

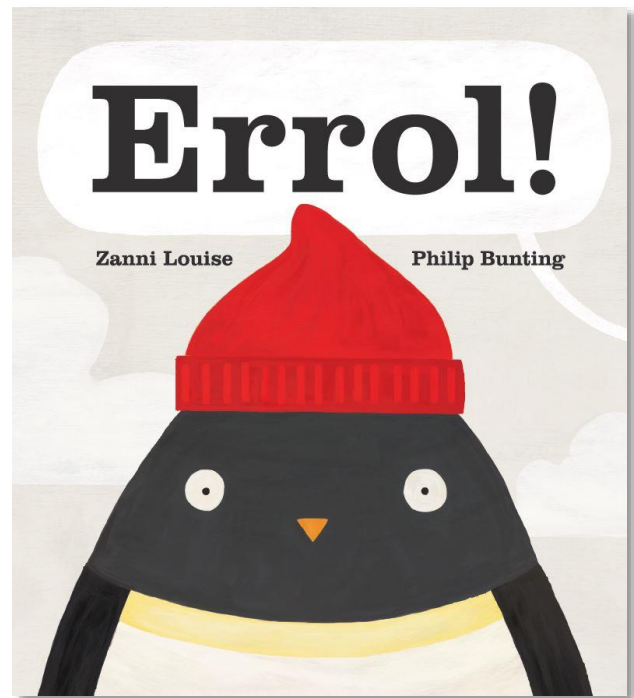
# Errol!

Author

Zanni Louise

Illustrator

Philip Bunting



## Synopsis

Errol is a cheeky and adventurous young penguin, and when he is reluctant to follow his mother, she tries the age-old trick of counting to three and announcing she is leaving. This inspires Errol to start moving...but not towards his mother. Instead, while her back is turned, the intrepid Errol tunnels through the snow and embarks on a series of adventures under the ice. Clutching Errol's abandoned hat to her chest, Errol's mother is lying on the snow bemoaning his loss when Errol finally reappears and cheerfully announces to her that if she does not come with him right now he will count to three. Delighted at his reappearance, his mother's reaction makes this playful story both heartwarming and benignly reassuring to the very young reader.

## About the Author

Zanni Louise is a CBCA Notable Australian children's book author. *Errol* is her first picture book published by Scholastic Press. Zanni lives in Northern NSW with her husband, two girls and a cat called Mary Feather Flower.

## About the Illustrator

Philip Bunting is a designer, illustrator and creative director. During 10 years in the creative industries, he has seen his work published around the globe; and designed more magazines, websites, identities, books and apps than he could poke a stick at.

## Themes

Adventure, parent/child relationships, loss and fear, love, family, humour, patience, stubbornness, independence.

## Writing Style

Zanni Louise captures in her writing the very essence of a frustrated parent, with Errol's mother using both words and tone that generations of children will be familiar with. Consisting entirely of dialogue

between Errol and his mother, the text is minimal and clear, setting the scene without any extraneous information. The humour is subtle and situational, resulting from both the contrast between the silent Errol of the opening scenes, and his echoing of his mother's words in the final pages.

### Illustration Style

Bunting's artwork complements the minimal and direct nature of the textual narrative throughout, while expanding upon as well as complementing the plot progression. The visual narrative is essential to understanding the overall story arc, as there are several scenes without text where the illustrations convey detailed information regarding Errol's activities. Bunting's backgrounds have been rendered in light neutral tones appropriate to the polar environment, while the rounded figures incorporate black and dark greys as well. Accessories such as clothing and groceries (as well as penguin feet and beaks) are all in hues found in the red/orange/yellow spectrum. The apparent simplicity of the cartoonish figures complements the innocence and straightforward nature of the textual narrative, whilst also containing textural complexity and key narrative details that are discernible upon closer examination.

## TEACHER NOTES

- 1) As a class look at the cover of the book, discuss what you can learn from it, and predict what might happen in the story. Some things to include in your discussion might be:
  - Where do you think *Errol* might be set? Why?
  - Who do you think Errol is - what type of animal might he be?
  - What kinds of things might happen to Errol in the story?
  - After reading the back cover, how do you think Errol might respond? Why do you think this?
  - What could be some problems Errol encounters during the story?
  - What might be some fun things that small penguins can do?
- 2) What did Errol's mother expect him to do when she counted to three? Why do you think she expected this?
- 3) Has your mother (or another adult in your life) ever counted to three? Why did they count? What were they expecting you to do? What did you do and why?
- 4) As a class discuss how Errol's mother feels during the story. Some things to include in your discussion are:
  - How do you think Errol's mother felt when he disappeared?
  - How do you know how she is feeling? Why might she be feeling like this?
  - What is Errol's mother's reaction to finding his hat?
  - Why does she lie down holding the hat?
  - What else might Errol's mother have done?
  - How does Errol's mother feel when he reappears?
  - How do we know this?
- 5) When Errol vanishes his mother lies down and clutches his hat. This is probably not a good thing to do if you lose someone when you are out in town or grocery shopping. As a class discuss what you

- should do if you get separated from your family or the adults looking after you when you are out in public. Some things to include in your discussion are:
- When should you stay where you are and when should you go somewhere else?
  - Where should you go?
  - Who should you ask for help?
  - Who should you not ask for help?
  - Who can you trust and who should you be wary of?
  - What information can you give to people who are helping you?
  - Do you know your parents' or caregivers' phone numbers?
  - Do you know your full name and how to spell it?
  - Do you know your address?
- 6) In small groups role-play what to do if you get lost or lose your adults in public. Practice asking for help from safe adults and telling people your phone number.
- 7) What sorts of groceries do you think Errol's mother might have in her shopping wheelie-bag?
- Why do you think this?
  - Look closely at the picture of the spilt groceries - what do you think they are?
  - What sort of things do you think that penguins would buy if they could really go grocery shopping? Why do you think this?
  - What do you and your family buy when you go grocery shopping? What would you like to buy?
  - Make a grocery wish-list of things that you would like bought the next time your family does grocery shopping. What meals could you make from these items? Would they be healthy? Share your wish-list with the class.
  - Draw a picture of something that you think a penguin would like to buy at a grocery store, and write a caption explaining why you think it would appeal to a penguin.
- 8) Research penguins. In the school library or online look up information about the lifecycle, habitat, and habits of penguins. In small groups, or as a class, make a poster or wall display showcasing what you have found. Some information you might want to include in your poster includes:
- Where do penguins live?
  - What do penguins eat?
  - How do penguins look after their babies?
  - When are the babies born?
  - What preys on penguins?
  - How many types of penguins are there?
  - How big are penguins?
  - How do penguins swim?
  - Why can't penguins fly?
  - Do polar bears eat penguins? Why/Why not?
- 9) As a class write a poem titled 'Under the Ice' about life in the Antarctic (or Arctic) ocean. You can make it rhyme, or you might like to try your hand at blank verse. Be sure to think about what it looks like, smells like, feels like, and sounds like to the polar marine life. Also try to include information about what they might want and what they might fear.
- 10) Visit a zoo where there are penguins, or a penguin colony if you are lucky enough to live near one.

- 11) Look at the page that shows all of Errol's adventures under the ice. As a class discuss where he goes, and what he does. Some things to include in your discussion are:
- What does Errol do?
  - Who does Errol visit?
  - Where does he go?
  - How can we tell what is happening to Errol?
  - What else do you think could have happened? Why do you think this?
- 12) Using an old shoebox from home, make a diorama of an Antarctic ice scene. Paint the inside of the box to look like the Antarctic waters and ice shelf, and use modelling clay or play dough to sculpt Antarctic animals. You can use crumpled crepe paper to create crinkly blue waves, and glue salt to cardboard to make snow covered ice-floes.
- 13) As a class, paint an under-ice ocean scene for a wall-display or mural.
- Place blank pieces of A4 paper on the floor or a large table, lined up neatly next to each other.
  - Across the top of all the pages draw a single long wavy line to represent the underside of the ice-sheet.
  - Individually, on a single piece of paper, paint a picture of something that might be happening under the ice, being careful to make sure that the edges of your ice sheet match the wavy line.
  - Assemble all the individual paintings into a single long under-ice mural, and hang it on the classroom or hallway wall.
- 14) Act out the story of Errol, and all the places he goes and things that he does. Perform this for another class or at assembly.
- 15) Where else could Errol have gone and what might he have done that isn't shown in the book? Draw a picture of a further adventure of Errol, and write a caption sharing what he is doing and why.
- 16) If you could dig a hole and go all sorts of interesting places, where would you like to go and what would you like to do there? Using the picture where Errol embarks on his adventures for inspiration, draw an imaginative adventure map of your own showing some of the things you would like to do and see. Share your map with your class, and write a brief paragraph describing your adventures.