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Recommended for: 7–11 years

Themes: Friendship, family, self-confidence, anxiety, performance

Applicable to learning areas: English language, literacy and literature, visual literacy

Summary

Stevie Louise was introduced to us in last year's bestselling *Drum Roll Please, It's Stevie Louise*. She is an entrepreneur (that's like a businessperson), an entertainer (obviously), and an extrovert on the inside (wait, is this a thing?).

Stevie and the Brooke Street crew are hard-up for cash. Going viral doesn't last forever, you know, and killer costumes are expensive. To keep their showbiz dream alive, the kids are competing in a local talent quest. But the competition is stiff (I mean, have *you* ever heard four goats sing acapella?), and Alex has a unicorn horn glued to his forehead for at least the next three weeks.

It's tough working under these conditions, but Stevie is up for any challenge to save Lunchbox Productions...

A gloriously warm, funny and relatable story from bestselling author, much-loved comedian, writer, radio announcer and social media sensation Tanya Hennessy.

A Word from the Author

'I wrote Stevie because I wanted to write a female character who was relatable and led by ambition. Not love. So, Stevie's funny, fierce and passionate, and she's a kid who wants to create.

'I also wanted to write something real about teamwork, overcoming adversity and relationships. It's a mix of some of my favourite books like *Hating Alison Ashley* and *Babysitters Club*.'

– Tanya Hennessy

Suggestions for Classroom Discussion and Application

Before Reading

- Look at the book's cover and try to guess what sort of person you think Stevie Louise might be. Does the expression on her face, her clothes (including mismatched socks) and untied boot laces provide any clues? What do the words 'Spotlight Please...' suggest about her and the story ahead? Do you think this is going to be a funny or serious book? How did the title, font, colour and image help you decide the answer to the previous question?

After Reading

- Which member of Lunchbox Productions would you most like to have as a friend, and what is it about that particular character you liked?
- What would you say was Stevie's best skill when working with her friends to create the play?
- What skill do you think you could bring to Lunchbox Productions?
- Stevie hilariously describes the different acts at the talent quest but what happens when we see something from another character's perspective? Try describing the same scenes but this time as Cadence saw them: or even as the five-year-old ballroom dancers saw them? Does the story change when you see things from another person's perspective?
- How did Stevie and her friends make their version of Hansel and Gretel funny?
- What fairytale would you like to see Lunchbox Productions take on next and why?
- Why do you think the talent agent was more interested in Lunchbox Productions than Starbound after seeing both perform at the talent quest?
- What lesson do you think Stevie learned in the story? Is that lesson the same one that Alex learned?
- What do you think Stevie and her friends will go on to do once they are signed up by a talent agency?
- If you could ask the author or illustrator one question, what would it be?

Visual Literacy

- Sometimes the way words are shown on a page help tell the story. Find examples of text in the story that is:
 - in upper case
 - in bold
 - italicised
 - in a different font to the rest of the words in the sentence
 - larger than the rest of the words in the sentence
- Explain why you think these changes were made and how they affected the way you read that part of the story.

Fighting Stress

- Consider this extract from the text and answer the question below:

My heart starts to beat out of control and I get sweaty and fidgety. I feel sick. I take ten deep breaths and try to 'focus on my breathing'

Stevie knows that focusing on her breathing is important when she is feeling stressed. Head over to this video from the ABCs 'Behind the News' show and identify some other things you can do [If You're Feeling Stressed or Anxious](#).

Creative Writing and Drama

- Work in a group of three or four to write a play that can be performed in front of your class.

Before you begin, consider:

- What sort of play you would like it to be. Funny or serious?
- Will it be a well-known play that you will change or something completely original?
- Who is your audience and why might they like to see this particular play?
- What is the moral or lesson of the play?
- How many roles will be needed?
- Whose job it is to put dialogue and scene instructions down on paper.

Divide up responsibilities such as:

- Who will be the play's director?
- Who will be responsible for the 'look' of the stage?
- Who will be the 'star' and who will have lesser roles?
- Are costumes necessary and who will provide them?



Things to remember when putting on a play

A good play should have a **beginning** (where you introduce characters), a **middle** (where you build up events and introduce problems that the characters might face), and an **ending** (where the problems are resolved).

Rehearse several times so everyone knows their lines and where they should be on the stage.

The Creators



If Amy Schumer and Rebel Wilson had a love child, you'd get **Tanya Hennessy** – comedian, radio announcer and social media sensation.

Originally from Newcastle, Tanya started in radio in 2012. Since then she has become an international social media phenomenon; written her first book, bestseller *Am I Doing This Right?*; become an ambassador for Priceline Pharmacy; sold out 27 venues for her first comedy show *Low Expectations*; and appeared on *I'm a Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here!*

In 2017 Tanya's rising star was recognised when she won the Junkee Award for Breakthrough Artist, was nominated for Cosmo Woman of the Year, selected to perform at Australia's first VIDCON and won best radio documentary at the Australian Commercial Radio Awards.

Talented and hilarious, Tanya is a true multi-media star.



Leigh Hedstrom is a freelance illustrator who lives on the Sunshine Coast with her family. She grew up in South Africa, drawing every day and dreaming that one day she might become a Disney animator.

In the early 2000s, hand-drawn animation studios all around the world closed their doors, so she had to find the next best thing, which turned out to be the actual best thing – illustration.

What Leigh loves about illustrating is being able to work across a bunch of different industries: publishing (books), education (workbooks, teaching aids and videos), advertising, and more recently, product development (toys). She also gets to work with amazingly talented people, like Tanya Hennessy.

The Stevie Louise books have become a favourite project, because it's not often that Leigh gets to draw the same characters many times ... Stevie, Alex, Trixie, Addison, Macey, Luke and Hannah have crept into her heart and become like real people to her.

Leigh enjoys the perks of a work-from-home job, such as the privacy to sing showtunes whilst working, having a cat within arms-reach and eating lunch from a plate.