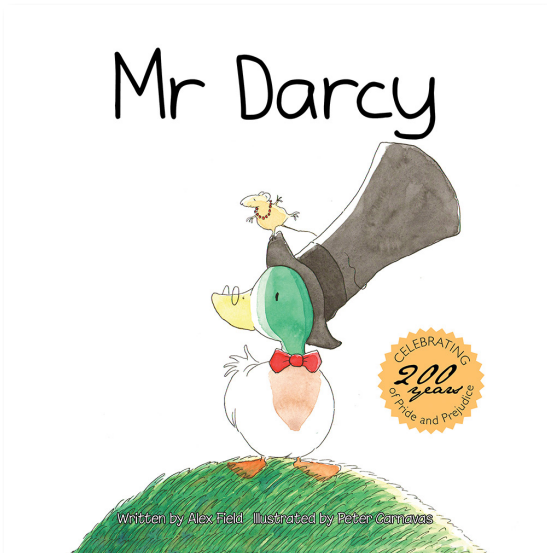


TEACHERS' NOTES

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Mr Darcy

Written by Alex Field

Illustrated by Peter Carnavas

Synopsis

Mr Darcy is a rather reserved and gentle duck. He lives in the best park and feels very important – too important to accept an invitation to tea. Sadly, this makes him lonely.

Fortunately, he soon discovers that he loves and needs his friends.

Author Motivation

The author is a great admirer of Jane Austen's novels, particularly *Pride and Prejudice*, which was written 200 years ago (1813). Alex was inspired to write the story after one of her friends named their family duck, Mr Darcy.

Author Background Information

Alex grew up in London, but frequently visited Hampshire, Jane Austen's home and also home to her grandparents. As a teenager, she read all of Jane Austen's novels and still goes back to them. Alex now lives in Sydney with her husband and five children. She works in publishing and has written for numerous newspapers and magazines.

Illustrator Background Information

Peter creates picture books for children and grown-ups to enjoy. He writes simple yet poignant tales, accompanied by whimsical illustrations, which combine to create layers of meaning for the reader. His books include *Jessica's Box*, *Last Tree in the City*, *The Great Expedition* and his latest picture book, *The Children Who Loved Books*, a warm and moving celebration of books and the ways in which they bring us together.

Peter's work has been nominated for many awards, including the Queensland Premier's Literary Award.



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The Children's Book Council of Australia Crichton Award, Speech Pathology Australia's Book of the Year Award, and he has been a finalist in the SCBWI Crystal Kite Award for three years running. His books have been translated into many languages, including German, Italian, Portuguese and Dutch.

Peter was honoured to be a National Year of Reading Ambassador in 2012 and continues his role as a Love2Read National Ambassador in 2013.

Peter lives on the Sunshine Coast with his wife, two daughters and a scruffy dog that occasionally escapes.

Educational Applicability

The theme of this book is family life and tolerance about different lifestyles, persistence in achieving creative goals, having an unlimited imagination and being able to solve problems.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Before Reading the Book

1. Share with the children a time when you needed help, but didn't ask for help. Ask the children to share examples from school and from home.
2. Have the children heard of the word 'pride'. What does it mean to them?
3. Discuss the hats worn by the characters Mr Darcy, Bingley, Lizzy and her sisters. What are they called? How did people dress 200 years ago when *Pride and Prejudice* was first published?
4. Why would you decline a birthday invitation?

After Reading the Book

1. Mr Darcy could have asked for help a number of times. Can you remember what he was doing when he said 'no' to offers of help?
2. Do you think Mr Darcy was proud at the end of the story?
3. What do you think the different animals and their clothing tell you about their character?
4. Why do you think Mr Darcy decides to accept Lizzy's invitation to tea?

ACTIVITIES

Design

Draw a picture of a duck and put a hat on him/her – it can be any type of hat.

Language

Mr Darcy uses polite language. Write down words that you can use that are polite, for example: please and thank you.

Emotions

Mr Darcy goes through a range of emotions in the story. How can you tell when he is sad? Note the colour used by the illustrator. See if you can find Mr Darcy when he is happy or perhaps when he is embarrassed – again, look at the colour used by the illustrator. Can you draw Mr Darcy with one of these emotions?



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Creative Writing

Do you have a pet at home? Perhaps you can make up a story about your pet using the emotions discussed above.



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