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TEACHERS' RESOURCE KIT

From the Cutting Room of Barney Kettle

By Kate De Goldi

Barney Kettle knew he would be a very famous film director one day, he just didn't know when that day would arrive. He was already an actual director – he'd made four fifteen-minute films – but so far only his schoolmates and the residents of the High Street had viewed them. Global fame was a little way off. It would come, though. Barney was certain about that ...

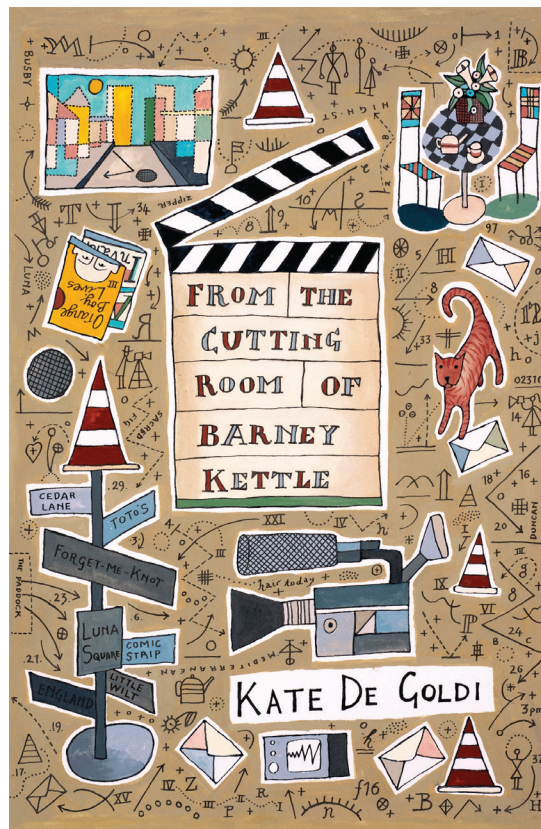
RESOURCE KIT CONTAINS:

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The Author:

Kate De Goldi is one of New Zealand's most loved authors, whose short fiction, novels and picture books engage children, teenagers and adults alike. The author of the phenomenal *The 10 PM Question*, which has been published extensively overseas, she is a two-time winner of the New Zealand Post Children's Book of the Year Award. The *10 PM Question* won Book of the Year and Best Young Adult Fiction in the 2009 New Zealand Post Children's and Young Adults' Book Awards, was a runner-up in the 2009 Montana NZ Book Awards, and won the Readers' Choice Award. It was a finalist in the LIANZA Children's Book Awards for the Esther Glen Award, was shortlisted for the Nielsen BookData NZ Booksellers' Choice Award, and was selected for the 2009 edition of the prestigious international catalogue *The White Ravens*. In 2010 De Goldi was awarded the Creative New Zealand Michael King Writers' Fellowship to research and write a book on children's book collector, Susan Price. She has a regular spot reviewing children's books on Saturday Mornings with Kim Hill on National Radio.



Before Reading

1. What does the cover picture indicate about the book's content?
2. When and where might the story be set?
3. What does the title suggest to you?
4. Read the author's dedication (p. 3). If you wrote a book, to whom would you dedicate it and what would the dedication say?

Themes

1. Discuss the following themes and find examples from the book which illustrate each:
 - a. creativity, inspiration and art
 - b. community, friendships and family relationships
 - c. history, time and change
 - d. childhood and growing up
 - e. collaboration and love
 - f. mysteries, secrets and intrigue
 - g. survival
 - h. humour and humanity
 - i. the search for personal identity and one's place in the world
 - j. natural disasters
 - k. death, grief and loss
2. What do you think is the main theme of the novel? Write an essay on your choice.

Setting:

The book is set in High Street in Christchurch, New Zealand, pre- and post the February 2011 earthquake.

Language features, structure and narrative:

1. What do you think the genre of this book is? List the aspects that are indicative of this genre.
2. The book has a narrative structure of 'stories within stories within stories' (p. 123). Find some examples of when this happens in the book.
3. Within the book, there are references to literary techniques, such as syllogism (p. 137), MacGuffin (p. 289), recurring motif (p. 292), coda (p. 319) and epilogue (p. 323). Find out the definitions of these terms.
4. The story is told in the first and third person.

Why do you think the author chose to do this? Is it effective? Why or why not?

5. Figurative language is used to convey ideas that might otherwise be difficult to express, such as simile and metaphor. Examples of these are: 'his questions came like a spray of enemy arrows' (p. 97) and 'her multi-tasking batteries were flat' (p. 144). Find more examples from the book.
6. The author uses food imagery in some similes, for example, 'more like a big aging tomato, all red and creased and looking like she might burst' (p. 42) and 'he flicked aside her objections like miserable toast crumbs' (p. 219). Find other examples from the book.
7. The author uses animal imagery in some similes, for example, 'then he was off like a wild cat after prey' (p. 127). Think of ten other animals and create a simile for each.
8. The author uses nature imagery in some similes, for example, 'she just disappeared... like a puff of dandelion' (p. 158) and 'something was coming, something at the back of his head, pushing its way to the front, like a new shoot muscling up through the soil.' (p. 209). Write a poem about a force of nature using three similes.
9. The following are examples of what figure of speech: 'the bell sang a brief farewell' (p. 132) and 'the boarded windows were myriad sightless eyes seeking them out.' (p. 198)?
10. What figure of speech do the following examples illustrate: 'a choking cough, a harsh yelp' (p. 41) and 'poured forth rumble, yelp and purr' (p. 153). Find another example from the book. Write a poem or descriptive paragraph which includes the words from your example.
11. The following are examples of what figure of speech are 'curled and content' (p. 54) and 'troublesome traits' (p. 55)? Think of this figure of speech for ten other letters of the alphabet.
12. The author often runs words together in the body of the text, such as 'thethrillingalchemyofthecreativeprocess' (p. 48) and 'justthesameasalltheotherinterviews' (p. 216). Why do you think she has chosen to do this? What effect does it have on the pace and meaning of the text?
13. Barney makes a pun about imagining Suit as a 'suitor' (p. 120). Think of three examples of puns and a context in which they could be used.
14. The author uses symbolism and idioms in the book. What are the phrases below typically symbolic of? What is the origin of these phrases? Research their origin. Choose ten

phrases and draw cartoon interpretations of them.

- a. writer's block (p. 35)
 - b. spun her wheels (p. 40)
 - c. this disappointing tendency is your funeral (p. 57)
 - d. avoided those like the plague (p. 58)
 - e. a mere blink of the eye (p. 76)
 - f. keep anything on the down-low (p. 97)
 - g. actions speak louder than words (p. 102)
 - h. on a roll (p. 103)
 - i. their pearls of wisdom (p. 103)
 - j. cat got your tongue (p. 107)
 - k. speak of the devil (p. 111)
 - l. doesn't like to be fleeced (p. 126)
 - m. gone into a whole new gear (p. 135)
 - n. burning the midnight oil (p. 200)
 - o. he had been hiding his light (p. 201)
 - p. stepped out (p. 224)
 - q. knock yourself out (p. 227)
 - r. just always bounces back (p. 245)
 - s. an emotional roller coaster (p. 265)
 - t. in a nutshell (p. 275)
 - u. a bitter pill (p. 285)
 - v. all hands to the plough (p. 290)
 - w. to push a pen (p. 291)
15. Find definitions of the words from the novel below. Write a sentence for each or use them to create a glossary for the novel. You may like to add any words from the novel that are new to you.
- a. excrescence (p. 48)
 - b. benevolence (p. 50)
 - c. proprietorial (p. 54)
 - d. macabre (p. 55)
 - e. melodious (p. 73)
 - f. feckless (p. 90)
 - g. banal (p. 94)
 - h. belligerent (p. 96)
 - i. mollified (p. 98)
 - j. elusive (p. 107)
 - k. insouciance (p. 111)
 - l. indefatigable (p. 115)
 - m. malevolent (p. 117)
 - n. basilisk (p. 122)
 - o. rueful (p. 128)
 - p. impudent (p. 129)
 - q. fallacious (p. 138)
 - r. fastidiously (p. 148)
 - s. garrulous (p. 195)
 - t. paean (p. 202)
 - u. precarious (p. 256)
 - v. astute (p. 256)
 - w. obdurate (p. 264)
 - x. oeuvre (p. 288)
 - y. cacophony (p. 305)
 - z. abeyance (p. 306)

Characters:

1. Do you like Barney and Ren as characters? Do you think they are realistic characters? Why or why not? Compare and contrast their personalities, opinions and actions, and analyse how they are influenced by one another. Use quotes from the novel to support your points, for example, 'Barney studied his sister. She was so different to him. It was quite amazing they were related' (p. 36).
2. Do you think Barney and Ren have a realistic brother-sister relationship? Do you believe that their relationship, as well as their relationship with their friends and family, develops and changes though the book? If so, list what are these changes are and the main events which contribute to the development?
3. At the start of the book Barney's mother describes him as a 'megalomaniac' and 'a budding dictator with delusional fantasies of omnipotence' (p. 15). Find examples of when he displays each of these qualities.
4. In the book Dad is described as 'a total dinosaur and...a total miser' (p. 167) and Ms Bloodworth as 'a benign sorceress' (p. 174). Think of three adjectives to describe the following characters: Barney, Ren, Suit, Albert Anderson, Orange Boy and Crimson Girl.
5. Choose an important event from the novel and describe Barney and Ren's reactions to it? What are the different pressures on Barney and Ren throughout the novel? What factors lead to the decisions they make and how do they cope with the various situations they find themselves in?
6. What does the novel say about friendships and/or family and their importance during difficult times? List examples of episodes when friends and/or family are either a help or a hindrance to Barney and Ren.
7. Draw a picture of one of the characters based on their physical descriptions, for example, Ms Bloodworth (p. 150) and Orange boy (p. 177 & p. 180).
8. Choose a character from the book, other than Barney and Ren, to write a character study on.
9. Which character do you particularly like or dislike? Why?
10. Which character do you most identify with? Why?

Comprehension/Close Reading Questions:

1. What helps Barney's bad mood pop 'like a balloon under a pin' and what does this tell us about one aspect of his personality (p. 19)?
2. What is the reason behind the author's 'unorthodox' decision to write a second beginning (p. 22)?
3. What are the things that 'spin' Ren's wheels (p. 40)?
4. What does Barney mean by his statement that the Street is just a 'bigger version of a school classroom' (p. 95)?
5. What would Barney rather be doing than 'actual school' and why (p. 118)?
6. Why does Gene wink at Barney and Barney yawp back when they are filming Suit in Montgomery's (p. 201)?
7. What do Barney and Ren feel about, and consequently do, after Willy's meaningful look as they leave his office (p. 235)?
8. How, and why, do Barney and Ren each react to the news that Orange Boy and Crimson Girl are leaving (p. 258)?
9. What does Nick's obsession with maths teach Barney about himself and others (p. 268)?
10. What comment did Sally make at the opening of the Living History Museum that greatly impressed Barney (p. 273)?
11. What names had Barney and Ren tried out for their secret envelope life (p. 292)?
12. What was it that helped Barney feel 'gloriously in charge' and why did he feel this way (p. 294)?
13. What did Barney do during the earthquake (p. 300)?

Who says 'there is nothing like the balm of story' and who does he work on the stories with as a type of therapy (p. 322)?

Comprehension/Close Reading Questions:

1. The book is a story about the headlong excitement of the creative process. Barney loves it when he has a 'pop of an idea' (p. 45) and often extolls his love of 'the thrilling alchemy of the creative process' (p. 32). Either choose your favourite scene from the book, or something from the book listed below, to create your own artistic interpretation of it. Use, for example, a diorama, painting, model, poem, cartoon strip, movie storyboard, video,

etc.

- the sketch of the R&R meeting (p. 116)
 - the Ambulatorix (p. 145)
 - the menagerie of carved animals (p. 156)
 - the Crazopoly game (pp. 189-190)
 - the badges stolen from the Emporium (pp. 190-191)
 - a map from the Map Shop (p. 203)
 - the Lonelyhearts Dating Agency Sock Installation (p. 240)
 - the Unpublished Poet's missing cat poster poem (p. 110), haiku about pawns (p. 241) or villanelle entitled 'Rook' (p. 326)
 - Crimson Girl's caricatures of the Street inhabitants with their exaggerated features (p. 263)
 - Barney's daily log as demanded by Ms Bloodworth (p. 266)
2. Barney considers Ren's lists of nouns in her exercise book as 'a word sketch of the Street, its sounds and shapes and smells, its activities and habits' (p. 46). Create a word sketch of your school, street or a place of significance in your local area, using nouns and adjectives.
 3. The book heavily features 'zines', including those Barney and Ren's class have made at school (p. 55-57) and the series of Orange Boy Parts I-VI zines. Create either one of the zines listed above or a zine about a subject of your own choice. As a class, display and read the zines you have created.
 4. Barney and Ren film all over the Street but they particularly enjoy filming at the hair salon as 'so much just happens' and some events there are 'like theatre sports' (p. 109). As a class play a theatre sports game of charades. In groups, act out a character doing something from the book without speaking. See how quickly your group can guess who you are and what you are doing.
 5. Sally works at the 'Living History Museum' which is all about community history (p. 74) including the people in the street who 'had come from elsewhere' (p. 153). Research and interview an immigrant or another inhabitant from your own local community. Present your findings in the style of a biographical entry in an encyclopaedia. Include a photograph of your subject.
 6. The author includes descriptions of the exterior and interior of the post office. Find other examples of descriptions of exterior and interior spaces in the book. Draw one of these based on the descriptions. Next, in pairs, write a description of an exterior or interior space of your choice. Read your description aloud to your partner and get them to draw the space based on your description.

7. Barney and Ren discovered that they enjoyed the attention of Orange Boy and Crimson Girl as they shared their life stories and in turn had wanted to present their life 'story as a gift: the onceuponatime of the Kettle family, of Busby's Emporium, on the High Street of town' (p. 187). Write down your life story and present it as an illustrated published children's gift book.
8. Barney and Ren play Twenty Questions with Orange Boy and Crimson Girl (p. 181-188). Divide into small groups, get one person to choose a character from the book to be, and play Twenty Questions. Answer the questions as your chosen character would and play until your group successfully guesses which character you have adopted.
9. When they help Orange Boy and Crimson Girl, 'Ren and Barney had become an exclusive aid organisation, helping just two people in need.' (p. 212). In pairs, create a charity to help. Design a marketing campaign to raise awareness of your charity. Think of the type of language you would use in your campaign, such as persuasive writing for radio and television advertisements or informative and business writing for pamphlets to distribute, etc.
10. Barney and Ren discuss what they see and think other people see when they look at themselves in the mirror, as either a past, present or future self (p. 222). Write three short descriptive paragraphs about how you view those three versions of yourself in the mirror.
11. Use these quotes from the book as either a topic for a class debate or as an essay starter: 'Even perfectly decent adults could be strange about children's rights' (p. 113) and 'Everyone needs representation...no matter what they may have done. That's a cornerstone of our democracy' (p. 229).
12. Barney watches the creative process of Orange Boy and Crimson Girl as they make a zine (p. 261). Study an artist creating, either in person or via internet, and write a detailed written description of their creative process.
13. Barney is obsessed by, and loves, the filmmaking process (p. 288) but finds it hard to understand how others can be passionate about different interests, such as maths, sports, knitting and marine biology (p. 267). However, he soon realises that 'everywhere... perhaps every street in their city hummed along in an outwardly ordinary way, but in fact harboured innumerable citizens with mad passions and habits' (p. 274). Choose something that you, or someone you know, are passionate about to write a description and/or an illustrated instructional pamphlet about.
14. Barney mentions linear storytelling (p. 242). In groups, create an illustrated linear timeline for Barney and Ren that shows the main events of the novel and where they took place.
15. Imagine you are one of the other inhabitants of High Street, such as Sally or Albert Anderson. Choose an event from the book and write a personal diary entry or monologue about it from your point of view. Think about how you would describe the physical scene, any other characters who were involved and your feelings about the incident.
16. Do you think the novel could be successfully adapted into a dramatic film? Write a letter in support of the film for possible investors and include which actors you would like to star in the film and the reasons behind your choices. Look at some movie posters. Notice the pictures and the words. Design a movie poster to advertise the film. Or, imagine the novel is going to be turned into a stage play. Design a suitable set, programme notes and advertising poster for the play.
17. Which is your favourite chapter in the book? Why? Write a plot summary of it.
18. The cover illustration and chapter openings are by artist Gregory O'Brien. What do you like/dislike about them? Design your own illustrations for two of the chapters, as well as a new cover.
19. Kate de Goldi is an award-winning author. Research and write a short biography about her and her other books, such as *The 10Pm Question*, *The ACB of Honora Lee*, *Club: A Lolly Leopold Story* and *Sanctuary*.
20. Visit the website <http://www.highstreetstories.co.nz> to listen to some stories that may have inspired Kate de Goldi when writing the book.
21. Write a review of the book, aiming it at the readership of your favourite magazine, newspaper, website or blog. Give it a rating, such as stars or a number out of ten. Consider the following questions:
 - Which characters appealed to you the most? The least?
 - How did the story make you feel as it unfolded?
 - What ideas in the book awakened your interest?
 - What did you dislike, or find boring?
 - Do you think this is a significant book?
 - Why is this book important for today's readers?

