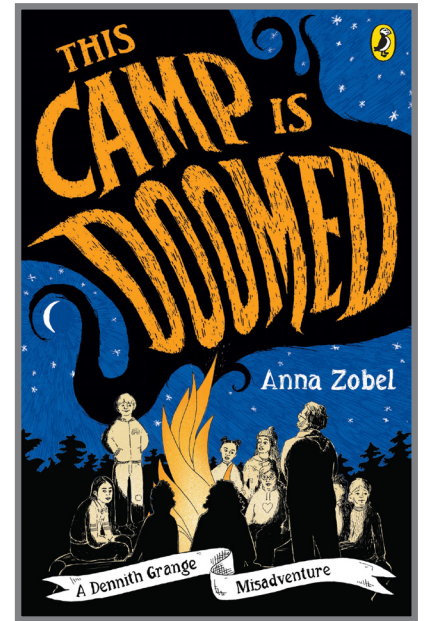


# This Camp is Doomed: A Dennith Grange Misadventure

AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR  
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RECOMMENDED FOR: Mid Primary

## SYNOPSIS

A run-down camp in the woods.

No phone reception.

Ten students with untested powers

Céline is seeing conspiracies everywhere. Fionn has a bad premonition about the colour blue. Mr Berg is horrified at the camp's questionable safety standards. Something is definitely not right at Camp Buttress.

## ABOUT THE CREATOR

Anna Zobel is an author and illustrator from Melbourne. Her middle-grade novel *Little Gem* was a CBCA Notable in 2022, and was also shortlisted for the Readings Prize. She is the illustrator of several books including *Who's Your Real Mum?*, which was listed for the CBCA and the White Raven Award. Anna is a gallery teacher with a primary background, and she is inspired by all the children she has encountered through her work

## THEMES

- School activities and mysteries
- Friendship and kindness
- Responsibility and power

## STUDY NOTES

- The author, Anna Zobel, says that she was inspired by one of her favourite movies, *School of Rock*. If you were going to be inspired to write a story based on a movie or TV show you love, which would it be? Which elements of that movie or show make it stand out to you?
- Anna used to be a full-time classroom teacher. How do you think this has helped her write *This Camp is Doomed*? How would the story be different if she had never been a teacher?
- Do you think authors always use their own experiences in their stories? What effect will this have on their stories? Do you ever use ideas and past events from your own life in your writing?
- What ingredient turns your own memory of something into a piece of creative fiction?
- The author was going to use this scene inspired by her father-in-law in the books but she ended up cutting it out.

‘... he’s a teacher, and once, on a Year Nine camp, he was attacked by a goose in the shower block and had to run out into the yard in his towel.’ Why do you think it didn’t stay in the story? Why do authors decide to cut things like this—and sometimes even whole characters—out of the narrative?

### BEFORE READING

- Look at the cover of the book. What do you think the book will be about?
- How has the designer created a sense of mystery and wonder?
- Do you think there will be mystery elements in the story? What makes you think this?
- How has the choice of fonts helped create the right tone for the cover?
- Analyse elements of the book cover design by Kristy Lund-White and comment on what makes them effective. Consider colours, fonts and images in your discussion. Why were these elements chosen?
- What would you have done differently if you were designing this book cover?
- The author—Anna Zobel—has also created all the illustrations for the cover. What are the advantages in being both the author and the illustrator for the same story? Can you think of any disadvantages?
- What is a premonition? Have you ever had a premonition about something? How does the idea of a premonition help to create tension in a mystery novel?

### AFTER READING

#### Writing/Illustrating Style

- How many character points of view tell the story in *This Camp is Doomed*?
- Why do you think the author has included an adult voice (Mr Berg) in the points of view? How does this make the book stand out from others you have read?
  - Did you like hearing from Mr Berg during the story? Why or why not?
- How has the author ensured that the reader knows whose point of view they are in during each section of the story? How does the design of the book help with this?
- Anna has not only written the story but has illustrated it as well. Do you think she has a distinctive illustration style? What are some specific elements that create her style?
- Look at the Prologue (p 1) and Epilogue (p 303). Why do you think the author included these as a part of the story? How would the novel be (or feel) different if there were no Prologue or Epilogue? Do you think they add extra information to the story?
  - Can you think of other stories that use this literary device at the start and end of the narrative?
- What mystery story elements can you find in the narrative? Are there plot elements that are in all mystery stories?
- Read a section of the story from each of the point of view characters. What makes their voices different from one another? How has the author made sure that they all sound like individual separate characters?
- Anna has used a lot of symbolic images as part of the chapter openers. Why do you think she’s chosen these images?
  - Choose three chapters throughout the story. How are they reflective of the text in that chapter to follow?
- Choose a character other than Mr Berg, Céline or Fionn. Next, choose a scene you really enjoyed from the story. Write this scene from your chosen character’s point of view. (You might have to make sure they are a character that appears in that scene.)

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Fionn and Céline are both worried during the story about some things being embarrassing. Do you think they have good reason for this? Have you had moments when you felt embarrassed about something? How did you get through these times? What advice would you give Céline and Fionn to help them?
- Have you been on a school camp? What do you think the aim of the camp was? What did you learn on camp? Do you think the aim was similar to Principal Wallace’s camp goals?
- It’s a time-honoured tradition to tell ghost stories at camp. Why do you think this is the case? Why do people enjoy being scared?
- Why do you think this story is called a ‘misadventure’ and not an ‘adventure’?

- Draw a map of Camp Buttress. Include as many buildings and locations from the story as you can. You could even include the forest and the path to the swing and the Hilltop Treehouse.
- Using the clipboard of the camp students at the start of the book as a guide, draw up a guide to your class and all the students in it.
- Create a letter from the Department of Power Abuse to the Klock family outlining their First Notice of Revocation Refusal. (Use the second letter they received on p 234 as a guide.)
- Céline loves reading *Big City Witch*—a manga series about a detective witch. Create your own idea for a manga series or a graphic novel. Outline who your main character might be and also the basic plot of your story.
- In the story, Céline’s point of view is indicated by a book at the start of her section. Mr Berg’s is flagged with a pair of glasses and Fionn’s by his citrine necklace. Choose three of the other students and create illustrations that could represent their characters and their points of view.
- Looking back through the stories, can you pick up clues as to Grandma Daizie’s real identity? What are some things that give her away once you know the truth?

### Friendship

- If you could become friends with one of the characters from the story who would it be? Why did you choose that character?
- Fionn and Luca are best friends. What makes their friendship so strong?
- Céline worries about having trouble making friends. Have you ever found it hard to approach new people or to chat with classmates you don’t know so well? What tips would you give to people about making friends?
- Why do you think it takes a while for Céline and Yvette to become friends? Do you think they will stay friends after the camp?
- Do you think that the kids at Camp Buttress will stay friends after their adventure? Why or why not?
- Do you think Mr Berg and Ms Malatesta will remain friends?
- Céline and Teddy used to be best friends, but now they’re not. Why do you think some friendships don’t last forever? Do you think Teddy and Céline will be friends again after the camp? Do you think perhaps it will be a different type of friendship?

### Power

- If you had a ‘power’ what would it be?
- Once you’ve chosen your power, think about whether you’d choose a job where you could use your power, or if you’d work somewhere not related to what you can do with your gift. Why have you made this decision?
- Do you think the fact that people in this world have powers is a main part of the story? Would the narrative be just as effective if the kids didn’t have powers? Why or why not?
- Being a ‘paired powers’ in this world is a serious thing. Do you think there could be instances when being a paired power would be positive? What types of job could benefit from a person with two powers?
- The kids have to attend Me and My Power classes when they are at high school. Do you think this is a good idea?
- After choosing your power, create/draw a registration card for yourself.
- List all the different powers mentioned in the book, putting them into the categories mentioned in the story. Are there any powers you can think of that aren’t in the book?
- Anna decided that giving the characters powers was a good way to help get around some plot problems. Find two instances in the book (apart from the climax) where this is evident.
- Can you find examples in the story of people abusing their powers?
- Pretend you work for the Department of Power Abuse. Create a list or a document outlining rules for living your everyday life with a power.