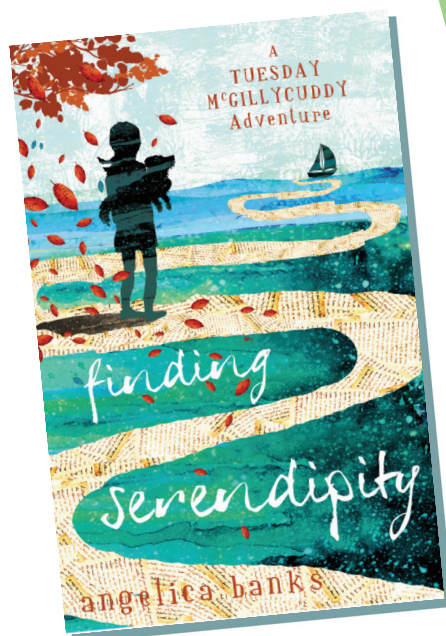


# FICTION STANDING ORDER



## FEATURED BOOK:

### FINDING SERENDIPITY

For information about our featured book, please visit our website: [australianstandingorders.com.au](http://australianstandingorders.com.au)

There's something for everyone this month, from the more serious to the light and playful.

**Yoko's Diary** is a beautiful and sad book. It's the diary of a thirteen-year-old Japanese girl, killed in the bombing of Hiroshima at the end of WW2. Sixty-eight years later, this diary is being published in English for the first time. There are moving tributes and letters from Yoko's family at the beginning and end of the diary. Yoko's words show the war closing in and the impact on her and those around her. There are additional information sections included which outline aspects of social, economic, political and domestic life in Japan at that time. A remarkable and moving look at this terrible event in history. Suitable for Upper Primary.

**Lina's Many Lives** is book two in the **Our Australian Girl** series about a young Italian girl growing up in Melbourne in the 1950s. In book 2, Lina's plans fall foul of the class bully. Suitable for Mid Primary. You might like to know that in 2014, the publisher, Penguin Books, will be releasing a series for boys in the same vein, titled **Do you Dare?**. Should be good!

The publisher of Deb Fitzpatrick's **The Amazing Spencer Gray** describes the book as 'suspenseful yet uplifting, a story about resilience and agency – building one and realising the other – and a story to empower young people in their lives and within their communities'. It's about how a young boy overcomes his fears when the glider he and his father are flying crashes. It has lots of funny moments and is a great read for boys (in particular) in Upper Primary.

Two more titles suitable for Upper Primary this month and, in this case more advanced Mid Primary readers, are **Finding Serendipity** and **Verity Sparks, Lost and Found**. The author of **Finding Serendipity**, Angelica Banks is, in fact, two authors – Heather Rose and Danielle Wood, both from Tasmania. I loved this book. It has a very classic feel to it and is a terrific adventure story that also reminds us of the power of words and story. The heroine, Tuesday, must learn the true nature of serendipity, which is to find something wonderful while looking for something else. And you have to love a book that has a 'small but formidable Librarian' as one of the heroes!

**Verity Sparks, Lost and Found** is the second book about a young girl with the gift of finding lost things. Now it's Verity who has lost something – her gift. The plot takes Verity and her father to Melbourne in the late 1800s. It's a wonderful adventure and a worthy follow-up to **Verity Sparks** (a 2011 ASO selection), which was shortlisted in the CBCA awards last year. Suitable for Upper Primary and more advanced Mid Primary readers. Verity is a treat.

Ursula Dubosarsky and Terry Denton have collaborated on an exciting new series, **The Cryptic Casebook of Coco Carlomagno (and Alberta)** (this year's longest series title!) and book one is **The Perplexing Pineapple**.

This slim book, suitable for Lower to Mid Primary is a lovely combination of detective story and puzzles. The puzzles are a great way of attracting reluctant readers and all readers will enjoy these funny stories set in a re-imagined Buenos Aires (inhabited by guinea pigs). We've selected this first title to introduce you to the series. Books 2 and 3 will be released in June and July.

Pirates, hidden treasure and a thrilling life at sea are all part of Susan Cason's novel, **The Pirate Company: On the Trail of the Golden Toucan**. A fun read for boys and girls in Mid to Upper Primary.

Happy reading.



## COMING NEXT ISSUE

### WOLF AND DOG

– Sylvia Vanden Heede and Marije Tolman

### THE RIVER CHARM

– Belinda Murrell

### VIEW FROM THE 32ND FLOOR

– Emma Cameron

### THAT BOY, JACK

– Janeen Brian

### THE GIRL WHO BROUGHT MISCHIEF

–Katrina Nannestad

#### SCIS

Don't forget that all ASO selections have been allocated SCIS numbers. These can be found on our website:

[www.australianstandingorders.com.au](http://www.australianstandingorders.com.au)

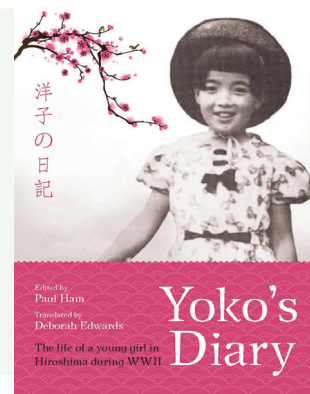
## YOKO'S DIARY

PAUL HAM —TRANSLATED BY DEBORAH EDWARDS

This is the diary of thirteen-year-old Yoko Moriwaki, who lived not far from Hiroshima in Japan during World War Two. Her diary was written as a school project and records her life as war closed in on her community, concluding the night before the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on 6 August 1945. Yoko and her classmates had been mobilised by the war effort and were working on a demolition site six kilometres from the epicentre of the explosion. All 277 students and their twenty teachers perished, including Yoko. Her diary was discovered by her older stepbrother and published in Japan in 1996.

ISBN: 9780733331176

RRP: \$24.99



### TEACHER NOTES

- Discuss how war affects those on the home front.
- During WW2, Japanese students were told to support the Imperial war effort in thought and deed. But how different was so-called educational 'propaganda' in Japan to what children were taught in western countries such as Australia, Great Britain or the USA?
- Towards the end of the war, Yoko worked as a student labourer on one of the house demolition sites. This would have been hard and dangerous work. Should child labour be condoned by governments in wartime?
- Yoko's life seems very grim, but she appears a cheerful little girl. Where does her resilience stem from? Discuss.
- Yoko's brother Kohji Hosokawa was a 'hibakusha' (atomic bomb survivor), and like many, he didn't speak of the experience for many years. Several hundred thousand survived but later suffered terrible radiation sickness, deformity and other mental and physical problems. Research the dropping of the bomb at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the effects in its aftermath.
- Visit websites which contain information about the bombing such as: 'Hiroshima Peace Site' [www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/top\\_e.html](http://www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/top_e.html); Hiroshima Day Committee, 'Hiroshima and Nagasaki Bombing: Facts about the Atomic Bomb' [www.hiroshimacommittee.org/Facts\\_NagasakiAndHiroshimaBombing.htm](http://www.hiroshimacommittee.org/Facts_NagasakiAndHiroshimaBombing.htm)
- Japanese culture teaches young people to be dutiful and disciplined in study and work. Did you find Yoko's attitudes surprising? Would you have been so obedient or accepting in such a situation?
- One of the delightfully personal aspects of Yoko's diary is the little notes at the head of each section recording when she got up, went to bed, how long she studied for and what chores she did. This reveals a personality which was very ordered and disciplined. It also gives readers an insight into how life was lived by children such as Yoko at that time and in that place. What did you learn from these notes?

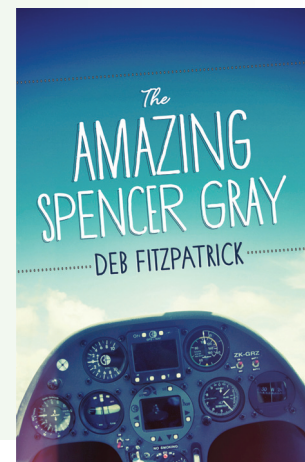
## THE AMAZING SPENCER GRAY

DEB FITZPATRICK

Spencer Gray and his family are new to the rural coastal town of Skippers Cove. His dad is the local community GP, and together with Spencer's mum Suzie and little sister Pippa, the Grays are a tight unit of four. Spencer also has two good mates at school – Charlie and the mischievous but charismatic Leon. When Spencer's dad announces that he is now old enough to join him for a flight in the Drifter – a non-motorised fixed-wing glider – Spencer can't wait to tell Charlie and Leon the exciting news. Flying in the Drifter is everything Spencer had hoped and more, and as they ride the thermals over the Stirling Ranges, the feeling is unbelievable. But then disaster strikes. The Drifter crashes in the mountains, leaving Spencer's dad badly injured and powerless. In this dire situation, Spencer is suddenly alone: decisions are his to make, and it is up to him to fetch help.

ISBN: 9781922089328

RRP: \$14.99



### TEACHER NOTES

- The title of the novel could refer to a number of things. What might be amazing about Spencer Gray, a twelve-year-old boy living in the south-west of Western Australia?
- Who are some survivors that you know of? How did they survive in harsh, unforgiving conditions? Choose one person's story and conduct research into their experience. You might like to use the following table:
- What are the positive and negative aspects of the Drifter? How does each of the characters see the glider? Is there any aspect of it that they all agree on?
- 'But the silence was long and cold. He heard a noise outside and turned around. It was raining. The sky was the colour of a gun.' (p 61) When the environment or objects are connected to the mood of a character it is known as a pathetic fallacy. In this case, Spencer's misery seems to be connected to the silence, rain and the colour of the sky. How might a rainy day be seen when a character is happy? Sad? Confused? Angry? Hopeful? Write sentences that incorporate your ideas.

Survivor's name	
What adventure/achievement were they trying to accomplish?	
What obstacles did they encounter?	
How were they rescued?	
What were the key elements to their survival?	
What can we learn from their story?	

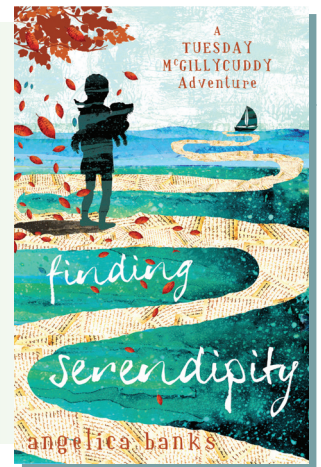
## FINDING SERENDIPITY

ANGELICA BANKS

Tuesday McGillycuddy is the daughter of the world's most famous writer, Serendipity Smith. Choosing to protect her family from the perils of fame, she has given the public the illusion of being a writer with no family who lives in a glamorous apartment at the top of a hotel. But in truth, she is Sarah McGillycuddy, wife of Denis and mother of Tuesday, who all live together with a shaggy brown dog called Baxterr. One day, Serendipity doesn't arrive home as expected and so Tuesday and Baxterr set out to find her. Tuesday's quest takes her to the place where stories come from. Tuesday must learn to think like a writer and use all her wit, courage, perseverance and imagination to be reunited with the people she loves.

ISBN: 9781743310311

RRP: \$15.99



### TEACHER NOTES

- Visual literacy exercise (a) Ask students to consider the title and cover design. What visual techniques has the designer used? What mood and connotations are evoked? Once everyone has finished reading the book, ask students to choose an alternative title and design a new cover. (b) After reading the book have students look at the images that appear at the beginning of each chapter and talk to them about why the publisher may have chosen to include them here. Make a list of the images used and talk about how each helps the reader understand the scene about to be described.
- The power of the human imagination is one of the most important themes in the book. The two people with the most powerful imaginations are Tuesday and Serendipity. Ask students to describe, in a one-page essay, how Tuesday's imagination leads to excitement and adventure but, in the case of Serendipity, accidentally bringing Mothwood back to life –imagination can be so powerful it can be dangerous.
- In what way does the scene in Chapter 21 play with the idea of the classic battle between good and evil? Have students come up with their own rhyming verse and choose several to stand up in front of the class and perform a 'word battle'.
- Look up the word 'serendipity' in the dictionary and explain why the word relates to other aspects of the novel as well as Tuesday's search for her mother. In your answer talk about how Tuesday finds out a lot more about herself than she ever expected.
- Explain to your students that two writers came together to tell the story of **Finding Serendipity** (please see our website for more information about the authors – [www.australianstandingorders.com.au](http://www.australianstandingorders.com.au)). Ask students to work in groups of two to create the most wildly imaginative story they can. Once the basic structure of the story is set, have each student write their own account of the story.

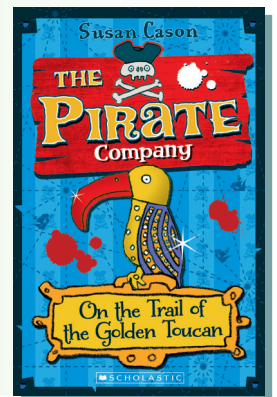
## THE PIRATE COMPANY: ON THE TRAIL OF THE GOLDEN TOUCAN

SUSAN CASON

When Tom Applecross's famous father fails to return home from an expedition, Tom's corrupt stepmother has the explorer declared dead. Eager to be rid of her stepson, Evlynn ships him off to his stuffy old aunt in Boston. Alone at sea, Tom dreads what the future has in store. But when he falls overboard, his journey takes an unexpected turn. Before long he is working on a pirate ship and making plans to mount an expedition to discover his father's whereabouts. Life at sea is far more thrilling than Tom could ever have dreamt.

ISBN: 9781742990026

RRP: \$14.99



### TEACHER NOTES

- Consider how writers research their stories. Choose a period in time that has sparked your interest and research it for the purpose of setting a story in that era. Using the first chapter of **The Pirate Company** as an example, consider what you need to learn in your research. As well as researching the geography and setting of the time, you will need to consider other elements: what people do, how they dress, how they speak, their method of transport, what they value, etc. Be thorough in your investigation as this information will allow you to create a believable setting. Compile your information under headings for future use.
- You have been invited to attend the annual 'Survivor' competition. This year the scenario given to each contestant is very similar to Tom's predicament: you fell overboard and washed up on a tropical island. Unlike Tom you happened to be carrying an empty drinking flask when you were swept overboard and this has washed up on shore with you. The island you have arrived on is very similar in nature to Tom's island, though there is drinking water. You just have to find out where it is. Your task is to create a survival plan that ensures you remain alive until someone comes to your rescue. You must be able to demonstrate knowledge of the following questions: How will you find water? How will you construct shelter? Where on the island will you choose a safe place to erect your shelter? How will you protect yourself from the elements? How will you find and prepare food? How can you guarantee your food sources are safe to eat? How will you keep warm? How will you defend yourself from predators? How will you protect yourself from the insects Tom faced? How will you alert any passers-by to your whereabouts?
- You must research thoroughly and be prepared to answer questions and justify all your answers. So, not only must you say how you will construct your shelter, you must be prepared to defend your construction and argue why your shelter will best help you survive your ordeal. Each contestant will have the chance to outline their survival method to the other contestants. Each contestant will answer any questions their fellow contestants may have about the proposal.

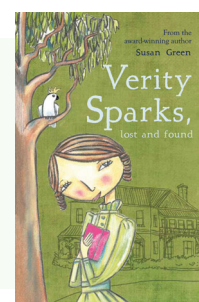
## VERITY SPARKS, LOST AND FOUND

SUSAN GREEN

Verity Sparks has found her father. But she has lost her gift – the ability to find lost things. Papa Savinov, eager for Verity to become a proper lady, sends her to the exclusive boarding school, Hilltop House. But Verity is more interested in solving the case of the missing Ecclethorpe heiress. As the investigation deepens, danger and intrigue grow closer. Will Verity's gift return before it's too late?

ISBN: 9781921977886

RRP: \$16.95



### TEACHER NOTES

- What are the themes in this novel? As a class or in small groups, identify and list the themes.
- How would life be different for a working-class family as opposed to a rich high-society family in Victorian England and Australia?
- A number of paintings in Hightop House share their names with real paintings such as 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' and 'The Battle of Waterloo'. Perform a Google image search for these titles to gain an understanding of the atmosphere of the dining hall at Hightop House. How do you think this atmosphere would make the students feel? List some adjectives to describe these paintings and the atmosphere of the room.
- Research spirit photography and the photo of Mary Todd Lincoln. Where else has spirit photography appeared through history? Do you believe it is real or fake? What makes you think that?
- Bullying is a prominent theme in this book when Verity is attending Hightop House. What are some possible reasons a person might be a bully? What would you do if you saw someone else being bullied? What would you do if you were being bullied?

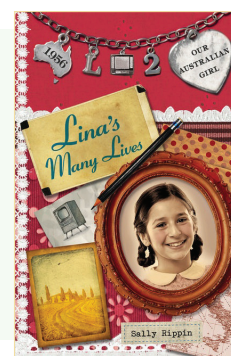
## LINA'S MANY LIVES (Our Australian Girl, Book 2)

SALLY RIPPIN

It's 1956 and Lina has won a scholarship to a wonderful girls' school. As hard as she tries, fitting into St Brigid's isn't easy – especially when she's the only Italian and the only student from a poor family. When she and her friend Mary have a wonderful idea, everything starts to fall into place – until the class bully gets involved and Lina's worlds collide. The author manages to strike the perfect balance between a school story of friendship and mischief, and an exploration of the difficulties and discrimination faced by migrants who came to Australia following WWII.

ISBN: 9780143307013

RRP \$14.95



### TEACHER NOTES

- Find illustrations of the cultural icons referred to in the story: Dawn Fraser; Audrey Hepburn and Marilyn Monroe (As the girls debated, which do you think has the better fashion sense?).
- Who were the bodgies and widgeys? (An extract from the film 'West Side Story' would provide a good illustration.)
- What role did Italy play in WWII? Why would Italy have supported Germany? As a result of this, how did many Australians feel about the Italians?
- Consider the typical dreams or aspirations of girls in the 1950s (p 6). What sorts of opportunities did girls have? What role were women expected to play in society?
- Why doesn't Lina want to let anyone know that she wants to be a writer?
- Why does Sarah react so nastily to discovering Lina's dream?
- In what way does pride cause Lina to behave in a manner that is out of character for her?
- In trying to protect her friendship with Mary, how does Lina almost destroy it?
- Do you think that Zio Mario will ultimately find work and be successful?
- How did the introduction of television to Australia in 1956 change people's lives?
- Stage a debate: 'That the introduction of television is the most significant piece of technological advancement.'
- What is meant by the title, 'Lina's many lives'?

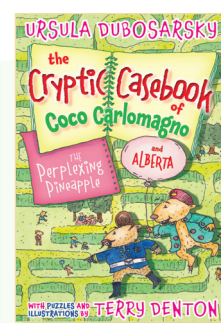
## THE CRYPTIC CASEBOOK OF COCO CARLOMAGNO (AND ALBERTA): THE PERPLEXING PINEAPPLE

URSULA DUBOSARSKY AND TERRY DENTON (Illustrator)

Buenos Aires' Chief of Police, Coco Carlomagno, is sure his office high in the Obelisco is haunted. Every day at the same time he sees a floating pineapple and every day he hears a terrible noise. What could it mean? Who could it be? There's only one guinea pig Coco can turn to help him in his hour of need: his logic-loving cousin, Alberta. Can Alberta help him unravel the mysteries of the perplexing pineapple?

ISBN: 9781743312575

RRP: \$12.99



### TEACHER NOTES

- Decorate your classroom with images of Buenos Aires, eg a map of the world with Buenos Aires marked, the famous Obelisco, parks in the city, and typical Argentinian foods. Play some Argentinian music to your class during reading or activity time.
- Coco writes a letter to Alberta that incorporates aspects of a rebus puzzle. Do some simple puzzles such as this by Googling rebus puzzles for young children. Now ask students, in groups of two, to 'decipher' Coco's letter. There is another rebus puzzle on p 42.
- Ask students to find the Spanish words in the story.
- Collect the words and put them on individual cards with a translation. Place cards on the walls around your classroom.
- Look at the picture on p 33 and find elements in the illustration that suggest Coco is terrified. Now turn to the illustration of the two chess players on p 52 and have students give reasons why they think these characters might be up to no good.
- Free downloadable puzzles will be available on the publisher's website in May ([www.allenandunwin.com](http://www.allenandunwin.com)). Just type in 'The Perplexing Pineapple' in the book search section for in-class activities.