peg dolls! She has illustrated over 20 picture books including *Caravan Fran* (Lothian Books/Hachette Australia), *The Tales of Mrs Mancini* (ABC Books) *The ABC Book of Cars, Trains, Boats and Planes* (ABC Books), and *Pom Pom, Where Are You?* (Viking/Penguin). Her illustrations are also sought after by Australian magazines including *Gardening Australia* and *The School Magazine*. Cheryl lives in Sydney, with her husband and daughter. Visit her website: <<http://www.cherylorsini.com/>>



Blackline Masters

BM 1 LUCY'S ENDPAPER / WALLPAPER PATTERNS

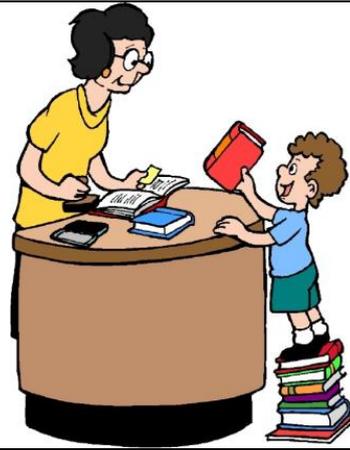
Design your own wallpaper pattern using the image of a book below. First, examine the endpapers of this book. Then colour in the books, decorate them, add devices such as stars and stripes and spots, add other images to make the pattern unique. You can enlarge this to A3 and repeat the pattern to create a wallpaper.



BM 2 NAME THE IMAGE



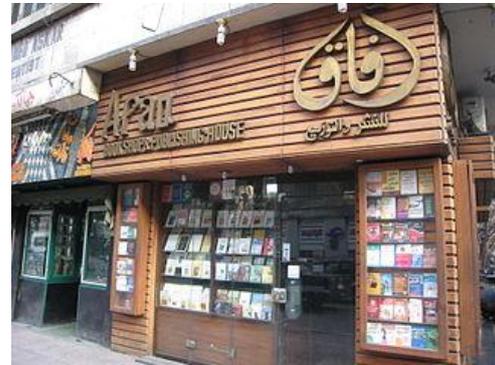
1.



2.



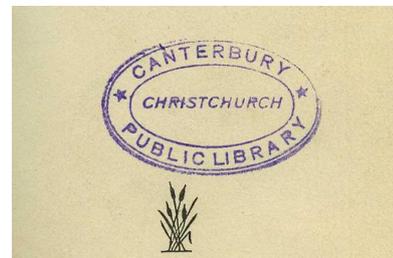
3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



8.

ANSWERS: 1. Book. 2. Librarian. 3. Library. 4. Bookshop. 5. Spectacles (Eyeglasses). 6. Library Stamp. 7. Bookshelf. 8. Library Trolley.

BM 4 LIBRARY SLOGANS

These are examples of slogans promoting libraries. Come up with your own slogans and images in the second column. Then cut them out, put them into a name badge, and wear them! Design a poster to go with your badge.

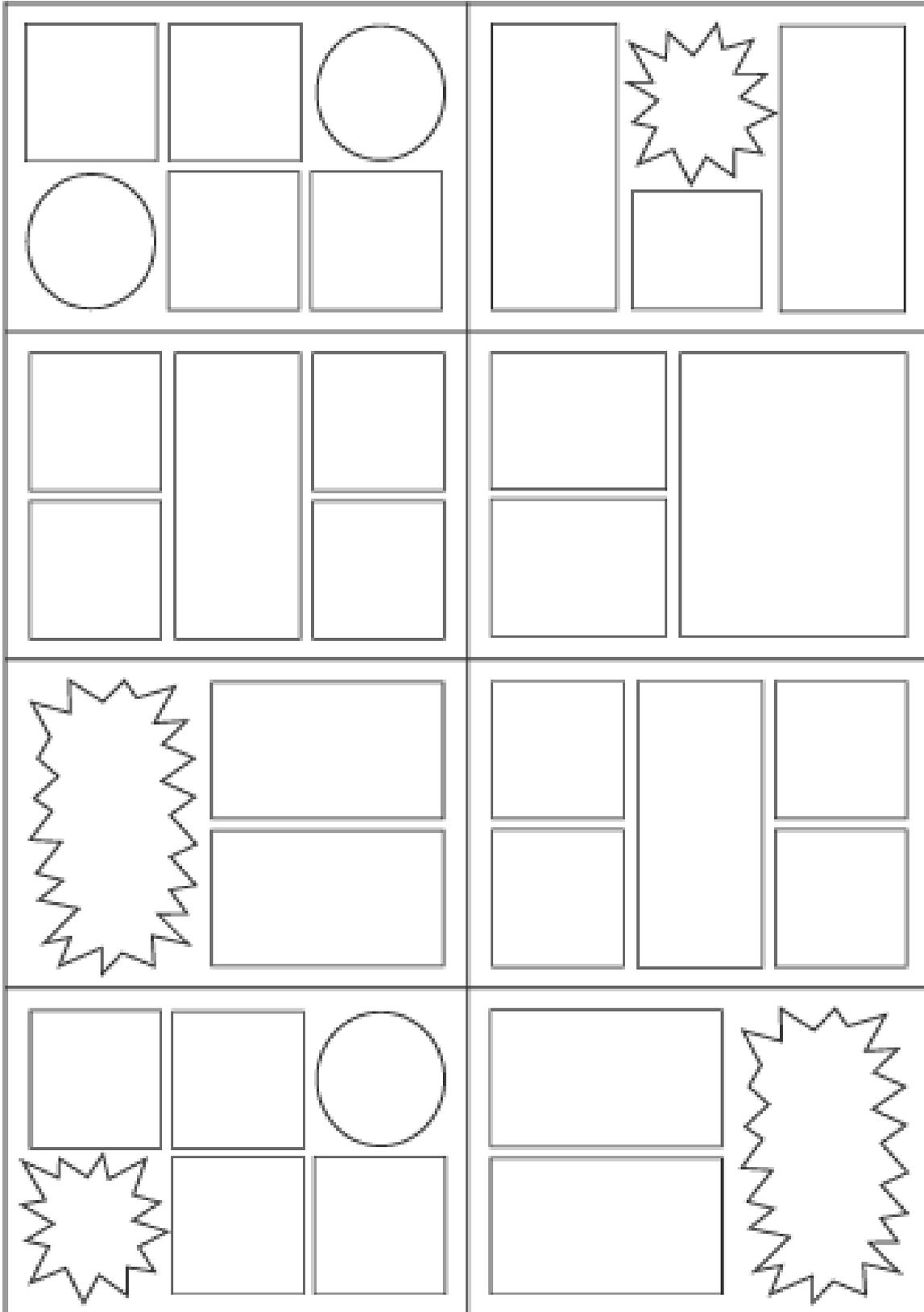


Librarians Rock!

GoneReading™

BM 5 GRAPHIC STORYTELLING

Create a graphic novel/comic interpretation of one of the scenes in this book. Use any of the layouts below as the storyboard for your comic. Enlarge on a photocopier to give you more space.



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WEBSITES

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- 'Picture Books about the Library' Good Reads <http://www.goodreads.com/list/show/724.Picture_Books_about_the_Library_>

About the Author of the Notes

DR ROBYN SHEAHAN-BRIGHT operates justified text writing and publishing consultancy services, and is widely published on children's literature, publishing history and Australian fiction. In 2011 she was the recipient of the CBCA (Qld Branch) Dame Annabelle Rankin Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Queensland, in 2012 the CBCA Nan Chauncy Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Australia, and in 2014, the QWC's Johnno Award.

