

DRAWN ONWARD

MEG MCKINLAY AND ANDREW FRAZER

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YEAR LEVEL: Y4–7

ABOUT THE BOOK

From the masterful pen of multi-award-winning Meg McKinlay and dynamic new illustrator Andrew Frazer, *Drawn Onward* explores shifting perspective and the inner voice. The text is a palindrome that takes readers from the glass half empty – ‘There is no light on the horizon and it is foolish to think you can change anything at all’ – to the glass half full: ‘You can change anything at all. It is foolish to think there is no light on the horizon.’

This powerful picture book for older readers is a call to hope that cleverly illustrates how the very same situation can be viewed quite differently depending on your perspective.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Meg McKinlay is a children’s writer and poet whose work ranges from picture books through to young adult fiction. Her publications include the Prime Minister’s Literary Award-winning *A Single Stone*, and CBCA-shortlisted *No Bears* and *Duck for a Day*, among many others. Meg grew up in central Victoria, and spent her childhood roaming through the bush, striking it rich at least once a week on a vein of fool’s gold. Raised in a TV-free household, she was a bookish kid, in love with words, excited by dictionaries and spelling bees. These days she lives near the ocean in Fremantle and spends her days writing, reading and rambling. She is always busy cooking up more books.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Andrew Frazer is a multidisciplinary artist from Bunbury, Western Australia. Inspired by stories of hope, despair, redemption, pain and forgiveness, Andrew’s narrative-based art draws on experiences that connect us all. Andrew’s arts practice ranges from public murals to illustration, and from hand lettering and design to arts management.

THEMES

- Mental health and wellbeing
- Emotional intelligence
- Positive vs. negative attitudes
- Self-empowerment

AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

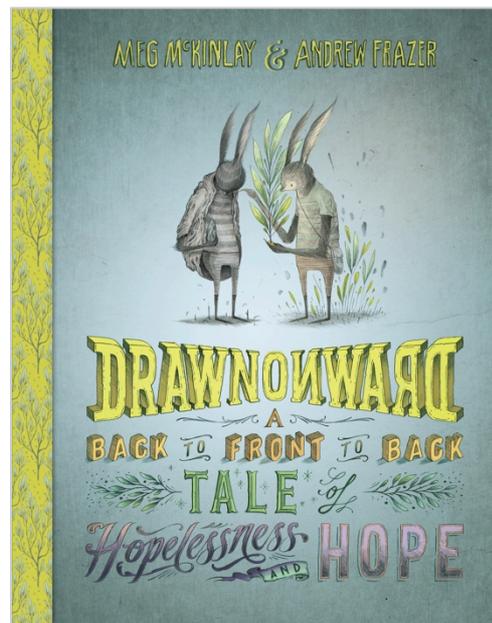
Y4–7 English

Y4–7 Visual Art

Y4–7 Mental Health and Wellbeing

USEFUL WEBSITES

- Author’s website: megmckinlay.com
- Illustrator’s website: andrewfrazerdesigns.com
- *Youth Beyond Blue*: www.youthbeyondblue.com
- *R U OK?*: www.ruok.org.au/every-day-resources



CLASSROOM IDEAS

Discussion questions

1. Examine the book's cover. How does the mirrored title relate to the book's themes?
2. A palindrome is a word or phrase that reads the same backwards as forwards, e.g. madam, kayak, racecar. In pairs, how many different palindromes can you think of?
3. An antonym is a word opposite in meaning to another, e.g. true–false, young–old. In pairs, create a list of ten antonym pairs.
4. Define the following terms: hope, despair, optimism, pessimism.
5. Using a Venn diagram model, compare and contrast the character's beliefs when he has a mindset of despair and a mindset of hope.
6. What difference do you think positive thinking can have on people's lives?
7. Why is it important to talk about our emotions?
8. What themes stood out to you in this book? What message/s did you take away from the story?

Creative writing

1. Author Meg McKinlay uses the same words to establish two very different sets of meaning. How is sentence structure used in the book to create a shift in meaning? Find two examples. (You may wish to type out the text to see how it has been constructed.)
2. The text is addressed directly to 'you', the reader. Why do you think McKinlay chose to write it in the second-person point of view? What effect does this have? Who do you think the narrator is?
3. *You are someone who could make any kind of difference.* What kind of difference would you like to make in the world? Write a short story about someone making a difference – in a big way or small.
4. What does *light on the horizon* mean? Write a recount of a time when you initially felt hopeless, but managed to recover a positive attitude and achieve your goal. What helped you feel hopeful again?
5. (*For older students*) Rhetorical devices are techniques an author or speaker uses to persuade their audience. Identify the following rhetorical devices in *Drawn Onward*: metaphor, pathos, ethos, repetition, amplification, ecphrasis. Use these techniques to write a persuasive text of your own.

Visual literacy

1. Compare and contrast the two characters on the front cover. What style has illustrator Andrew Frazer used to draw them – realistic, cartoon or abstract? What do you think about this style?
2. What does the term 'symbolism' mean? How has Frazer used symbolism in the illustrations? Consider:
 - the colour palette and the ways it changes as the story progresses.
 - the object that the dark character is holding and how it changes from page to page.
3. Why do you think the dark character doesn't have distinguishable facial features?
4. How does Frazer use the character's body language to communicate emotion? Have you ever felt a crushing sadness like the dark character? What made you feel this way? What strategies helped you?
5. The art of hand lettering involves the intricate, decorative drawing of letters, often combining different letter styles and sizes. What is the effect of the book's hand lettering? What words are given emphasis?

Mental health

1. Create a definition for the following terms: depression, resilience, self-esteem. Visit the website *Youth Beyond Blue* to view support available for young people suffering from depression and/or anxiety.
2. *Keep a journal*: Writing can be a therapeutic and private way for you to process your emotions.
3. *Worries list*: Make a list of things that worry you. Is there another way of looking at these? What advice would you give a friend who showed you such a list?
4. *Positivity list*: Make a list of all the things that help you stay optimistic, e.g. spending time with friends, going for a run, swimming in the ocean.
5. *Paper chains*: As a class, have each student randomly select the name of a class member. They should then write on a strip of paper a note to that student describing something they admire about them. Connect all the strips to make a class paper chain to read and display.

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