

# Etta and the Octopus

AUTHOR

**ZANA FRAILLON**

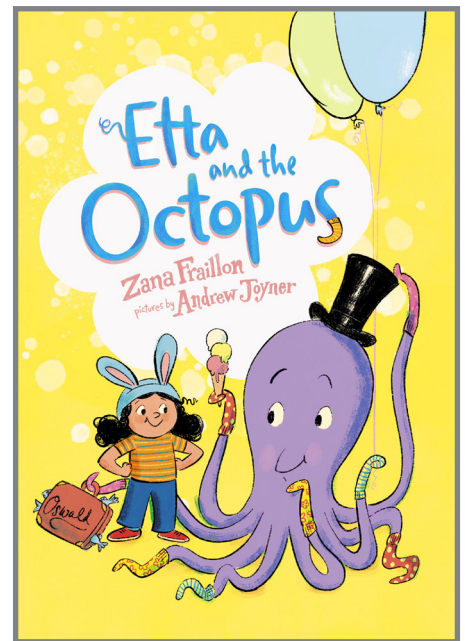
ILLUSTRATOR

**ANDREW JOYNER**

SCIS: 5445375

ISBN: 9780734421685

RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower Primary



## SYNOPSIS

*FOUND!*

*One octopus!*

*Likes to eat tuna sandwiches.*

*Goes by the name of 'Oswald'.*

It all began when Etta decided to take a bath . . . And realised she wasn't alone. On the floor lay a brown suitcase with Oswald written on it in fancy writing. And in the bath sat Oswald. Etta had never had an octopus in her bath before.

Etta feels sure someone must be missing their octopus and is determined to return Oswald, but he seems a little less enthusiastic.

When a rude lady with a net and a stick turns up to claim him, Etta must decide where Oswald really belongs.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Zana Fraillon was born in Naarm (Melbourne), but spent her early childhood in San Francisco. Her 2016 novel, *The Bone Sparrow*, won the ABIA Book of the Year for Older Children, the Readings Young Adult Book Prize and the Amnesty CILIP Honour. It was also shortlisted for the Prime Minister's Literary Awards, the Queensland Literary Awards, the Guardian Children's Fiction Prize, the Gold Inky and the CILIP Carnegie Medal. Her book *The Lost Soul Atlas* won the 2020 Aurealis Award for Best Children's Fiction and was shortlisted for the 2021 Children's Book Council Award for Book of the Year: Older Readers. Her most recent picture book, *The Curiosities*, illustrated by Phil Lesnie, was a 2021 Aurealis Award winner.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Andrew Joyner is the illustrator and author of numerous children's books, including the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *Dr. Seuss's The Horse Museum*, *The Pink Hat*, *Love Was Inside*, as well as *Too Many Elephants in this House* and *The Terrible Plop*, both by Ursula Dubosarsky. His books are now published in more than twenty-five countries. He lives with his family in Strathalbyn, South Australia.

Find out more at [andrewjoyner.com.au](http://andrewjoyner.com.au).

## 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. Her publications include *Paper Empires: A History of the Book in Australia 1946–2005* (co-edited with Craig Munro) (UQP, 2006). In 2011 she was recipient of the CBCA (Qld) Dame Annabelle Rankin Award, in 2012, of the CBCA Nan Chauncy Award for Outstanding Services to Children's Literature, and in 2014, the QWC's Johnno Award. In 2021 she was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia.

## STUDY NOTES

### SCIENCE

- Research octopuses and discuss their unique features. (Hint: Etta's Octopus Fact Sheet [p 16] could include some real facts.)
- How happy do you think an octopus would be living in an aquarium tank? Should sea animals be kept in captivity?
- Find out more about the real life octopus named Inky, that escaped from New Zealand's National Aquarium In 2016. Discuss your findings as a class.

### HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (HASS)

- What does this story suggest about friendship?
- Etta is initially a little concerned about Oswald's antics but later enjoys them. What changes her mind?

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERACY

- Why do you think the story is told in third person, rather than from Etta's first person point of view?
- Language can be used in a playful way to describe an activity, by juxtaposing words, for example, 'They walked in the promenades, and promenaded through the walkways.' (p 40) Try writing a sentence like this by juxtaposing words, for example, 'They paraded on the dance floor and danced on the parade.'
- Test your students' comprehension of words used by discussing the events which take place in this story. Ask them to finish the following sentences:
  - Etta likes having Oswald as a friend because he is . . . . .
  - Oswald likes to eat . . . . .
  - Oswald doesn't like . . . . .
  - During their walk in the Big City, Oswald gives Etta . . . . .
  - Marina Prinkle visits Etta because she wants to reclaim . . . . .
- How would you describe Etta?
- What sort of person is Marina Prinkle?
- Etta's Granny is mentioned a number of times. Where do you think she is?
- Write another short story about Oswald's antics.
- Write an acrostic poem using the letters in OSWALD OCTOPUS.
- In order to keep Oswald busy, Etta suggests a number of activities: they made cubbies, put on a puppet show, made cupcakes and played board games. What other activities might Etta have suggested to keep Oswald busy? Write a few sentences describing them.
- Make a funny list of foods that Oswald might like to create in Etta's kitchen, for example, seaweed pancakes.

### VISUAL LITERACY

- Oswald is said to be helpful but on p 37 he is actually removing the posters, not putting them up. And he steals the ice-cream, balloons and newspaper which he gives to Etta (pp 38–9). Examine all the illustrations closely and encourage students to discuss the details they discover in them.
- Create a comic strip version of Etta meeting Oswald.
- Design a new cover for this book.
- What is the craziest thing you can imagine Oswald doing? Draw a picture of him doing it.

- Etta wears a very fetching hat with bunny ears. Make a hat just like it.
- Design a Missing Octopus Poster and draw a picture of Oswald on the poster. Make him look as charming as possible! Then compare your pictures with rest of the class and display them.

TEACHER NOTES  
DR ROBYN SHEAHAN-BRIGHT AM