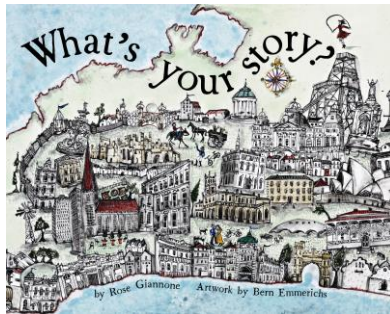


TEACHER NOTES FOR *WHAT'S YOURS STORY?*
Written by Rose Giannone and artwork by Bern Emmerichs



Synopsis:

What's Your Story? is a historical narrative set against the backdrop of the First European Settlement of Australia in 1788. It describes the friendship of a little orphan boy from England, Leonard, and the friendship he strikes with a little Aboriginal girl called Milba.

Leonard is on a ship from England with his aunt and uncle, Reverend Richard Johnson and his wife Mary. Many of the passengers are convicts but Leonard is not.

When Leonard arrives to the new land "Australia", he feels it is a topsy turvy world – it is January and it is summer, where as in England in would be cold and grey.

He goes wondering from the new settlement and finds himself alone. It is with this he discovers Milba. Milba is an Aboriginal girl from Eoria tribe. She is too confronted by Leonard, as she has never met a 'white' person before. Without words, they soon became friends and explore each other worlds.

Leonard and Milba are mesmerised by the peculiarity of each other's worlds.

THEMES

- Australian History – First European settlement
- Indigenous culture
- Identity
- Friendship
- Cultures
- Nature
- Animals
- Difference

WRITING STYLE

Written in 3rd person narrative.

AUTHOR MOTIVATION

The author was inspired by an interest in the first settlement of Australia and to explore this in a historical narrative for children.

AUTHOR /ILLUSTRATOR BACKGROUND

Rose Giannone - author

Rose Giannone is an Australian author who lives in Melbourne, but spends part of her year in Sicily, Italy.

Giannone is new to the world of children's literature with her first publication of *What's Your Story?* This is her first foray and adventure into children's writing

Rose's greatest desire is to be a raconteur in the grand tradition –listening to stories and the oral recounting of storytelling as well as the writing and filming of stories both invented and told.

Bern Emmerichs – Australian Artist

BERN EMMERICHS - *What's Your Story?*

"Share it, treasure it, old stories, new stories, tall and short stories. Stories that nurture, keep us searching and enriching our precious lives." Bern Emmerichs 2013

Bern Emmerichs is a highly celebrated artist in Australia. Her works are in the Australian National Gallery, the National Gallery of Victoria and collections all around the world.

Bern Emmerichs' stunning illustrations in *What's Your Story?* have been created by using large hand-painted ceramic tiles, which remarkably involved each colour on each tile being individually fired, which have then been photographed and overlaid with the author's text.

Bern Emmerichs is renowned for her work which explores historical narratives of Australia's First Settlement.

MARKETING & PROMOTION

- B+P's *Junior* magazine
- Reviews by Magpies, Child magazine and Good Reading
- Press release and copies to be sent to major newspapers for review.

STUDY NOTES AND ACTIVITIES

The author asks us in the first page: "Do you have a story?". All Australians who are not Aboriginals have origins overseas. Create a class project for the children to learn about and discuss their family's stories.

- Write a story or draw a picture about your family story and where your family come from.
- How did your family arrive in Australia and how long ago?

- Why did they come to Australia?
- What was their country of origin like back then?
- What was Australia like when they arrived, and what were their first impressions?
- Perhaps the children can present their family stories to their class. They could dress in clothes of their country of heritage, show a family heirloom and discuss its significance to their family's story, or even bring a traditional dish to share.
- A parent or grandparent might come to help present their own stories to the class.

Australia has many interesting and unique plant and animals. Ask the class to name Australian plants and animals.

- Looking at the list, ask the class what they would think of the animal if they had seen it for the first time? When a platypus skin arrived in England in 1798, biologists thought someone playing a practical joke had sewn a duck's bill, a beaver's tail and four webbed feet onto a rabbit's body! When Milba showed Leonard a platypus, he was similarly confused.
- What would the children think of a kangaroo if they had seen it for the first time? What about an emu, koala or frilled neck lizard?
- Similarly with plants, what would the children's impressions be of a boab tree, a wattle tree or a banksia pod?
- The Europeans introduced animals that Aboriginal people had never seen before. Milba thought a man on a horse was a single creature. Now discuss what the children would think if they saw such creatures for the first time. What would they think of a sheep, a horse or a pig?

Ask the children to find the illustration with *Friendship* boat, and ask them to describe some of the animals and things they brought to Australia?

Aboriginal people have the oldest continuous culture in the world. They communicate many of their stories across the generations through art, like the cave paintings Milba showed Leonard. Show some examples of Aboriginal art. Ask the class to attempt a drawing or painting in the style of Aboriginal art.

Have the children make emu and dog masks. Like the emu and dog races that the Europeans held, organize a class relay race, where one half of the class wear emu masks and the other half wear dog masks. Which animal is faster?

We are all enriched by other people's experiences. Ask the children to name something that another classmate had introduced them to for the first time, or something they had taught them.