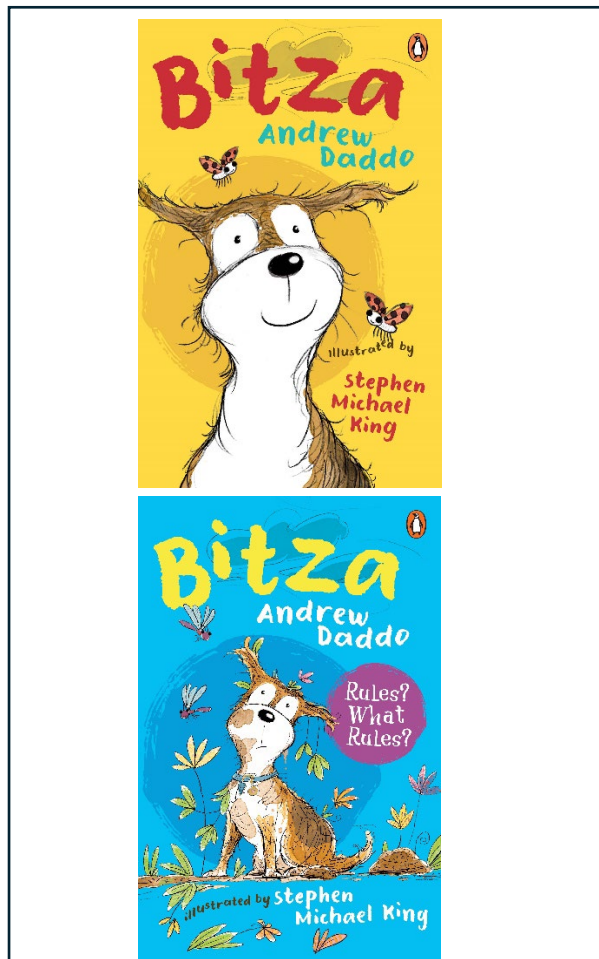




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PLOT SUMMARY

Book 1

I'm Bitza the dog!

A bit Labrador and a bit Poodle. A bit Kelpy and Staffy and maybe even Hound. Lots of different dog bits make up the lot of me.

I'm also a bit lost.

A good dog always looks after its ball, which is why I followed Jasper and the ball thief home from the park. She was looking for a dog, I was looking for a home.

It's perfect ... unless Dad gets his way.

Book 2

I've found a new home!

It's the best.

I've got a new best friend. A new top dog. A new place to sleep - and lots and LOTS of new rules - they're probably more weird than good.

When Jassy and Dad leave me home alone, I forget the rules. I'm thinking more about digging for bones and remodeling. Backyard Bitza!

RECOMMENDED FOR (ages 7 - 9; years 2 to 4)

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KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

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

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

• This is a celebration of pets, animals, and the joy they bring to everyone's lives

THEMES

• Belonging • Relationships • Caring for others • Caring for a pet

PUBLICATION DETAILS

Book 1: ISBN: 9781761355974 (paperback); 9781761356001 (ebook)

Book 2: ISBN: 9781761355998 (paperback); 9781761355981 (ebook)

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BITZA Series by Andrew Daddo

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andrew Daddo has managed to have a crack at just about every aspect of the entertainment industry. He's appeared on TV and stage, presented radio programs and podcasts, and even made movies. Best of all, Andrew is an accomplished author. He has written 28 books including picture books, chapter books, short story collections, novels and a vague biography – he's hard to pin down. He also talks up literacy in schools.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Stephen Michael King has been described as an artist who 'draws from the inside out', and it is this gentle, intuitive truth that gives heart and playfulness to his work. Stephen Michael King is an internationally renowned, award-winning author and illustrator whose career has spanned over thirty years, producing more than one hundred titles. He has worked with a stable of Australia's best children's book authors including Glenda Millard, Margaret Wild, Nick Bland, Peter Carey and Tim Winton. Books that Stephen Michael King has written and illustrated include: *Three*; *Rainbow Bear*; *Mutt Dog!*; *Leaf*; and *Milly*, *Jack and the Dancing Cat*. His books have been translated into over twenty languages, and he is frequently honoured in children's book award categories – including winning the CBCA Book of the year, and the Prime Minister's Literary Award.

INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR

How did you become an author?

It was almost an accident. Almost. I met a publisher and said, 'Oh, wow, I'd like to write a book.' It seems ridiculous now. Who would say that? But he was very kind and said, 'I'd be interested to read what you've got to say.' I was a bit excited and tried to write a story for about five minutes – it was harder than I'd thought, so I gave it away.

Months later, I met him again, so I said – again – 'I'd still like to write that story.' And he said again, 'I'd be interested...' So, it took ages, about a year, and I finally wrote a picture book. It was called *The Big Green Smiling Wobbly*. To be honest, I don't think it was very good, but

the publisher did suggest writing stories about what it was like growing up in a house full of (naughty) boys. That was fun, and easier than writing a picture book about a Big Green Smiling Wobbly. Once I got started writing stories, I found it hard to stop.

What was your inspiration for writing Bitza?

We have a Bitza of our own. Her name is Peg, she's a beautiful dog who was looking for a home. She has a favourite human, and that's our daughter Jas. In fact, a bit like the story of Bitza, it was Jas who found Peg. And I was the dad who said, 'I don't think she's the dog for us.' Jas was devastated, of course. But I held firm saying to her, 'Even though she's a puppy, her feet are huge. She'll be enormous, like a horse. Do we want a horse? I don't think we have room for one, or a big dog.'

Jassy was pretty sure Peg was a dog and not a horse – she was also very sure Peg was the perfect dog to live at our place. Sounds a bit like Jas and Bitza, right? Whilst the story of Bitza is definitely not about them (some of it might be) I'm almost certain they were the main inspiration for Bitza.

Explain a little about how you wrote the story.

Writing the first Bitza book was the most fun I've had writing in ages. I just love writing about dogs, because I love dogs. I love watching them and trying to figure out what they're thinking when they're watching us. A head tilt here, a little 'aroooorh' there. So I watched our other dog Spud (she was called that because she looked like a potato) and I watched Peggy. And, of course, I watched a lot of the dogs down at the park.

The first thing was to find the voice of Bitza – and next was to find a girl (also a bit of a Bitza) to fall in love with him. Then the plan was to have them meet, have them form a bond and then to see what happened. I didn't know the end of the story when I started writing – I never do – except that I knew Bitza would love Jas the way Jas loved Bitza.

What was your favourite book as a kid?

I think it was Enid Blyton's Famous Five series. That was written a loooooong time ago. I do recall they were a bit like our own lives. We grew up surrounded by paddocks and spent a lot of time pretending to be somewhere else. We were footy players, cricketers, motorbike riders,



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daredevils – you name it – and it was all made up and really great fun. That was the thing about Enid's books – they were about kids having fun, getting into trouble, getting out of a tight spot and living every moment like it mattered. At least, I think that's what they were about.

What was the most challenging part of writing *Bitza*?

I suppose the hardest thing about creating *Bitza* was working out who was telling the story. I loved the idea of Jas being the storyteller, but then really loved the idea of hearing *Bitza*'s perspective on things. Why balls are so great – and sticks and smells and people and going walking and slobbering around all day on the couch. Do dogs understand rules? Do they have dinner times? Do they love being pampered? And most importantly, how much are they listening to us humans, what do they hear and what do they understand? Once it was clear in my head that it was *Bitza* telling the story, the next hard part was working out how Jas and Dad would get to tell their parts of the story. It was tricky, but it's also great fun. I love dogs – especially our dogs. And I love my kids and the way they love our dogs. Bringing the two together was fun. I hope you love it.

WRITING STYLE

Bitza is written in first person, from the point of view of *Bitza* the dog, observing and commenting on his life with his human owners.

Questions

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of only having *Bitza*'s point of view?
2. How does the author communicate the thoughts and feelings of the human characters in the story?

Activities

1. Choose a chapter in the book then try rewriting the chapter:
 - a) from Jasper's point of view.
 - b) in 3rd person (as if you're an invisible observer of everything that's happening and telling us about it)
2. Choose a favourite animal. Do some research into its behaviours and habitat, then write a short story from that animal's point of view.

VISUAL LITERACY

Bitza has fun, bright illustrations on the cover, as well as internal black and white illustrations throughout the book.

Questions and activities

1. How do the illustrations help with understanding the story, as well as the emotions of the characters?
2. Take a look at the cover. What do you think the book will be about?
3. Now read the blurb on the back cover. Add to your previous answer. Is there anything else you feel may happen after reading the blurb?
4. Now read the book. At the end, write down if you guessed the plot correctly. What happened that you expected and what surprised you?

KEY STUDY TOPICS

Belonging

The first book in the *Bitza* series follows how *Bitza* finds a new home. There are a few different people who *Bitza* feels he belongs to, which are conveyed throughout the book.

Questions and activities

1. Can you name some of the times when *Bitza* feels he belongs with Jas and her dad? What are some things he says or does to convey this?
2. *Bitza* is written from the point of view of the dog, *Bitza*. Find some examples in the book of how this writing style helps to convey *Bitza*'s feelings about belonging.

Relationships

Sometimes *Bitza*, Jasper and Dad think they understand what the other is thinking or feeling but they don't always get it right.

Questions and activities

1. Find an example in the book where there is a misunderstanding between characters.
2. Can you think of a time when you didn't properly understand what someone was thinking or feeling?



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e.g. Perhaps a friend or sibling who is usually talkative seems very quiet, so you might start to wonder what you did to upset them.

3. Talk together about some of the ways you might approach a situation like this with a friend or sibling.
e.g. You might simply ask if they are okay. Or invite them to do an activity with you.

Caring for others

All the characters in the stories show their care for others in different ways.

Questions and activities

1. Create a table with a column for each character in the story and list a few ways they show they care for someone else. (eg Bitza, Dad, Jasper, Peggie)

Responsibility for pets

In the Bitza series, Jasper learns that caring for another living creature is a big responsibility. As she gets to know Bitza, she begins to learn more and more about the best way to keep him healthy and happy.

Questions and activities

1. List some of the things Jasper learns from her dad and from Bitza about how to keep a dog happy and healthy? Divide your list into 2 columns: Tips from Dad & Tips from Bitza.
2. a) If you have a pet, list all the things you do to help keep it happy and health. Then do some further research to find out other ways to help you care for your pet. Use the attached a table with tick boxes for each item to be checked off each day.

(b) If you don't have pet, choose a pet that you'd like to care for and do some research to find out the way you could help to provide good care for that pet.

(Remember that having a pet is not always possible for a family to take on for a variety reasons.)



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WORKSHEET

Caring for My Pet

SAMPLE - Helping to care for my dog

MY TASK	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
Morning walk or play							
Check water bowls							
Feed							
Fill treat toys							
Collect poo in yard							
Afternoon walk, play or training time							
Check water bowls							
Bath							

Now it's your turn...

CARING FOR _____

MY TASK	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN



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Bitza Word Search

A P W P O S H A K E
B P E W B A L L C I
I O E G J A S P E R
T O C P G W A T E R
Z D I G G I N G U F
A O C H A S E E L B
S T I C K S I T E O
D C H E W A L K A N
A C O L L A R Z D E
D H P A R K F O O D

digging
collar
food
shake
chew

Jasper
water
lead
bone
poo

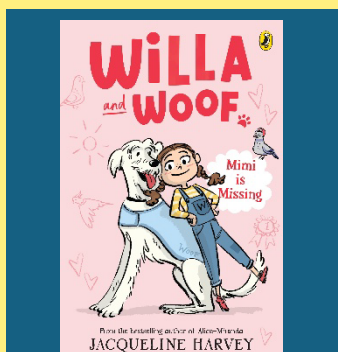
Peggie
chase
ball
park
wee

Bitza
stick
walk
dad
sit



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Further reading from Penguin Random House

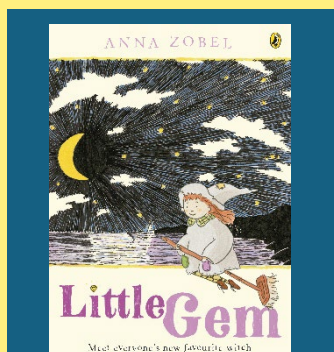


Willa and Woof by Jacqueline Harvey

A fun and adventurous series about 8-year-old Willa and Woof, her Albino Irish Wolfhound sidekick.

Willa and Woof navigate challenges with the help of Frank, her old-age-friend, and Tae, her same-age-friend

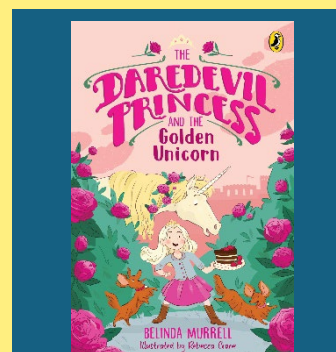
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Little Gem by Anna Zobel

An adorable and charming children's series about a witch named Little Gem. A sparkling gem of a read for anyone who loves Polly and Buster or Mummy Fairy and Me!

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The Daredevil Princess by Belinda Murrell, Rebecca Crane

A royally fun junior fiction series filled with magic, adventure and daring . . . and a very sassy unicorn.

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Order form

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
<i>Bitza Book 1</i>	Andrew Daddo, Stephen Michael King	9781761355974	2-4	\$14.99		
<i>Bitza Book 2</i>	Andrew Daddo, Stephen Michael King	9781761355998	2-4	\$14.99		
<i>Willa and Woof 1: Mimi is Missing</i>	Jacqueline Harvey	9781761043314	2+	\$12.99		
<i>Little Gem</i>	Anna Zobel	9781760896089	2-4	\$14.99		
<i>The Daredevil Princess and the Golden Unicorn (Book 1)</i>	Belinda Murrell, Rebecca Crane	9781761340437	1-4	\$14.99		
TOTAL						

NAME: _____
SCHOOL: _____
ADDRESS: _____
STATE: _____
POSTCODE: _____
TEL: _____
EMAIL: _____
ACCOUNT NO.: _____
PURCHASE ORDER NO.: _____

PLEASE SEND ORDER FORMS
TO YOUR LOCAL EDUCATION
SUPPLIER.