

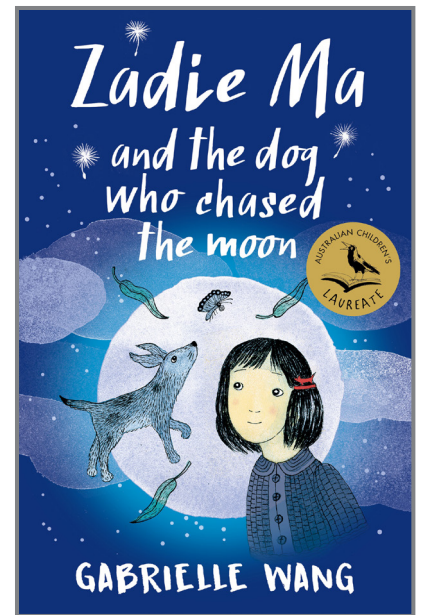
Zadie Ma and the Dog Who Chased the Moon

AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR
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RECOMMENDED FOR: Mid Primary



SYNOPSIS

Meet Zadie Ma, a girl who writes magical stories that sometimes come true. Can Zadie bring to life her most important story of all . . . the one where she finds Jupiter, the dog of her dreams?

Zadie Ma has a special talent for telling stories . . . and it seems that some of Zadie's stories come true. Zadie's dearest wish is to have a dog of her own and so she starts to write the story of a poor unwanted dog called Jupiter, who's just waiting to be rescued by a loving girl like Zadie.

One morning when she's supposed to be minding the family shop for her mother, Zadie sets off to look for Jupiter. The scene that unfolds isn't quite the same as in her story but she does find a real dog, and his name is Jupiter. Once Zadie has rescued him, she realises she can't just take Jupiter home because her mother won't let her keep a dog. Luckily her bold new friend Sparrow lets Zadie keep Jupiter at her house till Zadie can work things out.

But a series of unlucky events means that Zadie can't write the happy ending she dreams of for her story, and now she may lose her beloved Jupiter forever.

Can Zadie's most important story of all finally come true?

ABOUT THE CREATOR

Gabrielle Wang is an author and illustrator, and the Australian Children's Laureate for 2022 to 2023. Born in Melbourne of Chinese heritage, her maternal great-grandfather came to Victoria during the Gold Rush and her father was from Shanghai. Her stories are a blend of Chinese and Western culture with a touch of fantasy.

Gabrielle's first children's novel, *The Garden of Empress Cassia*, won the 2002 Aurealis Award, was shortlisted for the Queensland Premier's Literary Awards and was a CBCA Notable Book. *The Pearl of Tiger Bay* was shortlisted for the 2004 Aurealis Award and *The Lion Drummer* was a Notable Book in the 2009 CBCA Book of the Year Awards. *A Ghost in My Suitcase* won the 2009 Aurealis Award, was a CBCA Notable Book, was shortlisted for the 2011 Sakura Medal and received a Highly Commended in the 2010 Prime Minister's Literary Awards. Her first young adult novel, *Little Paradise* also received a Highly Commended in the 2011 Prime Minister's Awards. Gabrielle's picture book *The Race for the Chinese Zodiac* (2010) was a Notable Book in the CBCA Awards for 2011 and shortlisted for the 2011 YABBA and

WAYBRA awards. Gabrielle has created two popular characters Poppy and Pearlie for the highly successful 2011 Our Australian Girl series.

The Wishbird was a CBCA 2014 Notable Book and was shortlisted for the 2014 Australian Book Design Awards, Yabba Awards, Kroc Awards, Koala Awards, Cool Awards and Crystal Kite Award.

Gabi's books also include the suspenseful *The Beast of Hushing Wood* for middle readers, and a sequel to the award-winning *A Ghost in My Suitcase*, called *Ting Ting the Ghosthunter*.

STUDY NOTES

- Examine the book cover. What are the images on the cover?
- What feeling or mood do these images inspire?
- What do you think the front cover might reveal about the story? Read the back cover blurb to find out a little more.
- In all novels, the protagonist has to change, to learn something over the course of the story. What was Zadie's personality like at the beginning of the novel? What is she like at the end? What and who have made these big changes happen?

THE POWER OF STORY AND THE IMAGINATION

- What is the novel's writing style? What types of storytelling do you recognise in it?
- What is an allegory? What is a fable? Research these different types of storytelling. Research Aesop's Fables. Do you see some similarities with Zadie's stories?
- What are the lessons in each of Zadie's short stories. List the stories and ask students to explain the moral of each story.
- What is magic realism? What parts of this story do you think contain magic realism elements?
- Where does the author get her inspiration?
- How much do you think is true / based on the author's own life?
- The author uses detailed descriptions, metaphors and similes to describe place, people and things. For example, on p 19 'It was different lengths and stuck out from his head like the spikes of a cactus.' Choose your favourite simile and draw an illustration to go with it.
 - In pairs make up your own similes and metaphors. See who comes up with the most original and funny similes or the most colourful. Use your senses: sight, sound, smell, taste.
 - Throughout *Zadie Ma and the Dog Who Chased the Moon* there are many examples of text and scenes using one of the four senses. Find an example for each one.
- Why does the author say the end is just the beginning?
- Whose point of view is the main story written in?
- Whose point of view are the two graphic novel illustrated sections in?
- Write a narrative describing what is happening in Jupiter's graphic novel sections.
- What does Jupiter feel in the pound? How does Jupiter respond to the fire?
- Some students might like to create a short graphic story themselves.
- Why did the author choose this technique?
- Think about a time when there was a rescue in your life. Write a story about it. Or, if you haven't experienced a rescue yourself, make one up. Make it as exciting as possible.
- Think about animals you have met and what their stories might be. Write one of them.
- If you have a pet, write an adventure about them. The story must have a beginning, middle and end and most importantly, the main character must have a problem.
- Draw your own dog or cat. Create your own graphic novel from their point of view.
- Use your imagination—write what happens next in Zadie's story.
- Write a story about Zadie's life before the events of this novel.
- Write Mama and Daddy's story as young people. Where did they meet? Why?

- Write a story imagining that it will come true. (Imagine you have Zadie's superpower.)

WAR / AUSTRALIAN POSTWAR HISTORY

- What war affected Zadie's father? What was shellshock?
- What insight does Zadie have into homeless people after Mr O'Leary tells her about shellshock?
- Research polio. How did the world get rid of polio?
- Find out more about what happened in Australia in the decades before 1955 and just after. When was World War II? When were the Olympics in Melbourne? When was television introduced to Australia? Why do you think the author choose 1955 as the year to set this story rather than 1956?
- What are some examples of food that is eaten in the story?
- Ask your grandparents or someone else's grandparents about milk bars and lollies when they were growing up. Ask them what their favourite lollies were and which ones are still around today.
- What biscuits mentioned in the story are still around today?

IDENTITY / BELONGING / RACISM / MAKING ASSUMPTIONS BASED ON APPEARANCES / CHINESE CULTURE

- What is your own family background? Are you an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person? If not then your family has migrated to Australia from another country. Where did they come from? Why did they come to Australia? If you don't know the answer to these questions, ask your parents, grandparents, great grandparents or find out more about their history.
- Part of what we love about families is that they provide us with a feeling of belonging.
- Consider what does it mean to belong?
- Consider Zadie's family's background. Zadie was born in Australia, but her parents have a Chinese background. She can speak some Cantonese and adopts some Chinese customs at home, especially her Mama's delicious food. Where does she really belong? Is she Australian? Chinese? How do you think Zadie would classify herself? If you have a similar experience to Zadie where you were brought up with more than one culture, where do you feel you belong?
- What language do Mama and Daddy use sometimes at home?
- Research the different dialects of Chinese. How many are there?
 - Chinese characters are pictograms. What is a pictogram? Research the history of Chinese writing. When did it begin? What makes it different from other written languages? Does it have an alphabet?
- Research some facts about China and Australia: Compare size, population, climate, religion, languages and food.
- Research Chinese migration over the years since colonisation and the role of the gold rush migration.
- Choose an incident in the story and write it from a different character's perspective, such as Teddy, Mr O'Leary, Sparrow, Mr Shoeberry, Bella Zanetti, Daddy, Jupiter or Mama. Make sure to illustrate your story.

FRIENDSHIP

- What do you see as the most important characteristics of a good friend in this story?
- Describe Sparrow's adventures.
- Compare and contrast Zadie and Sparrow. How are they different?
- What do they learn from each other?
- What kind of explorer is Sparrow? What kind would she like to be? What do Zadie and Sparrow want to do when they grow up?
- Both Zadie and Sparrow are different in so many ways. What are some of the differences in their home life? How are they different in personalities? What makes them such good friends in the end?
 - What are their similarities?
- Jupiter has a deep friendship with first Davy then Zadie. Both Davy and Zadie want a dog for different reasons. Why do you think Davy wanted a dog when he first went to the dog pound? Why does Zadie want a dog? What do you think happened to Davy after Jupiter went missing?

- Do you have a special relationship with pets in your life?
- If you don't have a pet and could choose one, what sort of pet would it be?
- Research a dog's sense of smell and hearing compared to that of humans.
- Why do you think dogs are called man's best friend? Research the special relationship that exists between humans and dogs. How long ago did this relationship begin?
- If you have a pet or pets, or someone in your family or friendship group has one, draw them. Then write one sentence for each that describes their personality.
- Use your imagination to invent a new type of pet. It could have the head of a dog, the body of a horse, the legs of a chicken. Make your drawing as crazy as you like. Now write what special powers your invented pet has. What is its personality?
- Write and illustrate a story about how you first met your invented pet.
- Write about your friendship with your best friend. Do you have different personalities? What makes you such good friends? What things do you both like?

LOVE / FAMILY

- In this novel there are different dynamics between the people in Zadie's family. Describe the relationship between Zadie and Mama at the start of the story, and at the end. How does Zadie's relationship with her mum change over the course of the story?
- What events trigger changes in Zadie? What events trigger changes in Mama?
- Zadie and Teddy have a special sister/brother bond. Pick out some incidents from the book where Zadie shows her love for Teddy. Pick out some incidents where Teddy shows his love for Zadie.