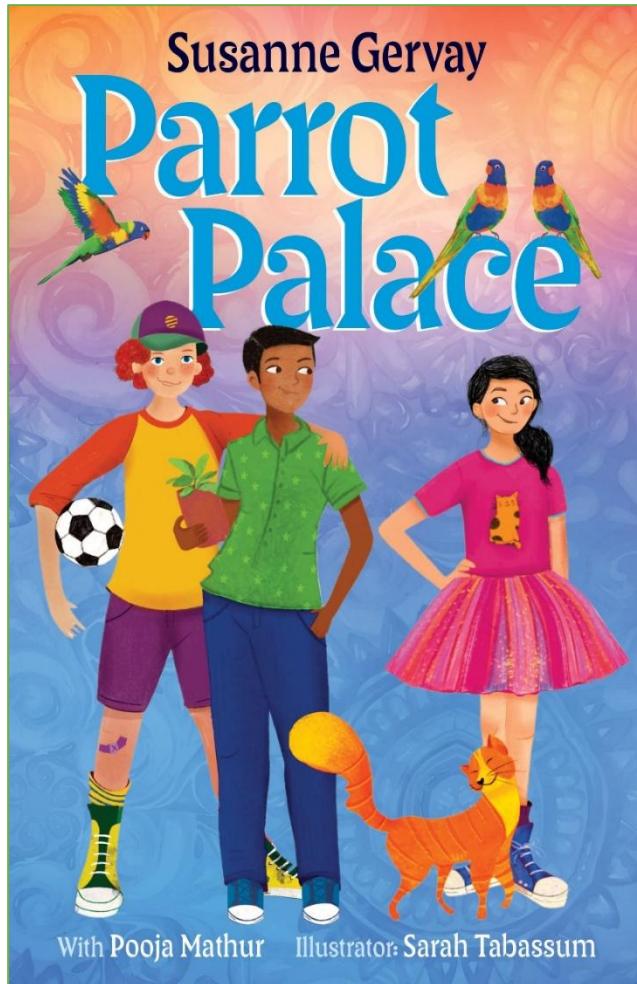




TEACHERS' NOTES

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Notes by Sue Warren – Teacher Librarian
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1. Summary

Three inventive, daring kids and their diverse families, live in a three-storey- apartment block called *Parrot Palace*. There are lots of parrot there, but their main goal is to create a squad of mates.

Hari, Lily-Rosa and Mikey share their secrets. Is Mikey going to become a joker or a builder like his Dad? Or is Lily-Rosa really going to be a firefighter or ballerina or defend her Opa because he is a home father? Or is Hari going to fix the disaster he created for his Nani and mother?

They join together and confront their arch enemy, the neighbour Mr Crabtree. It is here that they eventually find the real answers to friendship.

Key Concepts

- Diversity
- Acceptance and inclusivity
- Bullying / Confronting Bullying
- Assertiveness
- Cross – cultural perspectives
- Community
- Relationships with Family and Friends

Suggested age range: 8 – 11 years

2. About the Author



Susanne Gervay OAM wrote 'Elephants Have Wings' as a picture book after her numerous journeys to India. Now she has worked with Sarah Tabassum and Pooja Mathur to create the story of diverse children and their families including Hari and his Indian family, his half Hungarian-Chinese friend Lily-Rosa and his new mate Mikey. She values the story of inclusion. As an Ambassador for Australia, Susanne acknowledges the traditional owners of the land who have lived here for 65,000 years. Every year she welcomes new Australian citizens. These citizens come from countries such as Brazil, Taiwan, Philippines, India, Bangladesh, Ireland, Vietnam, China, UK, USA, Ukraine, even Hungary and everywhere. Like many, Susanne's family came here as refugees, who escaped war and terrorism. Like many from the world, people make a new life in a democratic multi-cultural nation just like the families of Hari, Lily-Rosa and Mikey.

Awarded the Lifetime Social Justice Literature Award, Order of Australia, nominated for Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award, you'll find Susanne trekking to where her heart goes. Speaking to the fire ravaged communities of Lithgow, trekking to remote indigenous

schools in the Kimberly, addressing the Youth Braille Writing Awards, addressing the World Burn Congress in New York, Susanne brings the message of courage to especially to young people.

Website: <https://sgervay.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/sgervay>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/susanne_gervay/?hl=en#

X: https://x.com/i/flow/login?redirect_after_login=%2Fsgervay

TikTok: https://www.tiktok.com/@susannegervay_author

3. About the Illustrator



Sarah Tabassum is an illustrator with a passion for blending digital and traditional media. Originally from Dhaka, Bangladesh, she now resides in Australia, drawing inspiration from her surroundings. Her artwork is influenced by vibrant colors and patterns. Sarah transitioned from traditional media to digital tools in 2020, finding a unique perspective for her illustrations due to her background in Computer Science and Engineering

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/sarah_tabassum_illo/#

4. Authenticity



Pooja Mathur is a teacher librarian and the winner of the ASLA Early Career Teacher Librarian Award 2023. She is a passionate advocate for reading for pleasure, Australian multicultural literature, and the importance of school libraries. Pooja has been involved in academic research, publication of articles, and presenting at professional development events. She migrated from India to Australia in 2004 and lives in Sydney with her husband, children, and in-laws. Pooja's parents visit often, and her children have a close bond with their grandmothers.

5. Relevant Curriculum Areas

General Capabilities:

English: Learn to listen to, read, view, speak, write, create and reflect on increasingly complex and sophisticated spoken, written and multimodal texts across a growing range of contexts with accuracy, fluency and purpose.

Health & Physical Education: All students and their communities have particular strengths and resources that can be nurtured to improve their own and others' health, wellbeing, movement competence and participation in physical activity.

Science: Take an interest in science as a means of expanding their curiosity and willingness to explore, ask questions about and speculate on the changing world in which they live.

Mathematics: Students are confident, creative users and communicators of mathematics, able to investigate, represent and interpret situations in their personal and work lives and as active citizens.

Design and Technologies: in which students use design thinking and technologies to generate and produce designed solutions for authentic needs and opportunities

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Culture:

- ✓ that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are able to see themselves, their identities and their cultures reflected in the curriculum of each of the learning areas, can fully participate in the curriculum and can build their self-esteem
- ✓ that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority is designed for all students to engage in reconciliation, respect and recognition of the world's oldest continuous living cultures.

Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia: This priority will ensure that students learn about and recognise the diversity within and between the countries of the Asia region. Students will develop knowledge and understanding of Asian societies, cultures, beliefs and environments, and the connections between the peoples of Asia, Australia and the rest of the world. Asia literacy provides students with the skills to communicate and engage with the peoples of Asia so they can effectively live, work and learn in the region.

Personal and Social Capability:

- ✓ students develop personal and social capability as they learn to understand themselves and others, and manage their relationships, lives, work and learning more effectively. Personal and social capability involves students in a range of practices including recognising and regulating emotions, developing empathy for others and understanding relationships, establishing and building positive relationships, making responsible decisions, working effectively in teams, handling challenging situations constructively and developing leadership skills.

6. Specific Curriculum Outcomes

English:

Year 3

Draw connections between personal experiences and the worlds of texts, and share responses with others ([ACELT1596](#)).

Discuss how language is used to describe the settings in texts, and explore how the settings shape the events and influence the mood of the narrative ([ACELT1599](#)).

Identify the point of view in a text and suggest alternative points of view ([ACELY1675](#)).

Create imaginative texts based on characters, settings and events from students' own and other cultures using visual features, for example, perspective, distance and angle ([ACELT1601](#)).

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning and begin to evaluate texts by drawing on a growing knowledge of context, text structures and language features ([ACELY1680](#)).

Year 4

Discuss literary experiences with others, sharing responses and expressing a point of view ([ACELT1603](#)).

Discuss how authors and illustrators make stories exciting, moving and absorbing, and hold readers' interest by using various techniques, for example, character development and plot tension ([ACELT1605](#)).

Create literary texts that explore students' own experiences and imagining ([ACELT1607](#)).

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning to expand content knowledge, integrating and linking ideas and analysing and evaluating texts ([ACELY1692](#)).

Year 5

Understand that patterns of language interaction vary across social contexts and types of texts and that they help to signal social roles and relationships ([ACELA1501](#)).

Identify aspects of literary texts that convey details or information about particular social, cultural and historical contexts ([ACELT1608](#)).

Recognise that ideas in literary texts can be conveyed from different viewpoints, which can lead to different kinds of interpretations and responses ([ACELT1610](#)).

Create literary texts that experiment with structures, ideas and stylistic features of selected authors [ACELT1798](#)

Identify and explain characteristic text structures and language features used in imaginative, informative and persuasive texts to meet the purpose of the text [ACELY1701](#)

Science:

Earth Sciences

Year 3

Living things can be grouped on the basis of observable features and can be distinguished from non-living things ACSSU044

Year 4

Living things depend on each other and the environment to survive ACSSU073

Year 5

Living things have structural features and adaptations that help them to survive in their environment ACSSU043

Technologies:

Design and Technologies

Years 3 & 4

Investigate food and fibre production and food technologies used in modern and traditional societies ACTDEK012

Years 5 & 6

Investigate how and why food and fibre are produced in managed environments and prepared to enable people to grow and be healthy ACTDEK021

- Communicate design ideas using models and drawings
- Generate, communicate and compare designs AC9TDI4P03

7. Before Reading

Consider the cover art and title:

- ✓ What could this story be about?
- ✓ Where do you think the story is set?
- ✓ To what do you think the title Parrot Palace refers?
- ✓ Can you make predictions about the characters shown?
- ✓ Why might the building be called Parrot Palace?
- ✓ Create the Learning Wall to include a world map.
- ✓ Organise classroom library to have related titles including with community/neighbourhood themes, gardens, diversity, families or friendship as well as other books by the author.

8. During Reading

- Do any students live in a flat or apartment? Perhaps they have stayed in one for a holiday? What is different about this type of living?
- Create a Venn Diagram to compare living in an apartment block to living in a free-standing house
- How many students are also from a culturally diverse family? Does the school have a diverse population? Conduct a survey to determine exact information.
- Use the blank world map template to pinpoint the countries of origin mentioned in the text, then add those of students/survey respondents.
- Hari's name means 'lion'. Do the students know the meaning/origin of their names? Create a class list.
- There are numerous other references to lions throughout the text e.g.
 - ✓ Nani thinks she's the great protector and charges through the loungeroom. She's like Durga the warrior goddess riding a huge lion. (p. 2)
 - ✓ Sinha. That's what we call lions. Did you know lions can see six times as far as people? [p 5]
 - ✓ We already have a cat. Sinha. Got the name from a lion in the zoo. He growls like a lion too.' He laughs. 'Sinha never growls at us.' [p. 6]
 - ✓ but better not to poke the lion. [p. 27]
 - ✓ What significance might these references have? What do students think is being inferred?
- Note on the learning wall all the foods/meals mentioned:
 - ✓ Jalebi
 - ✓ Nankhatai biscuits
 - ✓ rasgullas,
 - ✓ chicken curry
 - ✓ cherry strudel
 - ✓ gulab jamun
 - ✓ pancakes (with tomatoes, capsicum, onions, samosa filled with cheese, peas and potatoes)
 - ✓ chutney
 - ✓ sesame seed balls
 - ✓ apple pie
- Class discussion on Mr Crabtree's attitude:
 - ✓ Why is Mr Crabtree so angry all the time?
 - ✓ How does he make the children feel?
 - ✓ Is it ok for adults to be so rude and nasty?
 - ✓ Were the children justified in dumping the strawberry mush over the fence?
 - ✓ Have any of the students ever experienced the same kind of prejudiced attitudes? How did they deal with it?

- ✓ What would students do if they were in the same position as Mikey, Lily-Rosa and Hari? Write a letter to Mr Crabtree, explaining how it feels and what they would like to happen
- Consider the name of the building – Parrot Palace.
 - ✓ Hari says that parrots represent love.
 - ✓ There are [57 varieties of parrots](#) in Australia, and 402 species worldwide, all sizes and colours, yet all are part of the same family.
 - ✓ How do these two points factor into the author's message with this book?
- How does Mr Crabtree's attitude affect Hari with regard to his memories of his old school?
 - ✓ What do students think of the teacher and other kids at Hari's old school?
 - ✓ How can students ensure this sort of behaviour does not happen at their own school?
 - ✓ Plan an anti-bullying campaign.

9. After Reading

Literacy activities

- Create character profiles for Hari, Mikey and Lily-Rosa. A template might be useful here (numerous versions freely available online).
 - ✓ Describe their character's appearance.
 - ✓ Describe their background/past.
 - ✓ Describe how they speak.
 - ✓ Describe how they move.
 - ✓ Describe their actions, thoughts and feelings.
 - ✓ Describe their personality.
- Create digital AI versions of each of the children as a [Lego figure](#), or a [Funko Pop](#) or [Peanuts](#) style. This is a useful exercise in writing a precise description.
- Plot the story arc on a template suitable to ability level e.g. from [Reading Rockets](#)

Vocabulary: Define these words, then find 5 more interesting or new words to add.

Word	What I think it means	Dictionary definition
Discombobulate p 2		
Squints p. 3		
Cantankerous p 4		
Squawk p 5		
Mouthwatering p 6		
Sneer p. 6		
Intercept p 10		
Hooligans p 11		
Smirk p 13		
Stairwell p 14		
Spluttering p 15		
Fragrance p 18		

WRITING

- Write a diary entry from the PoV of one of the main characters with a focus on one of the significant events e.g. the day they all meet, when the fix the precious items from the shrine or the day they help Mr Crabtree when he is injured
- Write a 5 senses paragraph to describe one of the following:
 - ✓ HQ
 - ✓ The garden
 - ✓ The shrine
 - ✓ The feast
- Re-read page 17 and the list of all the holiday activities. Have students think back to their last holidays or imagine the holidays they would like and write a list of all the things they would like to do, in a similar style.
- Have students choose one of the dishes mentioned, then find a recipe that matches their ability. Do the same for a recipe from their own family or culture. Write and illustrate these to compile into a class recipe book.

10. Discussions & Activities

- Nani points at his runners. 'Leave your shoes over there. Next to Hari's. Everyone leaves their shoes at the front door. It is our custom.' (p. 3). This is sometimes just a courtesy but it is also a custom in other cultures. Do some research to investigate other cultures where this is the norm.
- In pairs or small groups, choose one of the dishes mentioned and find a recipe for it. These could be collated into a class cookbook. Students could add others from their own family or culture/s.
- Everyone in Australia, except the First Nations peoples, has originally come from another country or culture. Some students may have been born in another country; others might have family that has been here for generations. Conduct some family history research to find out as much as possible about the country or culture of origin for your family. For First Nations students, this could be specific to their own Country or mob.
 - ✓ Prepare a multi-media presentation to share with others.
- Organise a Mother Tongue event. Family members who speak another language might come and tell stories or teach some words, have a display of costumes or artefacts from cultures, play games from other countries or make crafts etc.
- There are a number of words in different languages used throughout the book and included in the glossary at the back.
 - ✓ Create a class dictionary with everyday words from various languages known to the students with the English equivalent: e.g., **dog** - 狗 (gǒu) [Mandarin Chinese], la mascota [Spanish], il cane [Italian], 犬 (いぬ, inu) [Japanese], a kisállat [Hungarian], thú nuôi [Vietnamese], mirri [Wiradjuri], ang alaga [Tagalog], l'animal de compagnie [French], कुत्ता / kutta [Hindi]

- ✓ **Namaste** is an expression of respectful greeting performed by placing the palms together, bowing the head slightly, which comes from the Sanskrit and is traditionally used by Hindus but also in many other cultures. Research different ways of greeting from other cultures and use some of these for morning roll-call or circle time.
- ✓ What is the language of the traditional owners of the land on which the class/school is situated? Whose country am I on?
- ✓ Compile a list of words in local language
- Do some research of the Hindi culture including **Ayurveda** *has healed wounds for more than 3,000 years. Breath slowly and deeply and let it work.'* [P 29].
- Invite a local Hindi person, perhaps someone in the school community, to come and talk about their faith and what they do.
- Invite a local Australian with cultural background that they identify with, to come and talk about their culture. It could be a Sikh, someone from the Jewish or Islamic faith, an Irish immigrant, the indigenous and the many people who make up Australia.
- Refer to Chapter 10 p. 31 re the ritual with the home shrine.
 - ✓ What do we mean by the word ritual? It has different meanings in different situations. It might refer to a religious ritual such as a christening, or just something that is done regularly such as a family going out for Sunday morning breakfast or when they put up their Christmas tree.
 - ✓ Brainstorm different rituals and create an anchor chart to explain the various meanings or interpretations.
- Lord Ganesha's axe is to cut away problems, Hari tells the others. Mr Crabtree's accident with the axe is a shock but does it also solve a problem? Discuss the link between these.
- Jealousy hurts your heart p3 is one of Nani's sayings.
 - ✓ Discuss what is implied here.
 - ✓ Invite students to share times when they have felt jealousy.
 - ✓ Is jealousy the same as envy (*students who have seen the Inside Out 2 movie will be able to elaborate on this point*).
- Australia has many diverse families.
 - ✓ In this narrative there are: the stay-at-home dad (Hungarian) who minds two kids while the mother (Chinese) works as a pre-school director; a sole parent (deceased father), Indian family with a mother who is a nurse and the Indian grandmother the homemaker; a nuclear family, with forebears here for many generations, and an (implied IVF) baby to be born soon.
 - ✓ Being mindful of any triggers/trauma invite students to share the make-up of their families e.g., nuclear, living with other generations, grandparents raising grandchildren, foster families, co-parenting, divorced/separated parents, sole parents, step-families as well as cultural diversity.
 - ✓ Ask students to consider what they think defines a family and construct their own definition. Create a family portrait with their definition added.
- **Brain Breaks;** Try out some yoga. (see suggested tutorials in resource list)
- Create a class garden. Start seeds/seedlings or cuttings in recycled cardboard tubes for easy planting. If no garden bed is available use pots or containers. It could be a sensory garden.

- Lamb's Ear plant grows easily from cuttings. Learn how to propagate it. If someone in the community has some you may acquire cuttings or perhaps a local nursery would donate.
- Cubby houses:
 - ✓ Who has one?
 - ✓ Who would like one? What kind would you like e.g. a treehouse or a teepee?
 - ✓ Have you ever made one from garden materials or an indoor one (blanket fort)?
 - ✓ Design your dream HQ cubby house. Create a floor plan using grid paper and draw how it would look and label its components and materials
 - ✓ Use large cardboard boxes to construct a classroom cubby.
- Use coloured air-dry clay to model Lord Ganesha – easy-to-follow instructions
- Create a classroom 'shrine' that reflects the beliefs or ethos of your class.
 - ✓ What should be on it?
 - ✓ How could students pay respects to it?

Maths activities:

- Use the data collected with the survey of nationalities/origins and collate into a graph of choice
- Measure the dimensions of your dream cubby house and scale for your floor plan.
- If the class can start a garden, measure dimensions, calculate spacing for plants, quantities needed etc.

Digital Technology

- Design your garden in 3D software program
- Use Minecraft to recreate the setting, with Parrot Palace, the backyard with HQ and the garden

Related Resources

Books with similar themes

Junk Castle -Robin Klein

Queenie in Seven Moves – Zanni Louise

What Zola Did series – Melina Marchetta

Leeva at Last – Sara Pennypacker

Anisha, Accidental Detective, #1 – Selena Patel

Eplc – Communities collection

Useful websites: activities and resources

Yoga for Kids

Yoga in the Classroom

My Garden Planner

3D Garden Planner

What is Ayurveda?

Lord Ganesha colouring pages [many freely available online]

Who is Ganesha?

How Lord Ganesha Got his Elephant Nose [3.03 mins]

Lord Ganesha: a traditional tale [10.41 mins]

The Values Children Should Learn from Lord Ganesha

DIY making a clay Ganesha at home

How to Draw Lord Ganesha [5.25 mins]