



TEACHERS' RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Upper Primary, age 9-11

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KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English, The Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences, Health & Physical Education
- **General capabilities:** Literacy, Critical & Creative Thinking, Personal & Social Capability, Ethical Understanding.

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- For students to learn from a relatable story about discovering and believing in your true self.
- To discuss finding your place in the family, community and among friends.
- To acknowledge and celebrate the little bit of music in us all!

THEMES

- Music/Melody
- Family/Home/Love/Belonging
- Resilience and self-belief
- Friendship
- Peer pressure
- Sport (soccer)

PREPARED BY

Penguin Random House Australia

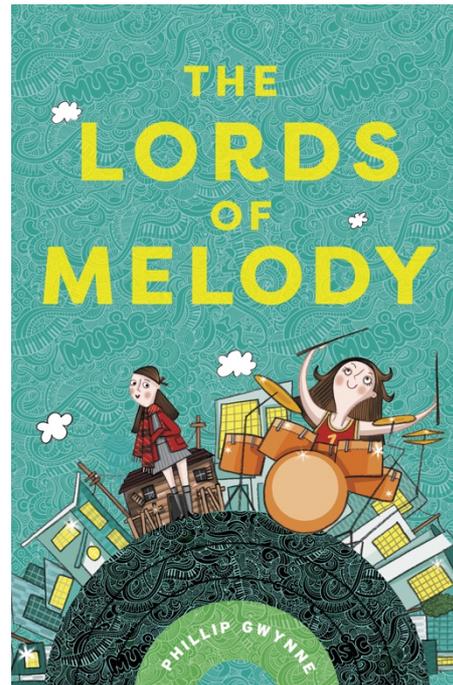
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The Lords of Melody Phillip Gwynne

PLOT SUMMARY

Introducing . . . The Lords of Melody!! From this acclaimed author comes an hilarious new novel for upper primary about the weird and wonderful things that can happen when you have music in your life - whether you want it or not!

The Lord family live in the worst house on the best street. It might have been different if Suzi Lord's rock 'n' roll parents, Strum and Miss Katy, hadn't stumbled on their way to stardom but after one hit single in Finland, it's been Lentil Slop Thing for dinner ever since.

But life is about to get a lot more interesting at 92 Melody Street. Renting out their spare room on ZedBedZ seemed like a good idea but with the ghost of a grumpy drummer, a long-lost grandfather as their first guest, angry opposition from a residents action group, AND a broken leg in the first practice match of the soccer season, Suzi ain't havin' much of a rockin' good time.

Then she dares to pick up a set of drum sticks and things really get wild.

With the driving beat of a rock anthem, the heart of a country ballad, and the vibe of the latest hip-hop hit, this hilarious mash-up proves that you just can't stop the music!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Phillip Gwynne's first novel *Deadly Unna?* was a literary hit and was made into the feature film *Australian Rules* for which Phillip won an AFI award. The sequel, *Nukkin Ya*, was also published to great acclaim.

He writes for a wide range of age groups from picture books such as *Brothers From a Different Mother* and junior fiction such as *Jetty Rats* and *Michael* in the *Stuff Happens* series, to the young adult novel *Swerve*, shortlisted for many awards amongst them the 2010 Prime Minister's Award and the Golden Inky.

AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

The author says:

One night I was sitting at the kitchen table and my two daughters were arguing. The father in me was begging them to stop but the writer in me was quite interested in what they were arguing about: their schools.

My older daughter is on a scholarship at a private school, while my younger daughter goes to our local public school.

They're both great schools, but that doesn't matter – my kids could still find plenty to argue about. And let's face it, the public vs private school is a debate that's not going to go away anytime soon.

So I started jotting down words, which became a few sentences, which became paragraphs, and before I knew it I was writing *The Lords of Melody*.

I'd always wanted to write a book that was, like our lives, saturated with music – this was my opportunity.

So I took these versions of my kids and gave them to a rock 'n' roll family. But of course no author is ever going to make it easy for their characters.

My fictional parents, Strum and Miss Katy, were once in a band that charted in Finland, but after the unfortunate 'onstage incident' they've been searching for that elusive hit ever since.

We are all in love with the idea of following our dream, especially if it involves creativity (the central premise of all TV talent shows!) but what happens if that dream goes awry?

WRITING STYLE

The author says:

I love music, but have no ability myself, and while I was writing this book my musician friends were suddenly inundated with texts from me asking all manner of technical questions about making music.

A contemporary phenomenon that has fascinated me is Airbnb – people opening up their houses to complete strangers, and I've always thought it was a great device to have in a book, a legitimate way to introduce fresh blood.

I've always considered myself to be a writer of edgy realism, so it I was somewhat alarmed when a ghost appeared in my book – a very modern ghost who only appears in an iPad, but a ghost nonetheless. So *The Lords of Melody* is also about freeing myself from some of the constraints I'd put on myself as a writer. (See *Worksheet 1, below, for a writing activity*)

A question I often get asked when I'm talking at schools is 'Which of your books is your favourite?' My pat answer is 'That's a bit like asking a parent which of their kids is their favourite'. But I really do love this book – it's a funny book, but it's not just funny for the sake of funny, it's a funny book about serious questions.

Questions

What do you think are the serious questions the author is exploring in this funny book?

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. Look carefully at the front cover of this book. What can you already tell about the story from the title and illustrations?
2. Now read the back cover blurb – does this fit with what you came up with after looking at the front cover?

THEMES

There's a heck of a lot going on in this book, it's the Bohemian Rhapsody of young fiction; it's about families, of course, what drives them apart, what brings them together, it's about following your dreams, and how that can turn into a nightmare, it's about community, when the street you love becomes a 'sought after address', it's about what it takes for people to come together and cooperate, make music. But like Bohemian Rhapsody it somehow comes together seamlessly into a rocking good read that's as funny as it is relevant.

Music/Melody

- the lives of the family have always and still do revolve around **music**.

Questions

What kind of music do you have in your life? Is it just a love of listening, or do you play an instrument? Do you think, like Suzi does eventually, that music can be 'in your genes'? Who do you have



in your family who is musical? (Maybe it even skips a generation...)

- the Lord family live in **Melody Street – in the worst house on the best street**. Suzi's parents bought the house at the height of their band's short fame but haven't had the money to do anything to it since. And now Melody Street has become a fancy address full of fancy houses surrounding their run-down house (like some of the suburbs in inner-west Sydney that were once working class and are now exclusive areas to live).

Questions

How important is your family home to you? What are the things and reasons it's important or not important?

What is the significance of the Lords living in Melody Street? Are their lives melodious? Why or why not?

- Despite never wanting to be part of the family's musical heritage, loving soccer not music, 11-year-old Suzi ends up learning the drums to help a friend, and finds she's actually a bit of a natural, having apparently inherited the family's musical gift after all, having natural rhythm and a talent for drumming.

Questions

What hidden talents have you discovered that you have? How did you discover them?

Family/Home:

- The Lords are anything but a 'conventional' family, and Strum and Miss Katy don't seem to provide much conventional parenting, living the free and slightly chaotic lives of musos, but they are all still fiercely loyal to each other (even Janis, who has tried to disown them since getting a scholarship to a posh private school)

Questions

- What are some of the ways that Strum and Miss Katy still manage to show their love and give guidance to their two girls?

- How/when in the story do Suzi and Janis show loyalty to each other and to the family?

- After music, the Lord's house in Melody Street is the probably the most important thing that's held the family together, especially as they own it. The local real estate agent (and father of Suzi's best friend) is secretly plotting to buy up all the houses in Melody Street to make way for a shopping mall. So he pulls the local residents together to stop the Lords making any money out of renting out a room, in a bid to get them to sell up.

Activity

Have a look in your local paper – are there any community action groups who are fighting for something in their area? What is the issue and who

is their leader? Research the issue and give reason why you think it is, or isn't, a valid concern.

Resilience/self belief

- Every member of the Lord family shows their resilience in different ways.

Activity

In Worksheet 2, write the names of each of the Lord family and beside them, write and how they doubt themselves, and/or when and how they are resilient.

Soccer/Teamwork

- Suzi's passionate about soccer and is very good at it. Unfortunately (or fortunately for the story), she breaks her leg playing a trial match at the beginning of the season which means she's stuck and home.

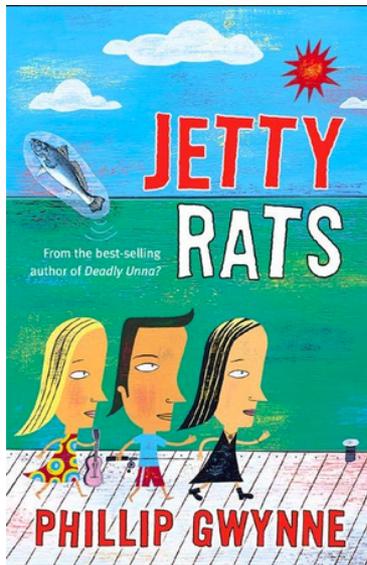
Questions

Where does that lead Suzi instead?

How does Suzi's experience in soccer help her when her focus changes?



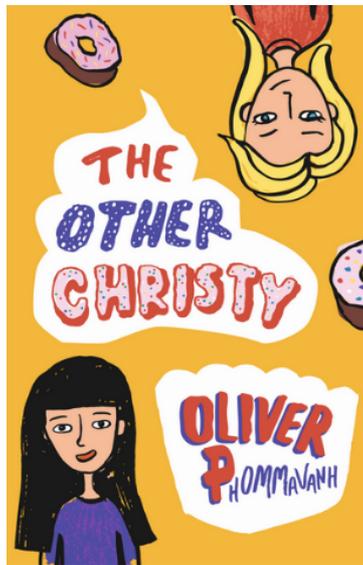
FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA



Jetty Rats
by Phillip Gwynne

Dogleg Bay is one big retirement home; the richest man in town – the funeral director – drives a hotted-up hearse. Hunter Vettori is thirteen, and longs to catch a record-breaking mulloway, leave Dogleg Bay, and become bigger than Rexy Hunt.

On the way, maybe he'll get to kiss a girl (there's only two to choose from and they're twins), save his mum from getting a really bad tatt and find out if Target really has a section called Christian Smart Casual. But, above all, Hunter wants his father back.



The Other Christy
by Oliver Phommavanh

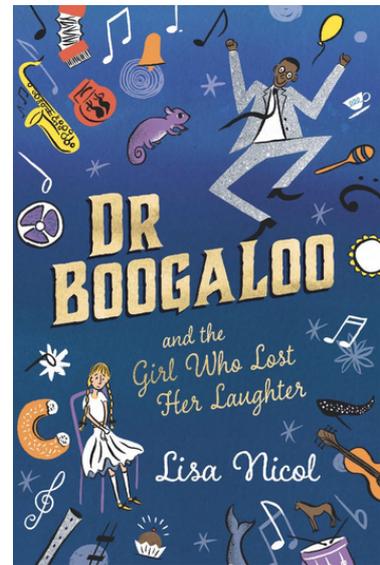
My name is Christy but nobody calls me that. I'm in the same class with another girl named Christie, so I've become just the other Christy, the spare Christy. Not the popular, loud one everyone likes.

Just once I'd like to be noticed, and have a real friend. Someone I can bake treats for and who just gets me . . . and my weird fussy Grandpa at home.

Could that person ever really be Christie? Could I be friends with my enemy?

The Other Christy is a touching and funny tale from the ever-popular Oliver Phommavanh about quirky families, sweet desserts and two girls who find out they have a lot more in common than just their name.

Teachers' resources available.



Dr Boogaloo and the Girl Who Lost Her Laughter
by Lisa Nicol

Dr Boogaloo was no ordinary doctor. Not at all like the one you might visit if you had a sore tummy. No, Dr Boogaloo was a very different type of doctor. He treated folks who suffered from rather unusual complaints. And how did he treat them? Why, with the most powerful medicine known to mankind . . . Music!

Blue was no ordinary girl. For starters, her name was Blue. But what was truly extraordinary about Blue was the fact that she hadn't laughed for 712 days. Not a hee hee, a ho ho or even a tiny tee hee.

Can Dr Boogaloo compose a cure before Blue loses her laughter forever?

Teachers' resources available.



WORKSHEET 2: The Lord Family's Resilience

Every member of the Lord family shows their resilience in different ways. In the table below, write how each character shows resilience and/or how they show self-doubt.

Character	How/when they doubt themselves or their ability	When/how they show resilience
Suzi		
Janis		
Strum		
Miss Katy		
Uncle Pigpen		



ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
The Lords of Melody	Phillip Gwynne	9780143796459	4-6	\$16.99		
Jetty Rats	Phillip Gwynne	9780143300496	5-7	\$19.99		
The Other Christy	Oliver Phommavanh	9781760890933	4-6	\$16.99		
Dr Boogaloo and the Girl Who Lost Her Laughter	Lisa Nicol	9781760892364	4-6	\$14.99		
TOTAL						

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