

# From Above The Clouds

## TEACHERS NOTES



Written by:	Kezia Brett
Illustrated by:	Martina Heiduczek
RRP:	\$24.95 inc. GST
ISBN:	978-0-646-97602-0
Year level:	K to Y4
Format:	Hardcover picture book
Number Of Pages:	32
Publisher:	Fierce Grace Publishing

### Book Overview:

'Can I have a story?' Grace asks.

Grace's parents tell the magical tale of how as a sick baby, her determined spirit and the love of family and friends, helped guide her into the world. And with their support, Grace recovers and returns home with her mum and dad, full of life.

Beautifully illustrated, this lyrical and uplifting story traverses the globe and celebrates the coming together of a family and community when a baby is born. It explores the love, hopes, and dreams that accompany new life – and the universality of this experience, since time began.

### Key Curriculum areas:

English  
Humanities and social sciences  
Health  
Visual art  
Social and emotional learning

### Themes:

Family  
Community  
Love  
Hope  
Dreams  
Overcoming adversity  
Courage  
Determination

### **About the Author – Kezia Brett**

Kezia writes for big people and small people, big screens and small screens, web pages and now... paper pages! *From Above the Clouds* is Kezia's debut children's book.

Kezia's professional career has taken her around the world, from managing a pub in country England, to working with Red Cross in remote communities across Asia/Pacific.

Kezia lives on the Mornington Peninsula. She started Fierce Grace Publishing to create quality stories that entertain and expand young minds.

### **About the Illustrator – Martina Heiduczek**

Martina grew up in a small village on the Baltic Sea in Germany. Here you could find her mostly galloping through the forests with flying piggy tails on her Shetland pony, drawing or reading.

These days she is an illustrator and graphic designer and lives in Queensland.

Martina's illustrations are a mixture of digital and traditional media. With a passion for colour and textures she works with layers of scanned materials, coloured pencils, watercolour and gouache.

Her works are inspired by nature, people, places, and the emotionally moving and silly things she sees out there... Magic is everywhere!

### **Inspiration for the story**

*From Above the Clouds* was born from a personal tragedy in author Kezia Brett's life – a high-risk pregnancy followed by the loss of her baby daughter.

It was important to Kezia to turn such loss into something positive, and so while inspired by this sad time, *From Above the Clouds* is its own story – one that is uplifting and has a happy ending.

During this challenging time, Kezia found that friends from all over the world – Asia, the Pacific, the UK, and the USA – offered their support. And while from different countries and belief systems, their message was the same: one of love and hope.

Kezia says, "This experience made me reflect on the community involved in bringing life into the world, and how cycles of birth, death and love are the same everywhere. It also taught me about the resilience of the human spirit and the personal growth that comes from difficult times. I wanted to create a book that teaches this to children in an entertaining way, and supports them to develop empathy, resilience, and community connectedness."

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION POINTS

Activities and discussion points can be used for small group activities or whole class activities. They can be adapted to suit all year levels.

### ENGLISH

- Discuss the title of the book: *From Above the Clouds*. What do you think is above the clouds? Why do you think Grace is sitting on the cloud on the cover? Discuss.
- The book uses many repetitive words. Why do you think the author made this choice? How do they add to the story?
- Choose ten of the repetitive words and write a short story that incorporates these words: please, yes, sending, guiding, hoping, laughing, carrying, dancing, kicking, believing, blowing, chanting, drumming, wishing, helping, singing, tumbling, happy, struggling, willing, whispering, dreaming, bringing, blessing, waiting, loving, fighting, grateful.
- Do you like being told a story at night? Allow students to share some stories they are told by parents, grandparents etc.
- Provide students with the opportunity to share the stories they have been told about when they were younger. Share as drawing, written or oral.
- Take turns describing/retelling the story as if you were explaining it to someone who hasn't read it yet. What do you think are the most important parts of the story? Why do you think that?

### HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

- The book shows several different cultural groups. What do you think are some of the cultures or countries visited?
- The book includes mythical characters – such as faeries and angels. What are other mythical beings or creatures you know of? Why do you think mythical characters are common in stories?

### HEALTH

- Grace is sick. What do you think are some of the factors that help her to get well again?
- Grace's parents talk about "*Believing that you would make it.*" What role do you think attitude plays when somebody is sick?

## VISUAL ARTS

- Discuss how the illustrator has depicted the wind throughout the book.
- What style has the illustrator used – realistic, cartoon, artistic, fantasy? Do you like this style? Why do you think the illustrator made this choice?
- Which is your favourite picture and why?
- Some of the illustrations incorporate several different elements. Choose four different objects, actions or people, and create your own cohesive piece of art that includes all four.

## SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

- Discuss making a wish and what emotions go along with making a wish. What are the emotions of it being fulfilled or not?
- The first page Grace is looking at a photo album. Do you have a favourite photo at home that has a special story? Discuss.
- Who is looking at the photo album on the final page? Why is this significant? What is beside her? Discuss.
- Ask students to bring in a special photo and share the story that belongs to that photo.
- Grace is supported by a big community from across the world. Draw a picture of all the people in your community.
- Tell a story about a time where you were determined or persevered at something. What did you do to not give up?
- After reading the story why do you think the author may have written this story?
- What are some of the emotions you feel when you follow Grace's journey? For each emotion, think of a new example of why someone might feel that way.
- Play "emotion charades". Using the list of emotions from the previous activity, have students take turns at using their facial expressions and body language to act out an emotion for the other students to guess.
- The monks in the mountains use chanting as a type of meditation. Chants or repeating a phrase or mantra can focus the mind on the present moment. As a class, come up with a positive mantra, and complete a guided meditation. Say the mantra out loud or internally.

### **Teachers Notes prepared by Fierce Grace Publishing**

*These notes may be reproduced free of charge for use and study within schools but they may not be reproduced (either in whole or in part) and offered for commercial sale.*