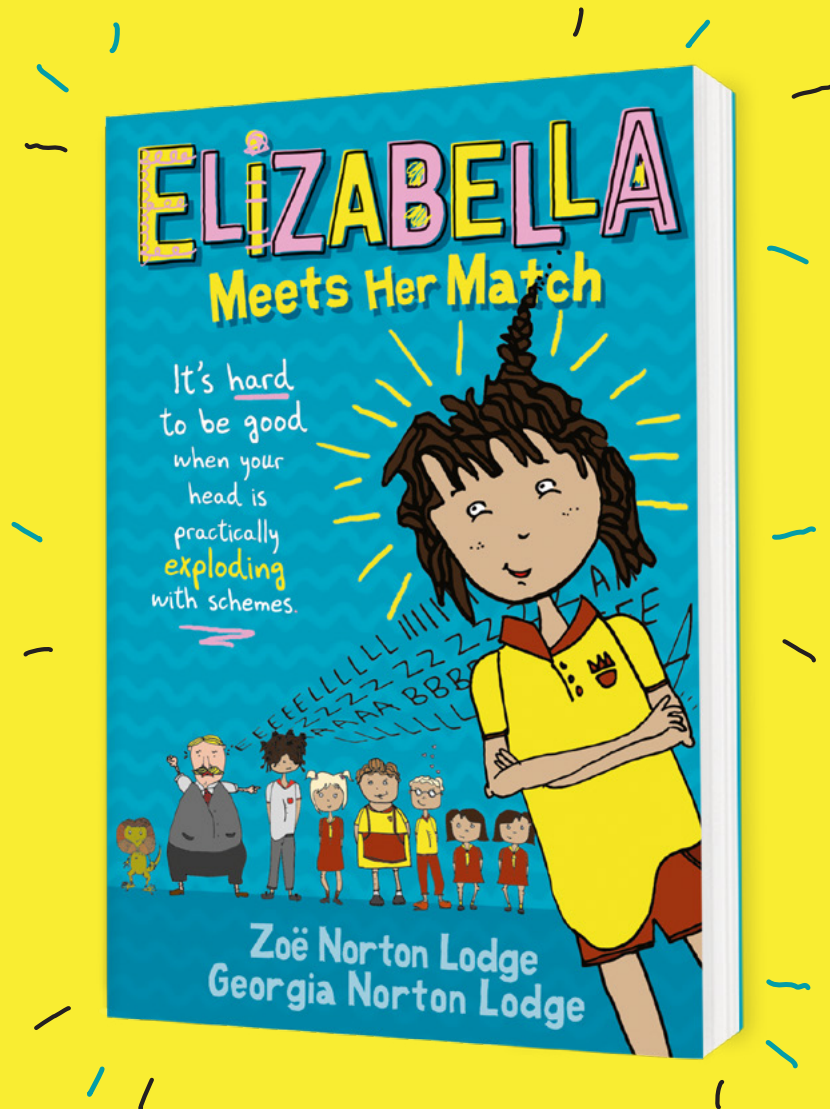


# ELIZABELLA

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & ACTIVITIES

It's hard  
to be good  
when your  
head is  
practically  
**exploding**  
with schemes.





It's hard to be good when your head is practically exploding with schemes! The hilarious Elizabethella series is middle-grade at its finest.

Elizabethella – ten and a quarter – is a Poet, Fixer of Fairytales and the biggest prankster in the history of Bilby Creek Primary. And when her plans involve making a swimming pool in the playground without consulting a single teacher, the students are behind her every step of the way. But what happens when Minnie, an even bigger prankster, shows up? Can Bilby Creek handle them both? And more importantly, can they handle each other?

# The Creators!

**ZOË NORTON LODGE** is a writer, actress and television presenter. She has been a writer/presenter on ABC TV's *The Checkout* for the past five years, and has written and performed in various Chaser television shows. She often guest appears on other ABC shows including *The Book Club* and *Insiders* (Talking Pictures) and has also guest hosted programs on ABC Radio Sydney. She performs regularly at writers' festivals and other live events. She is co-creator of Story Club, the live storytelling night, ABC TV show & podcast. Her work is widely published in Australian anthologies including *Best Australian Stories*, *Women of Letters*, *Best Australian Comedy* and many more. Zoë always wanted to write for children; she loves stories that are inventive, surprising, smart, magical and a little bit naughty. *Elizabetha Meets Her Match* is her debut children's novel.



By day **GEORGIA NORTON LODGE** leads her graphic design team at an award-winning interior design and branding agency. By night she is an illustrator, married to her side project *Georgia Draws a House* where she delights people with deliveries of their hand-drawn homes. She's also Zoë's younger sister. This is their second book together.

The tween market is crowded with male characters. Why do readers need a female heroine?

For starters, it's so important that girls have a range of female heroines to instil within them a sense of their own power. But for the world to be a better place everyone needs more female heroines. I just had a baby boy and I want nothing more than for his universe to be full of them. I've started by dedicating this book about an incredibly naughty ten year old girl to him.

Are you Elizabella, or did you want to be her?

I would say I was an aspiring Elizabella, but I never quite got there. I did always love writing like Elizabella, though. Apparently when I was in kindergarten I came home with a merit award declaring proudly that I was "Arthur of the Month", which my parents have never let me forget.

# Q&A With Zoë!

Elizabella likes to write poems. Can you tell us why people will love Elizabella, with your answer in poem-form?

What's there to like about Elizabella?

She's knotty and schemey, she cooks like Nigella

She's a little bit grimy and incredibly rhymey

And she has a crush on a Huck with his shoes that are slimy

"No I don't!" she protests, sounding over-rehearsed

'Cause she likes him so much she commits it to verse

There's Dad Martin, Bro Toddberry, a Lizard called Larry

There's Ava and Evie and Sandy and Daphne

There's Poor Mr Gobblefrump, feeling lovesick

There's frenemy Minnie where the plot gets real thick

And all of the while Elizabella will write

Poems and Fixytales all day and all night

And one day she will be Shakespeare but better

Instead of reworking histories, she'll fix Cinderella

And she'll give you a Sorry Poem instead of a sonnet

But make her write another love poem and she'll vomit.

How did you come up with Elizabella?

I honestly sat down in the bath one day and thought really hard about who I wished I was when I was a kid. Ambitious, fearless, questioning authority, popular, creative. Then I thought about all the things I hated as a kid. Being embarrassed, making mistakes, feeling jealous. Then I mixed them together with a pile of dirt and knotty hair and out came Elizabella.

What's the naughtiest thing you ever did in school?

I did actually once forge a note from my high school principal to one of my teachers saying that he needed to see her in her office immediately to discuss some "very serious matters". He was extremely unimpressed with me after a very confusing meeting with her (whatever - I maintain he deserved it!). I also once successfully bribed my English teacher into upgrading my essay mark with a skim latte and Portuguese tart ...

If you could pull off any prank in school, what would it be and why?

It's ambitious. It would involve the cooperation of the entire student body, and some mainstream media outlets. But it would be great if you could convince the entire teaching staff that there was a new public holiday (let's call it, I dunno, something boring and believable - Rest Day) so that one Monday (Rest Day) none of them came to school and the kids could do whatever they wanted in the school for a whole day. That would be brilliant!

How did you find writing for children instead of adults?

Often when I have tried to write for adults, I wind up appealing to children. *The Checkout* is very popular among kids, and even my first book of short stories *Almost Sincerely* was read by a lot of young people (mildly disturbing given some of the themes!). Essentially, I think my humour and general reverence for the ridiculous make writing for children my natural wheelhouse. Also, I'm about as mature as a ten year old so that helps.

What is Elizabella's message to readers?

Of course I would love for Elizabella to shine a light on her readers' inner power and strength. To show how anyone can be wild and brave, and that it's okay to question the rules. But it was also important to me for Elizabella to show us that sometimes when we're feeling jealous or angry or upset we may let those feelings dictate our behaviour and that it's important to learn to forgive ourselves when that happens. After all, we're all just silly humans doing our best.

Which kids' book characters inspired you growing up?

I was fairly obsessed with Paul Jennings, Morris Gleitzman and of course Roald Dahl. I always loved the way the characters would teeter on the edge of acceptable behaviour in Jennings's stories. I loved the depth of Gleitzman's characters, especially Rowena in *Blabber Mouth*. And I remain in complete awe of Roald Dahl's ability to conjure magic in every sentence, and his frankly enviable ability to marry the absurd and fabulous with heart-aching poignancy.

Did your experience hosting Story Club influence your writing?

Absolutely. Story Club, if you're not aware, is a live comedy storytelling night (and podcast) where people tell true stories around a theme. I have been running it every month with Ben Jenkins for over a decade. We started it at uni and just, well, I guess we forgot to stop! As a result (and with some breaks here and there) I have basically written a new story every month for ten years. The best thing about Story Club is that you know straightaway whether your joke is funny or not. Laughter is amazing, and its absence tells a cruel truth!

How is writing a book different to writing for TV?

I find writing for TV and writing a book very different experiences. With TV, especially *The Checkout* (which is a consumer affairs comedy show if you don't know it), you have a lot of masters. What's the message? Is it clear? There are matters of legality and editorial policies to be considered. Then there's the budget, resources, the very quick turnaround timeframe. Whereas writing a book you have this sort of terrifying freedom, you really are only limited by your imagination. It's also much harder because there are interweaving stories that stretch across a huge manuscript and need to be kept in check – unlike writing for *The Checkout* where the stories are short and revolve around a few simple messages. And where TV is usually highly collaborative, writing a book is a very isolated experience – until that glorious moment when you get to hand it over to your amazing editors, who make everything better!

What's the best apology you've ever given or received?

One of my Story Club stories is called *An Open Letter of Apology to Georgia Norton Lodge Volume 1*, which is about the time I accidentally almost killed my little sister when she was three and I was nine. Every time I tell the story I make her come and sit on stage with me while I read it to everyone.

Your sister Georgia illustrated *Elizabella*. How did you find working together?

Believe it or not, surprisingly trouble free! Georgia and I have always gotten along well (I suppose possibly with the exception of the time I tried to kill her – see above) and because of the six-year age gap between us, the older we get, the closer we become. We've always wanted to do something like this together, and luckily seem to have inherited complementary, rather than competitive, skills.

What's up next for you and *Elizabella*?

In our next book *Elizabella* is taking on a huge task when a big corporation tries to take over the Bilby Creek Primary tuckshop, which would put Miss Duck out of a job! *Elizabella* doesn't know a lot about business, but she knows what people like to eat and she'll do whatever it takes to restore the gastronomical status quo.

# Meet the Characters!

## Elizabella

Elizabella, ten and a quarter, has a giant brain that is swarming with schemes and plots and poems. Her favourite food is a Regular Bread House, even though she's never tried it and she's not 100% sure if it's a real thing.

## Martin

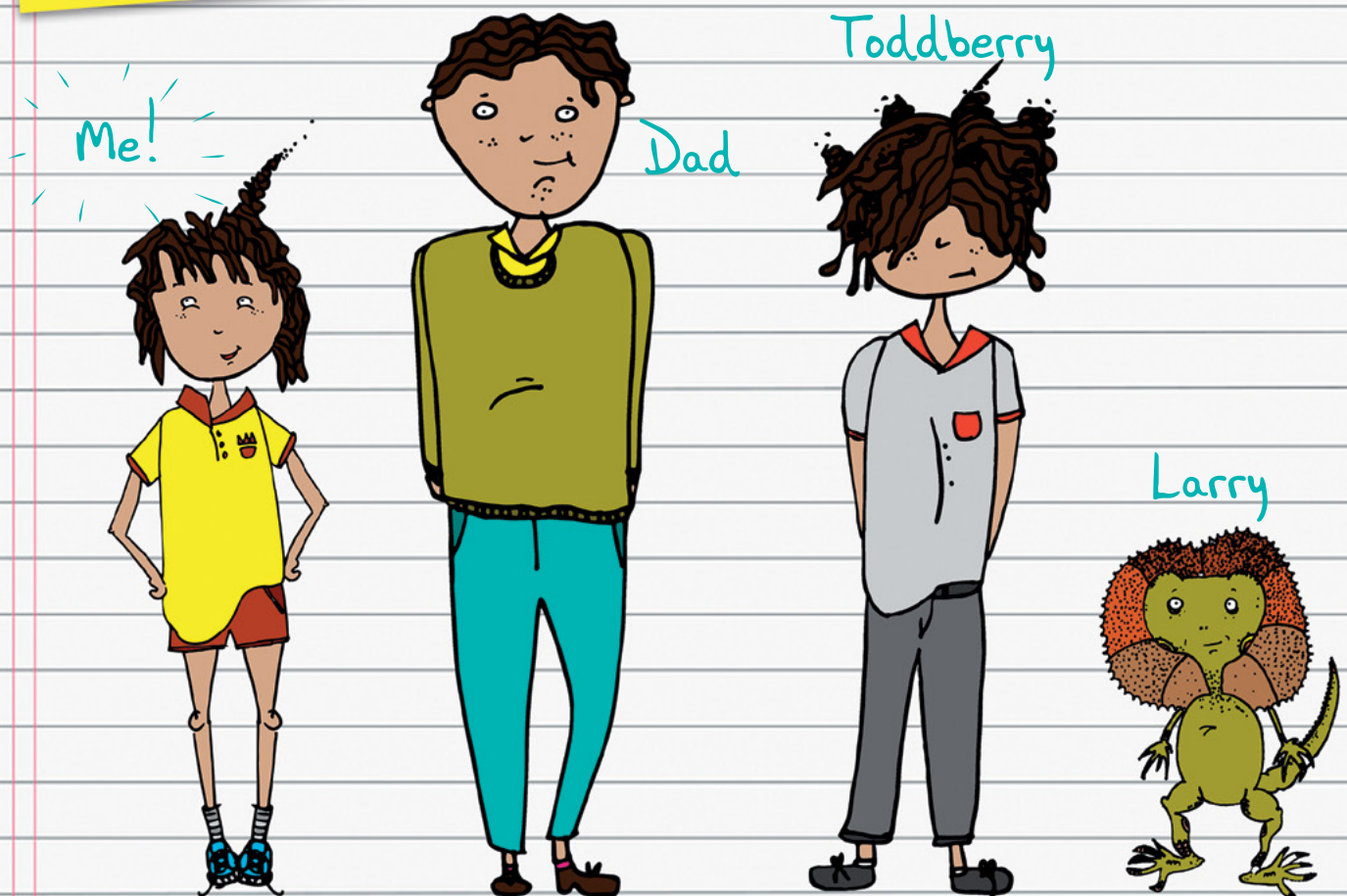
Martin is Elizabella and Toddberry's father. He loves tending to his garden and when his head is full of problems, he unloads on the worms in Squiggly Manor. Martin is a widower and hopes to find love again one day.

## Toddberry

Toddberry is really smart and knows heaps of stuff but nobody can tell so what's the point. His hair covers his face like a set of curtains, which makes it pretty hard to tell what he's thinking or feeling. If Toddberry played poker he'd have the best poker face, but he prefers to play Fierce Frogs IV.

## Larry the Frilled Neck Lizard

*I think, therefore, I am Lizard.* Larry is a philosopher who is always contemplating the meaning of life and the very nature of existence itself. He loves listening to people's problems and offering thoughtful advice, but he can't make his lizard mouth speak English so he's never sure if anyone understands him.



Mr Gobblefrump



Huck



Miss Duck



Minnie



**Mr Gobblefrump**

If Mr Gobblefrump made an online dating profile it would say: *Hello! I'm Chester Gobblefrump, a humble Acting Principal who loves The Rules, Poetry and Cooking. One day I hope to find someone to share my lovely Bicycle Built for Two.*

**Huck**

Huck is ten years old and wears glasses on his eyes and slime green shoes on his feet. He's not just Elizabella's classmate, he's one of her oldest friends. In fact, they're so close that the back fences of their houses almost touch each other.

**Miss Duck**

Miss Duck runs the Bilby Creek Tuckshop. She's a foodie who loves making treats for the children almost as much as she loves eating at all of Bilby Creek's fine dining establishments.

**Minnie**

Minnie is the newest enrolment at Bilby Creek Primary. All the way from Beijing, Minnie's brain is just as giant as Elizabella's and it's just as full of brilliant plans. Minnie loves to push the limits of everything, including how long hair can be (hers is as long as an entire kindy kid).



# Discussion Questions



- What are the different types of poems that Elizabetha writes? Pick your favourite poem and write one in the same style.
- When Elizabetha gives an apology she does it via poem. Why do you think she does this?
- Some text in the books is designed in a different font, see pages 78 and 79 for examples. Why do you think the book is designed this way? How would this affect the reader? Write a short story on a word processor and experiment with using different fonts, sizes and colours to create a varied reading experience.
- Elizabetha feels jealous that her friends are interested in Minnie. Why do you think she feels this way? How do you think you would react in a similar situation?
- Elizabetha creates recipes throughout the book. For example, extreme fairy bread, made with jam instead of butter (pages 90-91). Create your own extreme recipe, making sure to include an ingredients list, steps for the method and an illustration to show the finished product.
- Elizabetha and her mum would change parts of fairytales to make them better. They would call these *fixytales*. Come up with a *fixytale* of your own based on a fairytale you know (or find one in your school library).
- Elizabetha attends the Bilby Creek Fete. Plan what you would like a fete to look like at your school. Present it to the class.



# Elizabetha Vocab



Zoë Norton Lodge uses lots of interesting words in *Elizabetha Meets Her Match*. Find the meaning of each of the following words either by using contextual clues or looking them up in a dictionary. Add any interesting or unfamiliar words to the list.

Entrepreneur (p11)

Emanating (p29)

Ambitious (p48)

Virtuously (p69)

Amnesia (p76)

Inscrutable (p77)

Decorum (p102)

Ghostwriters (p115)

Empathy (p125)

# Sayings



A number of sayings are used in *Elizabetha Meets Her Match*. What do you think these sayings mean? Can you find any others in the book?

**This wasn't Mr Gobblefrump's first rodeo. (p31)**

**Her number was up. (p38)**

**Waste not, want not. (p54)**

**Taken leave of his senses. (p10)**

# Elizabetha Word Search

m d y t o d d b e r r y z n d  
l h d f e d y r r a l e s p g  
s b l f a h i x f y l o a m c  
f w a e b i l b y q c y d j o  
b d p f m j r o y k m z h g u  
e u m j j o n y l l e o p z o  
m q u a k o n w w m r c a w n  
b m r n e t q y d r b g r v u  
f r f p o e m o a w e z i t z  
v u e u p r a n k s q n w g m  
q e l i z a b e l l a f k b i  
p c b w d r e u w a j u a m n  
s r b b e v k z k t a b y k n  
i s o x r f k x h h a i k u i  
b p g p f i c c x j b p h e e



**ELIZABELLA  
TODDBERRY  
LARRY  
MINNIE  
GOBBLEFRUMP  
POEM**

**LEMONY  
HAIKU  
BILBY  
PRANKS  
FAIRYWREN**



# A messy mix of Matilda, Pippi Longstocking and Horrible Harriet!



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WALKER BOOKS

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