

## READER'S NOTES

TITLE: Sandcastle  
AUTHOR: Philip Bunting  
PUBLISHER: Allen & Unwin  
PRICE: \$24.99  
ISBN: 9781760295387  
PUB DATE: March 2018  
AUDIENCE: 3-6

### SYNOPSIS:

Rae and Grandad set out to build a sandcastle at the beach.

They make a tall tower. They raise great ramparts. They dig a deep moat. They even find a dragon. But will it be enough to hold the tide?

*Sandcastle* is a beautiful exploration of the ebb and flow of life and is for anyone who has ever pondered the big questions about our place in the universe.

### STYLE:

Philip Bunting's illustrations are first made from papercut shapes, which are scanned and pieced together digitally. The basic shapes are then collaged with found textures to finish the artwork.

He describes his style in this picture book as 'aesthetically modernist, but warm and engaging, at the same time.'

### AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR'S MOTIVATION:

'The book was partly inspired by one of my heroes, Stephen Hawking, who said, "What's true is that we are only the temporary custodians of the particles which we're made of. They will go on to lead a future existence in the enormous universe that made them."

'In a post-religious society, I feel we increasingly need exposure to spiritual concepts and ideas to help us make sense of our place in the universe (without having to rely on concepts imagined thousands of years ago).

'Personally, I find the idea that we're made out of stuff that has been a part of stars, the Earth, and other life forms, pretty bloody awe-inspiring. Then add to that the idea that these same particles will go on to lead future existences when we're gone... wow! We're all a part of a continuum that has been going on for longer than we will ever know, and will continue for longer than we can ever predict. There is true spiritual solace to be found in this idea.'

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR**

Philip grew up just around the corner from Mr McGregor's garden, a mile or so down the valley from Mrs Tiggywinkle's place, and only a short row from Owl Island. A childhood spent growing up in the English Lake District means that children's literature is in his blood. Philip now lives in Queensland, Australia with his family, and their rescue cat, Mowgli. He loves anthropomorphism and drinks way too much Yorkshire Tea. Philip's first picture book, *Mopoke*, was published in 2017.

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:**

- Show the cover of *Sandcastle* to your students and ask them:
  - Where do you think this story might be set? What is it about the cover that makes you think that?
  - Who might the people be and what are they doing?
  - Make a list of things you need to make a really good sandcastle?
  - What is *your* favourite thing to do when *you* go to the beach?
  - Do you think this is going to be a happy or sad story? What makes you think that?
- Now read the story to your class and when finished, start a discussion with the following questions.

- Explain in your own words what you think Grandpa meant when he said, 'The sandcastle may be gone, but everything that made it is still here, and always will be.'
  
- Why do you think that Rae decided to build another, even better sandcastle after Grandpa said that?
  
- What are the thousands of dots on the endpapers of the book (the very first and last pages of the book)? The author mentions 'particles from the enormous universe' at the end of the story. Imagine these dots were on a darker background. What might they be now? Hint: we see them at night, in the sky.
  
- Did you feel happy that Rae got to build a bigger and better sandcastle or sad that the first one was washed away?
  
- What did you like about the story? What didn't you like about it? How would you describe the book to your best friend (who hadn't read it yet)?