



The Extremely Weird Thing that Happened in Huggabie Falls

ADAM CECE

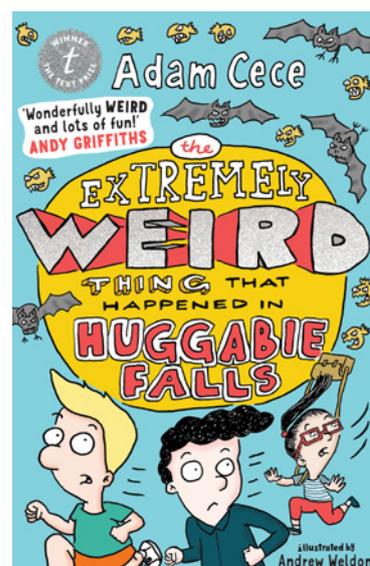
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Fiction

RECOMMENDED READING AGE: 8+

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CURRICULUM GUIDE

The following teaching guide has been designed to embrace shared curriculum values. Students are encouraged to communicate their understanding of a text through speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing and representing.

The learning activities aim to encourage students to think critically, creatively and independently; reflect on their learning; and connect it to audience, purpose and context. They aim to encompass a range of forms and include a focus on language, literature and literacy. Where appropriate, they include the integration of ICT and life skills.

SYNOPSIS

Huggabie Falls is a weird town full of weird people. You would think that Kipp Kindle, Cymphany Chan and Tobias Treachery would be pleased when the town suddenly begins to be normal. However, those weird people include their loved ones and they want them to stay just the way they are.

The trio set out in pursuit of the mysterious Felonious Dark in an effort to prevent Huggabie Falls from becoming normal forever. Author Adam Cece steps into the narrative, offering insights into the characters and some advice on writing a successful novel along the way.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Adam Cece lives in Adelaide. His first book, *Wesley Booth Super Sleuth*, was published in 2015. In 2017, Adam won the Text Prize for Young Adult and Children's Writing for *The Extremely Weird Thing that Happened in Huggabie Falls*.

BEFORE READING

1. Write a short story about an extremely weird thing that happened to you. You may use your imagination if you cannot think of something that really happened.
2. 'There is no such thing as weird, just different.' Can you think of arguments for or against this statement? Hold a debate or present your point of view in writing.
3. Who decides what is 'weird'? Do you think it is fair?

WHILE READING

1. The writer tells us that the town was weird in the opening passages (pages 1 and 2). What makes it weird?
2. As you read, make a list of unfamiliar words. For example: fidgeting (page 10), obnoxious (page 11). Find their meanings and think of other words that could be used in their places in the sentences.
3. What does the writer do to create a connection with his readers? Consider the moments that Adam Cece directly speaks to readers or the stories that he tells outside the main story.
4. Choose a scene from the book that hasn't been illustrated and draw your own picture. It might be a drawing in the style of the illustrations, a comic strip or a collage. Hold an exhibition for your friends.



Get them to add captions from the novel for your pictures.

5. Find five sayings or metaphors used in the novel, such as 'the calm before the storm' (pages 218–21) and 'flooded with unsettling information' (page 185). What do they mean? Write the literal meaning and implied meaning for each. You could write them on a set of cards with the saying and the meaning on separate cards. Mix up both sets and swap with a friend. See if they can match the pairs. You will find a lot of examples in the novel, such as page 183.
6. The creepy scientist says that her aim was to rid people of 'weird genes' (page 187). What is another word that could be used for weird in this situation? Think about other words that could be used to make this statement either positive or negative.
7. 'They now loved Huggabie Falls and couldn't imagine living anywhere else.' (page 186). What does this tell us about belonging?
8. Why do you think Tobias is reluctant to accept the word 'cure'? What does the word imply? (page 186).
9. Why does Cymphany recite the names of capital cities?
10. What sacrifices do Kipp, Cymphany and Tobias make for each other and their families?

AFTER READING

CHARACTER

1. Create a table of characters and for each list the words used to describe them. Draw a picture of each character based on those words.
2. What do Kipp, Cymphany and Tobias come to realise about their lives?
3. What actions by the three main characters tell us that they are close friends?
4. Make a list of the interesting names of characters in the novel. Make up an explanation for how they got their names.
5. What challenges do the characters face? How do they respond to those challenges?

STYLE AND STRUCTURE

1. Why does the author speak directly to the reader throughout the text? What does this add to the novel?
1. What does Adam Cece tell us about the 'dos and don'ts' of writing a successful book?
1. What are the typical features we expect to see in a mystery comedy? For example: heroes, nemeses. Research some examples and create a poster guide for people writing in this genre. You could start by watching an episode of the classic cartoon *Scooby Doo*. What similarities does *The Extremely Weird Thing that Happened in Huggabie Falls* have with this classic cartoon?

THEMES

Diversity and Individuality

1. 'Cymphany looked quite pleased with herself, as if she wanted nothing more than to be at least a little bit weird, which of course she did.' (page 23) Is Cymphany's family actually normal in Huggabie Falls? How does Adam Cece use the characters to celebrate diversity and individuality?
2. The creepy scientist refers to people's differences as 'weird'. How does the novel show us that 'weirdness' is defined differently for everyone? Find an example of something that is judged weird by some, but not all, in the novel.
3. Cymphany and Tobias admire Kipp's family who, in their minds, are weird enough to fit in without being so weird that they are outcasts. Is their view of their own family's weirdness the same by the end of the novel?

Family and Friendship

1. Despite their weirdness, the characters in the novel love their families. What message does the novel give us about our families and how we see them?
2. Most of our families are fairly normal in comparison to those in Huggabie Falls. Write a family profile—use your own or create one—and give each member something suitably weird to help them fit in in Huggabie Falls.
3. What are the qualities of a good friend? Write a job advertisement for a friend and include the qualities you would hope a good friend would have. Include some characteristics that are specific to you.

Good and Evil

1. Are the creepy scientists and Felonious Dark responsible for their own defeat? In Huggabie Falls, not all characters who appear bad are actually bad. Identify those characters who are not what they appear to be and explain why people might misunderstand them.
2. Rank the characters from good to evil (or least good). Keep in mind that some characters who are good can have some moments of evil and some who are evil may have good features. Think about where each will sit on the scale and be prepared to explain your choices.
3. Kipp, Cymphany and Tobias are not your typical heroes. Make a list of good or courageous things that they do in the story and why these might be unexpected.

RESPONDING

1. Write a newspaper article about Huggabie Falls, a town 'full of weirdness', (page 149), from an outsider's point of view or create the front page of the *Huggabie Falls Times* and include a number of weird features. You might do this as a group and create a different part each.



2. Write a short biography for a new Huggabie Falls resident. Include an illustration and ensure that you note their 'weirdness'.
3. Write a traveller's guide for visitors that explains the reason behind some of Huggabie Fall's quirks.
4. What does 'curtains for you' mean? Write a story that explains how the phrase might have come about.
5. Create a guide for the 'Huggabie Falls Imaginary Creature's Zoo'.
6. Create an illustrated map of Huggabie Falls using the novel to add key features mentioned such as the sanctuary, the primary school, the water plant.
7. The narrator frequently diverges from the main narrative to tell stories about Huggabie Falls that explain an expression or a Huggabie Falls location or person. Write your own story about a character, a saying or a place in a similar style.
8. Choose a saying from the novel, such as 'the calm before the storm' (page 227) (See your list from the earlier activity), and write a story about how the expression came to be used.
9. Write a response to the following statement: The three main characters in Huggabie Falls show us what it means to be loyal.
10. Write a creative response to the following statement: 'Everybody is a little bit weird. That is what makes us special.'