

Egg

AUTHOR

CLARE ATKINS

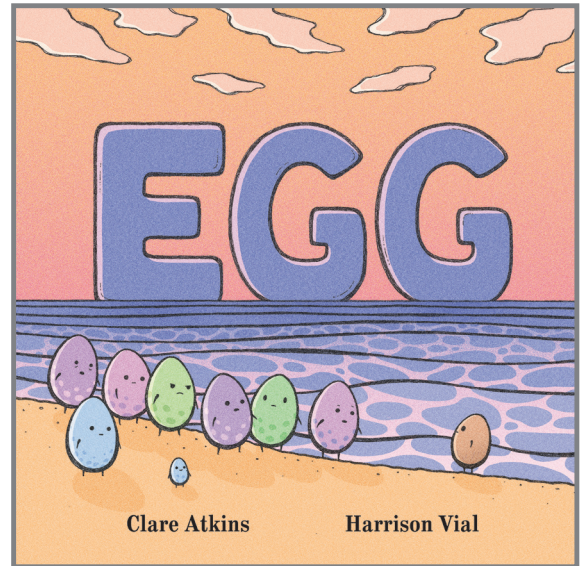
ILLUSTRATOR

HARRISON VIAL

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower Primary



SYNOPSIS

When an unusual egg drifts ashore, the other eggs on the island are unsettled. This egg is different. What if it starts to stink? What if it hatches? But in an act of kindness and curiosity, Little Egg ventures beyond the small-mindedness of its community, becoming friends with Strange Egg and bravely instigating a future filled with hope.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Clare Atkins is an author, scriptwriter, script editor and story developer. She wrote her first novel, *Nona & Me*, while living in the remote Aboriginal community of Yirrkala in the Northern Territory. It went on to win the 2016 Book of the Year in the NT Literary Awards and was shortlisted for the 2015 Children's Book Council of Australia Awards. Her second novel, *Between Us*, won the 2019 Children's Book Council of Australia Book of the Year for Older Readers and was shortlisted for many other awards, including the Prime Minister's Literary Award and NSW Premier's Literary Award. *Egg* is Clare's first picture book.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Harrison is an Adelaide-based illustrator. While studying illustration at the University of South Australia, he developed an interest in children's picture books and animation. He enjoys using a blend of traditional and digital techniques in his work. *Egg* is Harrison's debut picture book.

THEMES

- Kindness; Hope
- Courage
- Friendship; Acceptance
- Displacement; Belonging
- Xenophobia; Fear
- Environment; Climate Change

STUDY NOTES

- Before reading *Egg*, look carefully at the front and back covers. What predictions can you make about the story? Discuss the use of colour, body language and facial expressions.

- The written text begins, 'Out in the vast blue ocean, something bobs in the waves. Alone.' Make predictions about this aloneness before turning the page. What might have happened to this 'something'? Where might it have come from? After finishing the book, discuss this first page opening. How does the one-word sentence, 'Alone', help readers to empathise with Strange Egg? Compare with the final page opening. How did you feel when the story ended in this way? Share with a friend.
- Why, when the eggs first see the new arrival, do they seem reluctant to help it? How do the illustrations and dialogue share their initial reactions? What would you do if you saw this creature washed up on the shore?
- What is the significance to the story of Little Egg immediately thinking that Strange Egg 'looks like one of us'? Why are the other eggs so hesitant?
- How would you describe the expressions on the faces of the eggs when they are confronted with this new egg? What words would you use to describe their feelings? Create a Word Wall to capture these ideas.
- When the eggs creep closer to Strange Egg, what do you think they are looking for?
- Why is Strange Egg 'scared and silent' when confronted by the eggs? How could the eggs have handled this situation with more kindness and compassion? In the role of Strange Egg, write a journal about this encounter.
- What is it that Little Egg can see that the other eggs can't? What does this tell us about the importance of being brave and having a voice?
- How did you feel upon hearing that 'only rotten eggs float'?
- Have you ever felt like Little Egg or Strange Egg? Share in a reflection.
- Why is Little Egg so surprised to learn that eggs can hatch? What else has changed since the old days? Why does the story share this with readers?
- Look carefully at the page opening on which the older eggs tell Little Egg about the 'dangers back then'. What were those dangers? Were they really dangers? Discuss.
- What is the significance of the island's eggs being 'cooked'? Are the eggs of the island really safe? What dangers do they face without realising?
- How did you feel when the eggs said, 'WHY DON'T YOU FLOAT BACK TO WHERE YOU CAME FROM'? Why, when they speak to Strange Egg, is the dialogue sometimes written in capital letters?
- Discuss the formatting on the page opening on which the eggs consider rolling Strange Egg elsewhere. Why is it formatted in this way? If they did roll him away, would Strange Egg really have a choice, or would they be forcing it?
- Why do the eggs build a wall? How would this make Strange Egg feel? With older students, discuss walls that have been built throughout history to keep others out (for example, Berlin Wall, Great Wall of China, Trump's Mexican wall).
- Why does Little Egg decide to climb the wall? Why aren't they afraid?
- What creates the shade for Strange Egg? Why is he touched by Little Egg's actions? How does this notion of shade, which is also created by the wall, emphasise why the eggs find themselves 'cooked'?
- What is the significance of the curved shape of the steps Little Egg climbs to reach Strange Egg, and the curved line of his words on the following page?
- Describe the friendship between Little Egg and Strange Egg. What do they like about one another? What lessons about friendship can you learn from them?
- Why, when Strange Egg becomes Tree, providing much shade for the eggs, do they ask if there are more trees? What does this show about their changing attitudes? What does this say about the importance of young people to the world's future?
- Why does Tree welcome the birds without hesitation? What is the connection between the bird and its nest to *Egg*?
- How does *Egg* share a story of hope and renewal?
- Which character are you most like in *Egg*? Why? Share in a reflection.
- Re-read the text, this time specifically taking note of Little Egg's facial expressions, body language and dialogue. How are they different from the other eggs? What can we learn from a character such as this?
- Retell this story from Strange Egg's point of view.
- What point is *Egg* making about the power of simple actions such as Little Egg's?

- Discuss the symbolism of eggs in this text. What do eggs represent? How is this revealed in the story?
- Create a class display with Tree. On each of its leaves, write a note of affirmation about your classmates. Decorate with the eggs and birds enjoying its shade.
- What comment is *Egg* making about climate change, and those whose lifestyles and homes are affected by it?
- After reading *Egg*, redesign the front cover to share how this story ends.
- Discuss the importance of 'reading pictures' as well as the written text to fully understand the story. Discuss the role of illustrations in conveying meaning.
- Which is your favourite page of *Egg*? Why is this your favourite? Share with a friend.
- In small groups, create a dramatised version of *Egg*.