

Ernie and the Magic Kennel

By Robert Rakete
and Jeanette Thomas
Illustrated by Kimberly Andrews



• Reading • Writing • Social Studies • Thinking Skills •

Synopsis

Ernie is a corgi of right royal pedigree who lives in a flash kennel that resembles a castle. Benny, on the other hand, is a street dog who doesn't have a home. When Benny sees something magical flying in the air, he follows it right to Ernie's kennel. It is a magical invitation to visit the Queen at Buckingham Palace and he is told to pick up some other dogs along the way. Benny scrambles aboard just as Ernie's magical kennel takes off. Ernie and Benny fly first to Australia to pick up Blu, Switzerland to pick up Ace, and Paris to pick up Fleur. The Queen greets them and takes them to see a painting that shows how they belong to a line of royal pedigree dogs. Except it doesn't include a dog like Benny. He runs off, sad that he doesn't belong to a family like they do. The Queen finds him and assures Benny that family can be anyone who loves you. Benny is about to head home when Ernie arrives and wants to accompany him, saying "Let's go home," and telling him that they are brothers now. The book ends with Ernie promising Benny that he'll never be alone again.

A debut book from popular 'The Breeze' radio hosts, Robert Rakete and Jeanette Thomas, inspired by The Breeze's very own station dog and Jeanette's rescue dog.

About the Authors

Robert Rakete began his career in broadcasting in 1989, working on music television shows, before switching to radio and helping to start *MAI FM* in Auckland. In 2006 he joined *The Breeze* in Auckland. He is also an 'Honorary Wiggle', who has on occasion written songs and performed with popular Australian children's group *The Wiggles*. Robert also took to the dance floor in *Dancing With the Stars* in 2018. He lives with his family in Auckland, and this is his first book.

Jeanette Thomas has been in broadcasting since the late 90s and has worked in both radio and television, on shows such as *Crime Watch* and *Good Morning*. Currently she co-hosts the breakfast radio show on *The Breeze* with co-author Robert Rakete. Jeanette lives in Auckland with her family plus two cats and two dogs. This is her debut book.

About the Illustrator

Kimberly Andrews is an illustrator and author, who grew up in the Canadian Rockies. After moving to London, she worked for The House of Illustration and at the Natural History Museum. Now living in New Zealand, Kimberly's award-winning first book, *Puffin the Architect*, was published in 2018. She lives with her husband Tim and their family in a tiny house near Wellington, where she illustrates, writes, and runs her business *Tumbleweed Tees*.

Writing Style

This heart-warming animal adventure story is about being accepted and finding one's place in the world. It includes themes of adventure, friendship and loyalty. The characters travel from New Zealand to four different settings: Uluru in Australia, a mountain village in Switzerland, Paris in France, and London, England. A physical signifier is described for each location.

It's a joyful story written with rhyme and rhythm. The writer has used third person past tense to tell the story. Language includes contractions, for example, couldn't, you'll, G'day, they're, C'mon, let's, we're, they're, I'll, and it's. There are also supercharged verbs such as barked, slumped, tumbled and frowned. The writer has included five different cultural greetings: Kia ora, G'day, Hoi, Bonjour, and Hello, how do you do? A range of punctuation has been used: exclamation marks, commas, full stops, speech marks, and question marks. The 32-page paperback story is suitable for 3- to 7-year-old children and would make a great read aloud.

Shared Learning and Discussion Points

During the shared sessions encourage students to ask questions to clarify their understanding of characters and events. Have them make predictions, inferences and relate to their own experiences. Read the passages aloud and have students read alongside or by themselves. Tell the students to make a movie in their mind as you read it aloud. Encourage them to picture in their mind the characters, their actions, facial expressions, and where they are in the story.

ASK YOUR STUDENTS:

Look at the cover and read the blurb.

- Where do you think this story is going to be set? Is it all in one country? How can you tell?
- Who is the main character in the story? Or is there more than one?
- What do you think this story is about? Why do you think that?
- What do you already know about the Queen of England?

Comprehension questions

- Who is Ernie and where does he live?
- How are Ernie and Benny the same?
How are they different?
- How did Ernie and Benny meet?
- What did you think the sparkly thing flying in the air might be?
- What message did Ernie receive?
- Where do you think Uluru is?
- What do you think is happening to the kennel? (Page 11)
- Who do you think they'll pick up at their first stop?
- By looking at the picture on pages 14-15, what country do you think they are in? Why?
- What country do you think they'll go to next?
- What is Switzerland famous for?
- What does "Oui, oui" mean?
- Have you heard of the Louvre, and does anyone know what is inside it?
- Do you recognise the the Eiffel Tower?
Point to it in the picture.
- Where does Winston live?
- Why have the dogs put their paws above their eyes?
- What type of dogs are there in the painting on page 21?
- What do you think 'forebears' means?
- What does the Queen mean by, "This is your pedigree"?
- What is Benny doing while the others admire the painting? Why is this?
- What does the Queen mean when she says, "Home's more than a family tree"?
- Why does Ernie say he'll come too?
- Can you think of other words for 'family'?
- How do you think Benny feels when Ernie says they're brothers now?
- Where do you think their forever home will be?
- Are the dog breeds made-up or based on real dogs?
- Is the story fiction or non-fiction?



Activities

ACTIVITY 1: THINKING DIFFERENTLY

Choose an important event in the story and explain how you would have done things differently to the characters in the story.

Explain how that would change the outcome of the story in a small or major way. Be aware that sometimes the smallest changes can have the biggest change on others.

ACTIVITY 2: THE TRAVEL AGENTS

Several countries are mentioned in the story. Can anyone remember what they are? What does the class know about those countries?

In groups, children become travel agents and promote a city of their choice that features in the book. Do some research on the place/country and find out what tourist attractions they have. Draw a concept map of all the exciting things that happen in that city. For example, landmarks such as rivers, lakes, beaches, forests, parks, famous buildings, restaurants and adventure activities might feature on the concept map.

Afterwards, design a poster for that place to try and persuade the readers to want to go there.

ACTIVITY 3: REVIEW IT

Discuss and then write about the parts you liked or did not like in the story and why. Would you recommend it to a friend?

Summarise the story so that you can tell a friend about the book.

Who are the characters? Where is the setting? What is the problem in the story? How do the main characters solve it?

Written by Maria Gill



teacher toolkit

 SCHOLASTIC