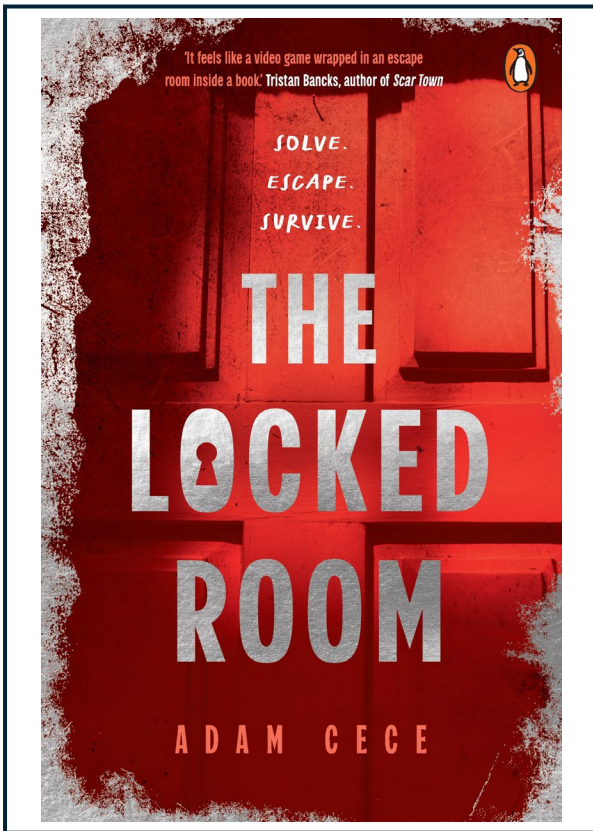




## TEACHERS' RESOURCES



### The Locked Room Adam Cece

#### PLOT SUMMARY

Andy and three other kids wake up in a locked room.

The room has no windows, but it has a locked door, with a countdown clock above it.

They have less than an hour to figure out how to get out of this room. But when they do . . . ?

There's another locked room, and more locked doors. And they can't go back.

*High concept, high stakes, high emotions – this story packs a punch and you won't be able to put it down.*

**RECOMMENDED FOR**  
Ages 12+ (Years 7 to 10)

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#### KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- Learning areas: English
- General capabilities: Literacy; Critical and creative thinking; Ethical understanding

#### REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- High concept, high stakes novel which packs a punch by award-winning Australian author Adam Cece.
- Upper middle-grade readers who enjoy a fast-paced novel will love this page-turner.

#### THEMES

- Resilience
- Teamwork
- Puzzles and escape rooms

#### PUBLICATION DETAILS

ISBN: 9781761351068 (paperback);  
9781761351075 (ebook).

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# The Locked Room by Adam Cece

## PRAISE FOR *THE LOCKED ROOM*

'It feels like a video game wrapped in an escape room inside a book.' TRISTAN BANCKS, author of *Scar Town*

'Keeps you guessing till the very end. Lock this in as your next nailbiter!' ADRIAN BECK, author of *Villain*

'A mystery inside a maze of puzzles, the fast-paced tension starts in Chapter 1 and doesn't let up!' AMY DOAK, author of *Eleanor Jones is Not a Murderer*

'There's no escaping this page-turner. Once you're in, you're in – all the way to the end.' MIKE LUCAS, author of *What We All Saw*

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Adam Cece is an award-winning author of children's books, including *Wesley Booth Super Sleuth*, *Twin Spin* and the hilarious Huggabie Falls series, which has been published worldwide. He is passionate about inspiring people, young and old, to read and write. He is a South Australian Premier's Reading Challenge Ambassador, mentor, workshop facilitator and manuscript assessor, and visits schools and libraries delivering fun, interactive talks focused on being an author, the craft of writing, getting published, solving mysteries, and how to write a cracking shopping list.

You can follow Adam on X and Instagram @ceceadam on Facebook @adamceceauthor or find him online at [www.adamcece.com](http://www.adamcece.com).

## AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

I've always loved contained, ticking-clock thrillers, but often these are horror movies/ books, where (upon failing the rooms) characters get killed in gruesome ways. I wanted a page-turner puzzle thriller that was exhilarating and captured a sense of danger, but was suitable for kids (teens, and even kids as young as 10). My original idea/spark of an idea was 'The Breakfast Club, if it was set in an escape room'. I

used to be an obsessive planner for my books, and it stifled the creativity a bit, and I was never finishing my novels as a result. But then one day, my friend and mentor Fiona McIntosh, sat me down and told me I had to get rid of my planning writer-pants and become a pantster-writer (write by the seat of my pants) or become a 'gunslinger' as she called it. This idea stuck with me, and it changed the way I wrote forever. Because I wanted *The Locked Room* to be a fast, twisty thriller, I wanted to write it in the same fashion. I put four interesting characters in a locked room, with a countdown, and I had no idea what was going to happen next, then I just started writing.

This book explores many issues experienced by teens, such as bullying, parental expectations, identity, broken families, mental health, depression, death of a sibling, and others, but also at its core is about how we are all unique, with different lives, but deep down we are all the same: we are all searching for purpose, searching for a place to belong, and through this commonality we can find connections in the most unexpected of places.

## PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. Look at the cover. What can you tell about the book from the images used?
2. How has the designer used the typography, placement of illustrations and colour to communicate what the book is about and what genre or category it might fit into?
3. Do you think the cover would be as affective with a different font? Why or why not?
4. Look at the back cover of the book and read the quotes. Based on these quotes, what do you think the book will be like?

## WRITING STYLE

### Questions and activities

1. What do you think of Adam's writing style? How would you describe it?
2. Adam says that he wanted to write a 'page-turner puzzle thriller'. Do you think he was successful? What elements of the story make it a 'thriller'?



3. How has the structure of the narrative helped with the tension and suspense?
4. Adam has used humour effectively throughout the story. Pick a good example of this and share it with the class.
5. Why do you think tension and humour can work really well together? Can you name other books or movies that use this combination?
6. On page 80, Chad says that Andy has used the word 'literally' incorrectly. What does he mean? Can you write a few sentences using this word correctly and then incorrectly?

## VISUAL LITERACY

### Questions and activities

1. Use a chessboard (or draw one) to visualise the K8 Experience as you read along.
2. How have the illustrations in the book helped contextualise the action of the story?
3. What purpose does the clock under the chapter headings serve? How do you think the narrative would change without them?
4. On page 143, you get to see how the author visualises the characters (in silhouette). Is this how you would've drawn them?
5. How does the visual of the countdown clock affect us as readers? Do you think it would be similar to the characters in terms of working under a time pressure?

## THEMES

- Working in teams and problem-solving.
- Resilience, motivation, trust, belonging, identity.
- Friendship and finding unlikely friends.
- High stakes, high emotions – how to work under pressure.
- Developing a level of understanding and empathy.
- Overcoming differences and obstacles.
- Forgiveness under difficult circumstances.

- Considering patience where needed.
- Hope and positivity.
- Listening to each other.
- Mental health – therapy and its methods.
- Celebrating success and being compassionate about failure.
- Decision-making.
- Encouraging creative and innovative thinking.
- Surviving against all odds.

## KEY STUDY TOPICS

### Group dynamics and problem-solving

#### Questions and activities

1. The four characters in *The Locked Room* are very different. Which character (or characters) did you relate to the most? Why do you think this was the case?
2. Break into groups of four. Assign yourself and classmates the different characters from the book (Andy, Chad, Gabriella Lee and Nameless Girl) and act out a scene from the book.
3. Split into groups and do some team building exercises. Examples could include building a tower out of pasta and sticky tape, the human knot, a collaborate art project, etc. Write down what you learn about yourself and the other students during this exercise.
4. On page 68, Nameless Girl says, 'Most people at school don't even know I exist'. Is fitting in something you struggle with, or do you know friends/other people who do? Why do you think it is important to feel like you belong somewhere?
5. On page 180 Gabriella Lee says, 'The point of this room is not for me to win.' Do you think it's possible to win a situation by 'losing'? Can you think of an example of this from your own life?
6. Write a scene from the book without the character of Chad in it. How has this changed the



scene? Do you think it makes the scene better or worse? Why do you think this is so?

7. Discuss the character development throughout the story. How did each of the rooms affect the characters' relationships with each other and their own personal growth? E.g. Chad not calling Andy 'Wailer' towards the end of the story.

### **Puzzles and Escape Rooms**

#### **Questions and activities**

1. Can you think of other famous sayings, like 'strength in numbers' or Andy's dad's not-so-motivational one, 'it's not worth it'?
2. In groups, create your own escape room storyboard. Consider a theme, different puzzles and riddles, and even what you want it to look like.
3. Draw a table with each of the rooms in the book as the heading. What stands out to you? What makes the room interesting?
4. Re-write the opening scene from the point of view of Patrick, waking up to see Allie, Kim and Xander.
5. We see rooms tailored for Gabriella Lee and Nameless Girl in the narrative. Do you think we saw the room designed for Andy? Which was it? Or, if you think we didn't see it, create it yourself.
6. What do you think Chad's room would have involved? Do you agree with the Designer that he is a hopeless cause and her only failure? Why or why not? Find evidence of this in the narrative.
7. In groups, create a scale diorama of one of the escape rooms from the book and/or an escape room you have invented. How does seeing the room as a diorama change your perspective on the room and its puzzles? Is there something new that you learned from viewing the room and its puzzles as a diorama that you didn't pick up on in the description in the book?

#### **Questions and activities**

1. How do Andy, Chad, Gabriella Lee and Nameless girl react when they wake up in the first room from page 1? What emotions do they experience?
2. Do you work well under pressure? Why do you think some people thrive in stressful or situations where there is a time pressure?
3. Why is it important to show empathy during stressful situations? Has this happened to you with your friends or your family?
4. Write a thank you letter to someone who has helped you overcome a challenge.
5. Now that you've finished the novel. Look back on Nameless Girl's journey. How much do you think of what she said was true?

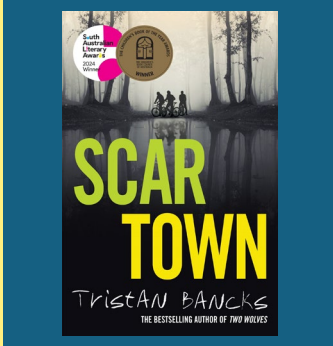
### **QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES**

1. Look at the fonts used on the front cover of the book. Research the difference between 'serif fonts' and 'sans serif' fonts. Which type of font has been used for the title of the book? Why do you think this design decision was made? How would using a different font impact the effect the cover has?
2. Once you have read the book, write your own 'review quote' using the examples on the back cover as a guide. Share your quote with the class.
3. How has the design of the cover reflected different elements within the story? Do you think the cover is a good reflection of the narrative? Why or why not?
4. How do the names of the characters reflect their personality?

### **Pressure and Stressful situations**



## FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA



### **Scar Town** by Tristan Bancks

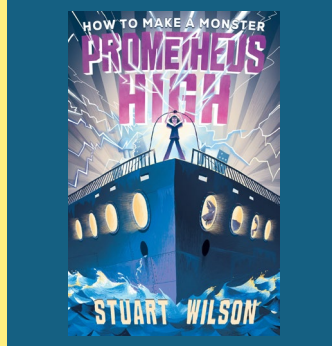
Seven years after Old Scarborough was drowned, a house is emerging from the water. Will and his friends Dar and Juno dare each other to explore it.

But when they find bones – and a stash of cash – they realise they're not the only ones interested in its secrets.

Now they're fighting for their lives against the men who want what they found. Will can't leave the mystery alone, though. What if the bones belong to his missing dad?

A DANGEROUS JOURNEY TO UNCOVER THE TRUTH IN A TOWN THAT WANTS THE PAST TO STAY BURIED.

*Teachers' resources available.*

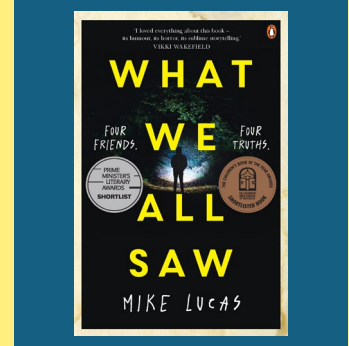


### **Prometheus High: How to Make a Monster** by Stuart Wilson

*A rusting ocean liner.  
Thirty students learning to resurrect the dead.  
A murderous monster on the loose . . .  
Just a typical day at  
PROMETHEUS HIGH.*

*Athena Strange's first semester at Prometheus High starts with a bang. But when her lessons in reanimation, robotics and skulkers move too slowly and she has trouble making friends, Athena decides to take matters into her own hands.*

*On a ship where science and magic collide, and the monster under your bed is probably very real . . . will Athena be able to hold her head above water?*



### **What We All Saw** by Mike Lucas

Witches only exist in stories. Everyone knows that. But what if the stories are real?

FOUR FRIENDS. FOUR TRUTHS. ONE NIGHTMARE.

If you wander into the wood ...  
If you hear scratching sounds from the Old Quarry ...  
If you go too close to the edge ...

WATCH. OUT.

*Teachers' resources available.*



# ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
<i>The Locked Room</i>	Adam Cece	9781761351068	Year 7+	\$19.99		
<i>Scar Town</i>	Tristan Bancks	9780143791812	Year 5+	\$17.99		
<i>Prometheus High: How to Make a Monster</i>	Stuart Wilson	9781761042256	Year 5+	\$16.99		
<i>What We All Saw</i>	Mike Lucas	9781761045936	Year 7	\$19.99		
				<b>TOTAL</b>		

<p><b>NAME:</b> _____</p> <p><b>SCHOOL:</b> _____</p> <p><b>ADDRESS:</b> _____</p> <p><b>STATE:</b> _____</p> <p><b>POSTCODE:</b> _____</p> <p><b>TEL:</b> _____</p> <p><b>EMAIL:</b> _____</p> <p><b>ACCOUNT NO.:</b> _____</p> <p><b>PURCHASE ORDER NO.:</b> _____</p>	<p>PLEASE SEND ORDER FORMS TO YOUR LOCAL EDUCATION SUPPLIER.</p>
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