

Cloudspotting

AUTHOR

SAMANTHA TIDY

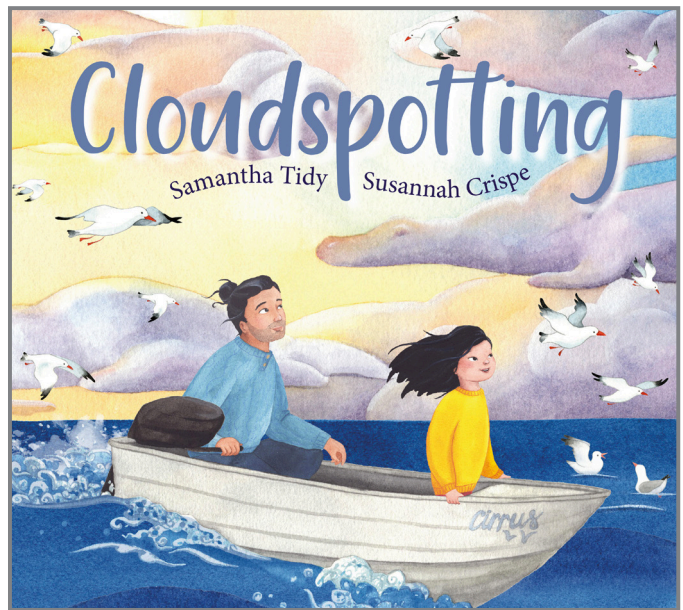
ILLUSTRATOR

SUSANNAH CRISPE

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower



SYNOPSIS

When the sun rises over the sea, the sky is a canvas of possibilities for a father and daughter. *Cloudspotting* is a joyful celebration of love, lunch and the imagination.

Join a father and daughter as they share a special time catching crabs but also treasuring being on the water and appreciating what is around them.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Samantha Tidy is a passionate permaculturalist, gardener, educator and award-winning author of both adult and children's books. She has worked in lots of libraries and museums and loves to hunt down stories hiding in heritage collections. She writes fiction and nonfiction that seeks to cultivate community and connection.

Samantha lives in Canberra and spends time both there and at the coast in Tathra, NSW, which helps her feel connected in some small way, to the beautiful childhood she experienced growing up in Western Australia, on and in the ocean. Her other books include *The Happiness Jar*, *The Day We Built the Bridge*, *Our Bush Capital*, *Wollemi: Saving a Dinosaur Tree*, *The Friendship Flight*, *When Grandma Burnt Her Bra* and more.

Find out more about Samantha at her website <https://www.samanthatidy.com/>.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Susannah Crispe is an award-winning Australian children's book author and illustrator.

Susannah was born in New Zealand but grew up in Australia, and now calls Canberra home. She has lived overseas and travelled extensively. She studied art history and zoology at university and enjoys volunteering with native wildlife throughout Australia. She worked in museums and bookstores until discovering her true passion for creating books.

Susannah writes and illustrates her books from her light-filled studio among the trees, drawing inspiration from her adventurous son, cluttered bookshelves and nature. As an illustrator, she works primarily in watercolour and digital collage to produce beautiful scenes brimming with detail. Her other books include: *Where the Heart Is*, *Cookie*, *Under the Moonlight*, and *Swoop*, with more on the way. Find out more about Susannah at www.ohsusannah.com.au.

THEMES

- Ocean life
- Parenting
- Imagination
- Ecological sustainability
- Family dynamics
- Patience
- Slow living

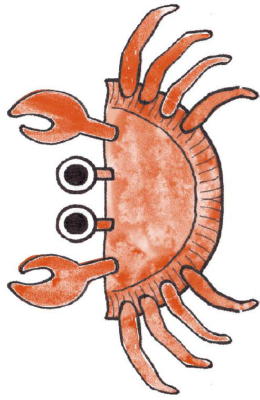
STUDY NOTES

- After reading the book, as a class, explore the illustrations up close, allowing them to point out things that perhaps are not so obvious on a first reading. Have them:
 - Examine the first house interior page. What elements inside the house tell you more about this family?
 - Look closely at the sky as it becomes lighter during the day. What shapes can you find appearing? Are there any clouds that they have not spotted?
 - What can you see under the water?
 - What is the name of the boat? Why do you think the illustrator chose this word for the boat?
 - Are there any other 'characters' in the story that make a regular appearance?
- Having examined the illustrations closely, ask students:
 - How do the illustrations and the words work together to tell you more about the story?
 - How would the story play out if there were no illustrations?
 - How would the story be different if there were no words, and you relied on the illustrations only to understand the story?
- Consider the underwater viewpoint page, looking up from the bottom of the ocean. Find also, this same scene illustrated later as a side view. Ask students to illustrate what this view would look like from above. Discuss the differences between these perspectives and consider who would have this view (eg. A bird, a fish).
- After reading, look at the end papers. They are two different colours. Consider why the crabs are blue at the beginning of the story, and red at the end.
- In this story, the narrator reflects on the fact that 'bin day is two days away.' Why is this important?
- In this story, the father measures a crab and decides to put it back as it is clearly too young to be taken from the ocean at this point in its life. Have students create a decision flowchart for this event. Have them explore the consequences of what would happen if the father did not put the crab back, and what would happen over time if he did this every week. What would happen if everyone did this? Explore with students how we might encourage others to think this way if they don't already.
 - Make a poster or advertisement that explains this to people interested in fishing or crabbing. Can we apply this way of thinking to other considerations in our life? What situations can happen at school if people don't consider such consequences? This may enable a larger discussion around recycling, keeping the play area tidy, putting things back appropriately, etc.
- The brothers clean the boat after their return. It appears this might be a regular chore for them. Ask students what chores they each fulfil in their own families. Are there chores they would like to do, but don't currently? What chores do they not like? Which chores are fun and how do they feel when they contribute in this way to their family life?
- The family in this story experience a lifestyle influenced by their geographical location, ie. they live near the ocean, and so they spend time on it. Have students reflect on their own geographical location, and how the location of the place they live affects their personal activities and hobbies. Do they often travel to another location and how does this affect their activities when they go there?
- Do students do any particular activities with one parent? Do they share traditions with other families? You may wish to collect these activities on the whiteboard and talk about them in more depth with students. This could then become a creative writing exercise for journalling, or a gratitude journal activity.

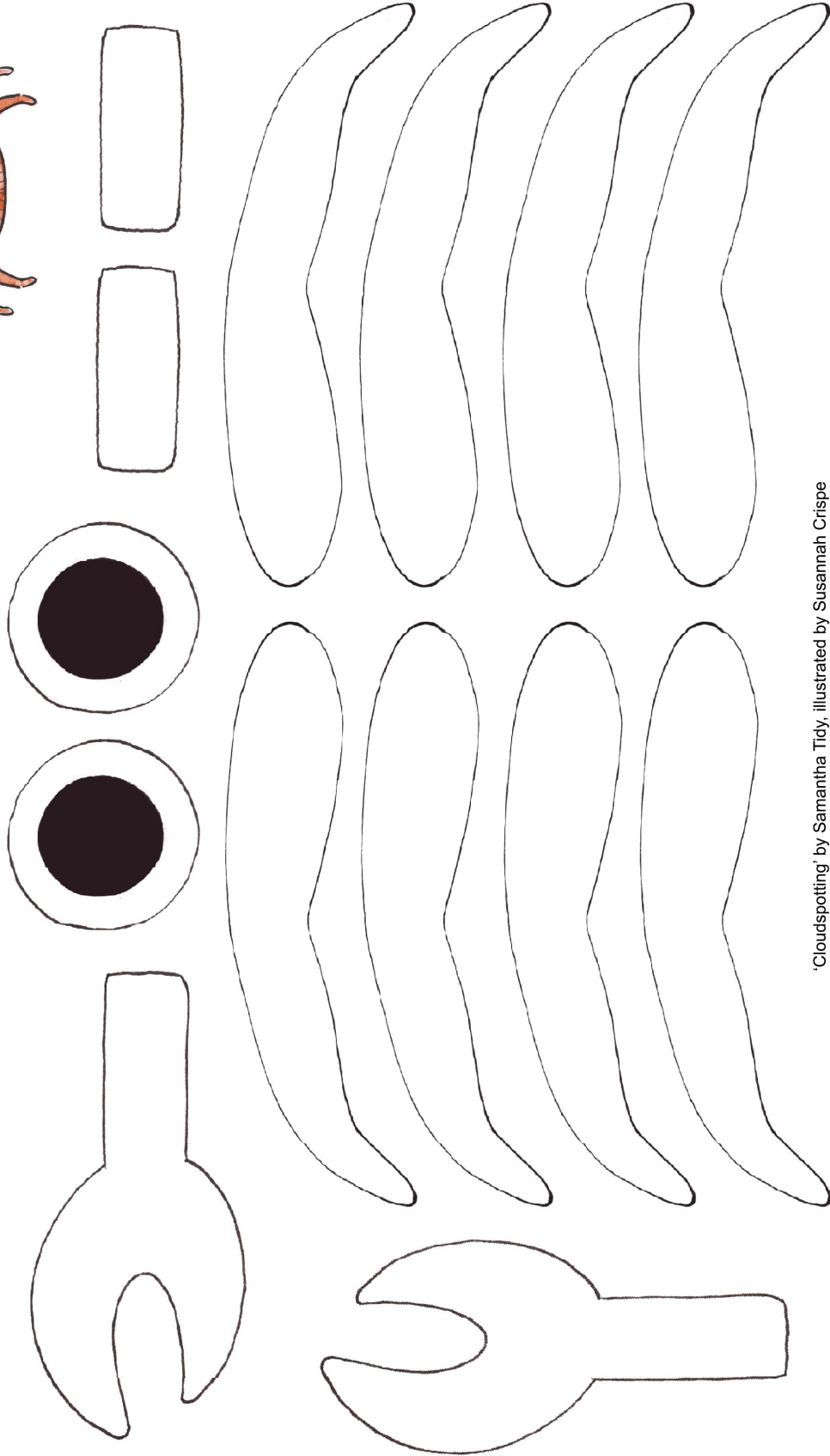
- What do they believe the message of the story is? Express to the students that there are no right or wrong answers. Do books need to have messages for the reader? How many different messages can we find?
- The author wrote this story about her childhood memories. Ask students to reflect on their earliest memories, and something they currently enjoy doing with their family that they think they will one day look back on fondly.
- Consider a craft activity to compliment the reading of the book:
 - Make crabs using paper plates and red and blue paint (see activity sheets)
 - Hang seaweed streamers from the ceiling and build a larger, underwater scene over a term or year
 - Colour in a crab fishing scene from the book (see activity sheets)
- Finally, as a celebration of the imagination, take your students outside and spot some cloud shapes! They could then come back inside and draw them or make them from paper shapes filled with stuffing to hang from the ceiling in the classroom.



PAPER PLATE CRAB



1. Cut a paper plate in half
2. Decorate, paint or colour in the legs, eye stalks, pincers and your half plate
3. Cut out the legs, eyes, eye stalks and pincers, and glue onto the plate.



'Cloudspotting' by Samantha Tidy, illustrated by Susannah Crispe
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