

The Mud & Slime Crimes (Tangletree Mysteries: Peggy and Stu Investigate #1)

CREATORS

STEVE ROBERTS AND JOEL STEWART



SCIS: 5455635

ISBN: 9781801300735

RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower to Mid Primary

SYNOPSIS

Beyond the park and deep in the woods is a world of surprises. Here, Peggy the dog has a secret life of mystery and investigation amongst the twisty trees and strange townsfolk of Tangletree. No problem is too perplexing, no puzzle too small. Along with her faithful sidekick, Stu the shrew, Peggy finds all sorts of ways to help her friends. Join Peggy and Stu in these colourful comic mysteries in the world of Tangletree.

ABOUT THE CREATORS

Tangletree Mysteries: Peggy and Stu Investigate (The Mud & Slime Crimes) is Joel Stewart and Steve Roberts' first book collaboration after working closely together for many years on TV animation including *Abney & Teal* and *B.O.T. and the Beasties*. Joel has also illustrated for Julia Donaldson, Michael Rosen and Michael Bond as well as his own picture books. Steve has created award-winning children's television as well as working as a freelance illustrator in comics.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright AM 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. In 2021 she was appointed a member of the Order of Australia.

STUDY NOTES

BEFORE READING

- What does the cover of this book suggest to you?
- Have you read other graphic novels before? If so, what do you enjoy about them?

WHILE READING

Humanities & Social Sciences (HASS)

- Tangletree is a town populated by citizens who know each other well. When a problem arises they call a town meeting to discuss and make decisions. What else did you notice about the community of Tangletree?
- Natalie's outrage that her borrowers fail to return books on time is an exaggeration of an issue which is a real concern to libraries. The authors have employed exaggeration here to create a humorous telling of this common issue. Do you always return your books on time?

- Sport often brings a community together as does the annual Tangletree Race in this book. What sporting events bring your community together? Discuss the different sporting events as a class.
- When Peggy beats the other contenders they are gracious in their congratulations. This is called ‘sportsmanlike behaviour’. Are you gracious when you lose a race?
- ‘The race’ is conducted on an extreme terrain. Have you ever had to race on a course which contained obstacles? How did you deal with those obstacles?
- Have fun in class creating an obstacle course and then conducting a race like the one Stu wins in this book. Or you could design and draw a map of an inventive obstacle course instead.
- The wayward behaviour of the machine created by local inventor, Hannah, isn’t as crazy as it might seem. Many machines behave in unexpected ways. Have you ever had problems with a faulty machine?
 - Make up your own story about a crazy machine.

English Language and Literacy

- This series falls into the genre of crime-solving mystery with Peggy and Stu having to solve a mystery each time Peggy visits Tangletree Woods. What are the narrative tropes or key features of a crime-solving mystery as communicated in these two narratives?
- Write a synopsis for another mystery for Peggy and Stu.
 - Create a graphic novel/comic interpretation of the opening scene you have imagined. Use the layouts in the story as a reference for your comic.

Visual Literacy

- This book is a graphic novel, a form of writing based on comic visual conventions both in design and illustration, as explored below. The seven basic elements of graphic design are line, shape, colour, texture, type, space and image. Discuss these elements in relation to this book.
- Examine the cover of the book and the messages it conveys to the reader. Design your own cover for this book.
- Observe the layout of each page in this comic storyboard and the changes in format between them. Observe the details used in graphic novels, such as panels, frames, gutters, speech balloons (bubbles).
- Perspective is important in telling a visual story, for example we meet Peggy in a series of comic long shots (p 6) and then in a close-up on the opposite page (p 7). What effect does this change in ‘zooming into’ a view of Peggy have on the narrative? What else changes in how Peggy is depicted in these two pages? (Answer: She is on four legs p 6 and two legs p 7.)
- At the beginning of the book (pp 2–3) we are introduced to the main characters. What did these images suggest to you about each character? What did their facial expressions and ‘body language’ suggest about them?
- All the characters in Tangletree are animals of some sort, apart from Peggy’s owner who appears in the opening and closing frames. Peggy is a dog and Stu is a shrew. Almost all the animals are very much northern hemisphere animals. Can you identify what sorts of animals the other characters are? What southern hemisphere animals might have appeared in this book, instead?
- The medium or style employed is comic-style drawing, and the colours used are rich primary colours. Examine the style of illustration and then create your own drawing of these two characters and create a classroom display of the various images.
- The authors of this book share the writing and the drawing. Work with a partner on a story or a drawing. Choose one person to sketch out the picture in pencil and one to draw over it in black pen or ink. Then try it the other way around. How do the drawings differ? Which part do you enjoy the most?
- Graphic novel reading encourages the reader to follow the action sequentially in a filmic way, and to predict the action. Examine the frames on pp 60–61 where Peggy and Stu meet Warrington outside the library. What predictions did you make before turning to pp 62–3? Were you correct?
 - Discuss other ‘page turns’ in this narrative.

Creative Arts

- Draw a map of the landmarks mentioned in this book to give the reader an idea of the topography or layout of Tanglewood.
- Create a diorama of a scene from this graphic novel.

- Devise a creative a response to this book in any medium you choose, eg. collage, model, drawing, poem.
- Create a poster to advertise this book.
- Create a Book Trailer to promote this book.

Learning Technologies

- Research graphic novel writing and illustrating online.

AUTHOR OF NOTES

DR ROBYN SHEAHAN-BRIGHT AM