

BEHIND THE CANVAS!



StKath 1/06 team 2



Write a Book in a Day



**THE KIDS'
CANCER
PROJECT**

Science. Solutions. Survival.

PARAMETERS FORM 2019

TEAM DETAILS

STATE: NSW
DIVISION: Primary School
SCHOOL/GROUP: St Catherine's School SYdney Junior School
TEAM NAME: StCaths Y6 team 2
TEAM ID: 1038

PARAMETERS AND RANDOM WORDS

Parameters

Primary character 1 Sports coach
Primary character 2 Plumber
Non-human character Dragon
Setting Stable
Issue Failed harvest

Random words

Community
Skipped
Magic
Canvas
Sings

Dedication:

We dedicate this book to all the kids in the hospital battling cancer. We hope you enjoy our book and that it brings you lots of joy. We wish you all the best for recovery!



Prologue



Ecstatic giggles bounced off the echoing walls of the two storey farmhouse. Little 3-year-old Annabeth squealed with contagious laughter as her mother tickled her smooth neck. This family never failed to have fun, even while they were battling a ferocious drought. Matthew (Annabeth's dad) was chuckling away with a drink in his hand and couldn't help feeling happy watching his family play.

Beneath the laughter, Rebecca (Annabeth's mother) heard something. She had been sure of it. That sound was definitely rushing water. Her heart was beating harder than a drum. Matthew and Beth hadn't heard anything. Anxiously, she swiftly strode out of the room, her feet barely touching the ground. She didn't want to worry either Matthew or Beth. The sound was coming from the stables. Each corner Rebecca turned, she thought about what she could have possibly discovered. It couldn't be water, could it? They were in a drought! *The door was just a few metres away.*

Rebecca shoved the stable door open. Inside, the horses were sleeping, and behind them was an antique **canvas**, drenched in clean, fresh water. It was so mesmerising to watch the running stream gush down the bare wall. It was almost like **magic!** Rebecca reached out her hand to touch the amazing substance. The water covered her hand and seemed to pump through her body. Rebecca reached in further. It was relaxing and made her want to never take her hand away. Rebecca realised that she had really just found water! She found a steady flow of drinking liquid during a savage drought! She had to go tell Matthew! She tried to pull her hand out, but she just couldn't! It seemed as if there was a magnet pulling her into the **canvas**. Rebecca couldn't do anything. The force was too strong. Before she even knew it, she was gone!

Chapter 1- Drought Again



Drought. Drought again. This was way worse than last time. We had been struggling for months, our crops perishing and our native animals were abandoning their homes. Splash looked miserable, and even the horses looked dispirited. I tucked my flyaway chestnut hair behind my ear, heaved up the swinging metal pail of seeds and **skipped** over to the hay fields, wishing that we would have a good harvest. It seemed not. The field was as dry as a desert. Cracks were even starting to appear in the rocky dirt. Having water at that moment would be a miracle. But miracles don't happen around here anymore.

Chapter 2- Everything's changing

I sat down for our usual Wednesday night dinner. The smell of charcoal black sausages and mushy, charred peas wafted around the dining room as I entered the house. I was used to this smell. Dad wasn't the best cook. After mum went missing, dad always tried to fulfil her cooking skills, yet he never quite got the magic touch. Wednesday was the only night that he wasn't out working late. As he flopped down in his chair, I could see the frustration in his eyes, the drought had won the battle. "Hi Beth," he sighed, struggling to look happy. These days he always seemed quite worried, but I tried to act normal.

"Now I don't want you to get angry but the only way to earn money is to get a job. A job in the city. I was planning on becoming a plumber. I could get us back on our feet. I think it's a good idea. This drought is getting to the worst of us, we need the money to make profits."

I wanted to scream. I wanted to yell at him in his face and let him know how he made me feel. He was going to leave me and go to the city! I knew he was trying his hardest and that he was right; the only way to get money was if he took up a job in the city.

"Alright, but who is going to look after me?"

"Oh, well I hired a sports coach who specialises in horses and such who can look after you and teach you some skills."

I wanted to know what she was like immediately - Was she nice and smelled like roses? I had so many questions but Dad was tired so I called it a night.

The next day, Madam Cronache and I had our first lesson. Dad took the bus into the city and worked all day. Although Dad had mentioned I was going to have a new horse riding coach, I never knew she would be an evil beast! Madame Cronache was the name of the monster teaching me. She was a nightmare!

Chapter 3- The dryness of Water Dragon Valley



City people would never understand. Even a big city **community** would never understand. Never know the crushing force of poverty. The immense power drought held upon us. They had no clue what I was going through. Dad was out constantly, learning to be a plumber, fixing old pipes in the city, while I was trapped in the dryness of Water Dragon Valley. It was ever so lonely. I only had Splash my beloved water dragon and the horses to keep me company.

Poor Splash, now he had no water left in his cage. How on earth was a Water Dragon going to survive with no water? Our horses were getting weak, tired and extremely impossible to handle. They refused to get up off the dirt floor. Every night dad came home we would contemplate getting a crane to physically lift up the poor things. One afternoon, after my lesson with Madame, I took my horse to the shady stable. The rusted corrugated roof let tiny specks of light into the back of the dust-filled room. It was like it was giving life to the barren space. I inspected the stable searching for a pipe filled with water that was forgotten about for many years. After digging around for a few minutes, I gave up. My eye caught sight of a hanging glamorous **canvas** hidden partially by a chest of drawers in the corner. I wandered over to it, pondering what it could be. I'd never noticed it before. It looked like a few ink splashes had occurred on it. Mm, it didn't bother me. I didn't really pay any attention to it. I **skipped** back out of the stables, looking for another place that could possibly be storing water.

Madam Cronache was becoming more suspicious every time I saw her. I always knew that she was not going to fit the model of my perfect dream coach, but the way she acted spiked my senses. I already had enough weight on my shoulders! The drought was finally digging into my soul but I had never been affected so badly before. What had happened to me?

“Just finish up for today. I am not proud at all and would like to see better tomorrow. Hit the showers. You’re sweating child!” Madam Cronache yelled.

I would like to see her try horse riding! How would she feel if she was constantly bossed around by some strict old hag? All she ever did was boss me around and I was just so sick of it. I would tell Dad of her in the morning. Hopefully, we could fire her. But for the moment, I had another twenty-four hours to spend without Dad. Another twenty-four hours to spend with Madam Cronstupid. Ugh!

Chapter 4- Mum and Me

“Get your back into order you imbecile.” Madam Cronache boomed. She was like an annoying toy. Constantly talking, saying something useless. Over the short amount of time I had Madam Cronache, I knew she was evil. Seriously evil. I climbed back onto my horse, and did as she said. Poor Buttercup was so tired. Horses shouldn’t be like this. Dehydrated. I had so many emotions to handle. Dad, going away all the time, leaving me with the devil of a Madam Cronache. After some more time of drowning out Madam, my lesson was over. I missed how mum made me feel. I was so bored after Madam had gone. No matter how evil she was, she did keep me out of the house and fit and exercised.

I walked Buttercup back into her stable, and thought about Mum. What was she truly like? I didn’t have her for long enough. I missed her so much. I loved the faint smell of her perfume and I couldn’t wait until I was old enough to be like her. When I asked dad what he liked best about her he said, “I love how she **sings**. She has a voice like an angel.”

We were playing around the night she disappeared. We were in a drought, but we were all happy. It wasn’t bad. I remember when we were having a really fun time together, and then her face completely changed. Like she was going to be sick or something. I remember how she ran out of the room, and sprinted around the farm, looking for something. Being a preoccupied child I was oblivious of the situation, and thought mum would calm down eventually, but after a while, she didn’t come back. After a really long time, she was still gone. I remember rushing around the farm with dad, calling her name. We didn’t get any response. We checked everywhere. She was just gone. I cried myself to sleep that night.

Chapter 5-

Up to no good

I crept down the stairs slowly, carefully, quietly. It was obvious that dad was asleep, it was too late for him to be up at this time after all these tough days. I had woken up in the middle of the night, desperate for some water or maybe even a square of chocolate when I heard footsteps. They were coming from outside the stables. I couldn't shake the curiosity off. I had to find out who was making all the noise outside! I tiptoed through the narrow hallway, struggling to dodge all of the creaky wooden blocks that would squeak and probably wake dad up.

I silently approached the back door, peering into the star-filled night sky. I could hear buckets clanging and water splashing. Someone's up to no good. I slowly crept across the parched grass trying to get as close to the intruder as possible. Suddenly Madame Cronache pushed open the barn door. She saw me and jumped two feet high into the air in fright. "What are you doing here?" she cried, obviously shocked she had been caught. "Why this is my house and you are currently not allowed here at this time. I'm going to tell my dad about this and I can probably guess you will be fired right away." Madame Cronache ran out of the stables and disappeared into the night. She won't be coming back here anytime soon. But what had made her want to come in here? She's found something and I need to know what it is.

Chapter 6-
It could only be...



I could feel the cold metal of my silver, heart-shaped locket press against my chest. I always felt its heavy weight whenever I was nervous. I would never forget what my dad told me, long, long ago. "Your mother gave this to you before she...went missing." His expression faltered but at the time my five year old self hadn't noticed. "I want you to keep it forever." The flashback ended and I opened the old, dilapidated barn door, nervous for what could await inside. At the end of stables, a little **canvas** portraying a river leaned against the wood. I walked over. Something wasn't right. Had some of the paint come off? No, that wasn't it. Then I saw it. A small figure, at the back of the picture stood, in a colourful, vibrant summer dress. Where had I seen her before? It hit me. That was my mother! I looked in carefully, then I jumped off the dusty floor and ran out the door. I pulled an old cardboard box out of dad's polished wooden desk. I grabbed the first photograph of mum. Her big brown eyes and glossy brown hair was unforgettable but I had to be sure. I ran out to the stables again and matched up the photograph with the painting. It could only be her. Yes, it was my mother! Did this mean...?

Chapter 7-
A family again

A thin drop of water ran down the **canvas**. Water. Water at last! But that wasn't what I was mainly thinking about. That woman inside the **canvas** painting had to be my mum. I had waited for a sign. Could this be it? Another drop of water ran down the **canvas**. I caught it on my fingertips and let it fill me with energy. I then pushed my finger to the silhouette of my mum on the **canvas** and suddenly the whole **canvas** disappeared. Stuck on the wall was a person who looked just like the lady in the photographs. Mum.

"Mum!" I screamed in disbelief. I was head over heels in excitement. I couldn't believe it was her! Really really her!

I ran towards her and wrapped my arms around her waist, feeling the safest I had ever been. "Dad! Come quick!" I kept my arms around her, wanting the hug to never ever end! Dad walked in and stood still for one minute, processing what was in front of his eyes.

"Becky, is that you?" Dad raced over to Mum and me and squeezed us so hard I thought my ribs would crack. We held that position for a long time, neither of us wanting to break the moment.

"Wait!" I abruptly exclaimed. "What about all the water?"

"Water?" asked Dad. "What water?"

Mum went into an explanation of how there was water behind the **canvas** the whole time and she had found it all those years ago, the night she had disappeared. Dad then asked the question I had been wanting to know the answer to.

"How did it happen?"

I sat eagerly, waiting for a reply.

"I'll tell you over a nice cup of hot chocolate in the house."

Together, the three of us cruised up the path to the farmhouse, arms wrapped around each other's shoulders, all glad to be a complete family again.

"It can't get much better than this, can it?"

Even as I asked the question, I knew the answer was no. Nothing could get better than this!



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No one believed it, Until it came.
The deadly
drought hits
their home...



11 year old Beth lives on a country-side farm in NSW with her dad and her water dragon splash. Everything is fine. Only when her dad hires an evil sport coach does the drama begin. The drama that turned her whole life upside down.

Recommended for
9-12 yr olds