

# Nothing Ever Happens

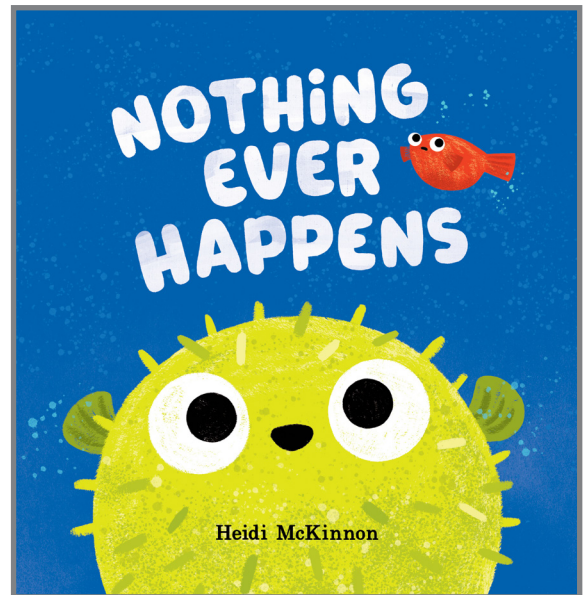
CREATOR

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower Primary



## SYNOPSIS

*'Nothing ever happens!'*

*'Every day is always the same.'*

*'Same old rock. Same old shell.'*

*'Same old seaweed. Same old starfish.'*

*If only something amazing and extraordinary and unexpected would happen . . .*

Two little fish are very bored and wishing for something—anything—exciting to happen. But sometimes a big adventure is much closer than you think . . .

## ABOUT THE CREATOR

Heidi McKinnon is an author/illustrator who lives in Melbourne. Heidi has a background in art and design. Her books are mostly based on true stories, except for one. Heidi's first picture book, *I Just Ate My Friend*, was shortlisted for numerous awards, including the CBCA Crichton Award, and has been published around the world. Her picture book *There's No Such Thing* was shortlisted for 2021 CBCA Early Childhood Book of the Year.

## STUDY NOTES

- Before reading the story, as a class, discuss the book cover and title. Some things to include in your discussion could be:
  - What do you think the character on the cover of the story is meant to be?
  - Read the back of the book. What have you learnt about the story from this?
  - Where do you think this story is set?
  - Who do you think the main character of the story is?
  - What do you think is likely to happen in this story? Why do you think this?
  - Share your predictions for the story with the rest of the class. After reading the story revisit your predictions and discuss how accurate (or inaccurate) they all were.
- Why do you think the fish in the story says that they cannot remember yesterday? Which ocean creatures would you expect to be able to remember yesterday? Why would you expect this?
- What type of fish do you think the main character of the story is?
- What type of fish or other aquatic creatures live near or in your local area? Find a picture of one of them online, and

paint or draw it in its natural environment.

- Visit a local aquarium (if there isn't one near enough for a day trip, you might be able to visit a pet store that has fish tanks). What types of creatures can you see? When you return to class, write and illustrate a recount of your excursion, sharing what you learnt and what your favourite part of the experience was.
- What is the 'definitely not amazing' thing that happens to the two fish in the story? Why do you think the fish think that it is not amazing?
- How have the two fish's attitudes changed after being swallowed by the whale?
- Do you think that the two fish were lucky or unlucky when they were swallowed by the whale? Why do you think this?
- Look carefully at the artwork in the story, and then the artwork on the end pages of the book. Create an underwater oceanscape artwork of your own, inspired by the artwork in the story. Before you start, as a class, discuss the different techniques that you might use to create your artwork. Think about the colours, shapes, lines, and texture that you can see in the artwork, and talk about the different ways that the artist shows that it is an underwater scene. What creatures and plant life can you see, and why are rocks curved and smooth-edged? Roughly sketch out a design for your artwork using a lead pencil before starting work on your actual piece. You can use oil pastels, acrylic paints, or collage to create your seascape, or you might like to combine two or more of these to create a mixed-media artwork.
- The fish in the story talk about the same old rock, seaweed, shell and starfish that they see every day. What other things might you expect to see in the ocean? As a class, brainstorm, and come up with a list of as many different things as you can think of which could be found in a small patch of ocean.
- Create an underwater glitter scene in a jar. Follow the below instructions:
  - You will need an empty glass jar with lid, glycerine, distilled water, blue food colouring, glitter, and a hot glue gun. Collect small waterproof items to help you create your ocean scene such as plastic fish, sand, small rocks, etc.
  - Make sure that the glass jar is completely clean on the inside, and that all labels have been removed from it.
  - Carefully use the hot glue gun to glue ocean themed items to the inside of the jar lid. You can use small plastic toys, laminated pictures, small rocks and pieces of coloured plastic string to create your scene. Be sure to leave enough space at the edge so that you can put the lid back on the jar!
  - If you wish, you can use PVA to carefully glue a picture of an ocean scene to the outside of one half of the jar, so that you can see the picture when you look through the jar. Because it is on the outside of the jar, the picture doesn't need to be waterproof. You might also wish to attempt gluing strands of tinsel to the bottom of the jar, so that when it is turned over they hang down inside it.
  - Once you are happy that all your items are securely glued, it is time to fill your jar with water. Use 3 teaspoons of glycerin, and 3 teaspoons of glitter for every one cup of water. Carefully pour your glycerine/water/glitter mix into the jar, being sure not to overfill it.
  - Apply glue to the threads on the top of the jar, then screw the lid down tightly. Wait for the glue to dry (if you used hot-glue for this it shouldn't take long), then turn your jar over and check for leaks. You might need to tighten the lid, or add an extra line of hot glue around the outside of it.
  - Gently shake your Ocean Wonderland, then sit the jar on its lid for you to watch and enjoy the flakes of glitter swirling through your seascape.
- Why do you think that the whale didn't eat the two smaller fish? What do whales usually eat?
- Write about what happened in this story from the point of view of the whale.

AUTHOR OF NOTES

**RAE CARLYLE**