

# Plummeting with PIZZAZZ



*The Sleepdeprived*

cSloths

ohno



THE KIDS' CANCER PROJECT

WRITE A BOOK IN A DAY

## Parameters Form

### Team Details

STATE: VIC  
DIVISION: Middle School (Required word count 3500 to 5000 words)  
SCHOOL/GROUP: Our Lady of Mercy College  
TEAM NAME: The Sleep-deprived Sloths  
TEAM ID: 3

### Parameters and random words

#### Parameters

Primary character 1 Lawyer  
Primary character 2 Trapeze artist  
Non-human character Chalkboard  
Setting Sports field  
Issue Making a new friend

#### Random words

event  
crisp  
elastic  
clumsy  
bright

### Instructions

- Start no earlier than **8am**
- Write an original story:
  - based on all **five parameters** (above)
  - including all **five random words** (above) as written, and in bold type
  - with some identifiable **Australian content** (in theme or setting or characters, etc)
  - keeping within the allowed word count (remember every word on every page counts)!
  - include this parameters form in your book **immediately after the front cover**
- Remember: **Every** word on **every** page counts. This includes your front cover, back cover, blurb, acknowledgements and copyright form.
- **Be sure to give yourself enough time to submit your book and complete the following checklist before 2pm**

Log on to the Team Coordinator Portal to:

- ☐ Check the spelling of your team name and team members' names  
(how these are spelt on submission will be how they are displayed on certificates)
- ☐ Complete the Declaration
- ☐ Submit your finished book in **both** PDF and plain text format by 2pm

# **Authors and Illustrators**

## **Authors**

Eve A, Rori B, Alice D, Liza H, Lucy J, Honora P.

## **Illustrators**

Essie D, Liza H, Honora P.

# Copyright



## Copyright

Published by The Sleep-deprived Sloths, Our Lady of Mercy College, 52 Cape Street Heidelberg VIC 3084. Eve A, Rori B, Alice D, Esther D, Liza H, Lucy J, Honora P.

Copyright © 2026, Our Lady of Mercy College.

All rights reserved. This book is copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under Copyright Act, no part may be reproduced by any process without written permission. Enquiries should be made to the publisher.

## **Acknowledgement of Country**

The Sleep-deprived Sloths would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which this book was created, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

The Sleep-deprived Sloths would also like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which this book will be read. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

## **Thanks**

A special thanks to our teachers, Ms. Apfelstedt, Ms. Salamone, and Ms. Morrison, who gave us this opportunity and support throughout the day. We also extend our gratitude to Ava, who reviewed our book.

## **Dedication**

To all those who want a more flamboyant life or just a moment of drama, or some nothing at all. We wish you all joy in this novel, because you deserve it and nothing else. We send our love!

## Prologue

The crowd let out huge screams, and arguments broke out. The game had reached half time and now, here I was, a professional trapeze artist. Balancing on a platform opposite Eden, my closest rival, I shook under the spotlight. I had let out a hurried sigh when the music reached my ears, but something felt wrong as I gripped the bar above my head. Fully relying on the bar to support me, I put all my weight onto it.

Crack! The rope drooped and my heart dropped in my chest.

Landing on the net reminded me of the thousands of people in the audience. And while scanning the stadium for faces of disbelief, I was only more aggravated at the obvious culprit, Eden. They smugly continued their performance as if I was completely unimportant.

Absolutely humiliated.

I was ashamed at first, but when I was retrieved from where I was slung on the clingy mesh, my head burned with rage. All I could think about was her complacent behavior for the rest of their perfectly executed show. The cheers roared, at the stolen moment. People stood up in their chairs, clapping and I overlooked the disaster with only one thought: I would get them back.



## Chapter 1 - Eden

The spotlight shines **bright**, illuminating my body. My arms are up high in my final pose, the crowd cheering in front of me.

“You did so well.” My coach says once I’m safely off the stage, I smile, too tired to say anything more. I take a seat on the side and look up to see Ian. His moves are graceful as he swings up into the air and suddenly as if he was hit, he falls.

The crowd gasps as their swan falls into the **elastic** net. Brutally. The rest was a blur and now they were all looking at me.

“He’s demanding a lawsuit,” my coach says finally.

“What?!” But I didn’t do it, how many times do I have to say that before they believe me.

“Why do they think I did it anyway?” I grumble.

“Because you guys are rivals!”

“No we’re not!” A pause. “Honestly I don’t care anymore, they can do whatever.”

“Come on, we’re going to win this thing, so get up, we’ve got a lawyer to meet.”

## Chapter 2 - Ollie

I stand behind my desk, jogging on a built in treadmill, drinking a thinning black coffee. I love the smell of paperwork at 5 o'clock in the morning. It's almost completely dark out, daylight still not caught up yet. I have my hair pulled back from my face with a blue headband, dressed in navy spandex, keeping my voice perfectly steady while speaking to a customer on the other side of the open comm in my ear.

"No, sir, you can't order pizza at this phone address. Please go and call your nearest Dominos." As the gentlemen's tinny voice shouts through, I end the call, closing my eyes as an aggressive sigh leaves my chest. I take a long sip of my coffee and keep going. I hear the familiar sound of Maggie teleporting in front of my desk. I huff an agitated sigh, walking faster on the treadmill until it creaks. "I'm busy," I say, not looking up from my laptop, though I do glance at him to read what's on his face.

"Someone needs your help." I tense, raising my head completely, fingers stilling over the keyboard.

"Show me" I say simply.

Maggie shifts, his largely rectangular body turning to the side, letting in a drag queen, though not in the from the famous circus I recognise from the TV inside. They are not dressed in their usual attire like the TV but I recognise them nonetheless. Their thoughts are louder than I care to admit. They're panicked and flustered, probably embarrassed to be here in the first place.

"Can I help you?" I question blandly, devoid of the emotion that was probably shown by the receptionist and Maggie.

"I need help." They smile tightly, unable to meet my eyes, which irritates me.

"I heard," I answer simply, stepping off the treadmill and wrapping a towel around my neck deftly. "Explain to me. I want details."

They ramble, looking like they're about to cry and by what I get from it, Eden claims they have been framed for sabotaging their friend Ian's performance and this man's threatening to sue Eden for something they might not have done.

It wouldn't be smart to trust them now, but I'll give them a chance. This angered me, one of the only emotions I feel regularly. Irritation. I step closer, watching them break down about this accusation that could take their whole career away in a single order.

In response I say, "I'll help. Tell me what I need to do."

### Chapter 3 - Maggie

I know I may be but a mere chalkboard, but I'm always on top of what's going on around me. And what's going on around Ollie; the silly shazza doesn't even know where her own feet are, the way she runs on that treadmill. Oh well, it's fine, I've lived 100 years, and I'll live 100 more.

I know Eden was framed, and Ollie's coming round to the idea of it. Something like this could be detrimental for that reputation of theirs, but I trust that Ollie will get them out of this mess. She's never failed a case in her whole 12 months of being a lawyer. And she's had a lot of cases, like the one about the guy who stole Ms. Marjorie's prize-winning strawberry. The poor old woman was devastated; it turned out she had already entered it in the farming competition, and they had it on a mantelpiece. Or the one about Mr. Smith's noise complaint because he refuses to get a quieter air fryer. There was also the one about the trapeze artist who got framed! Oh, that's this one. She's only had 2 cases before this one. 12 months and only up to her third case, jeez, I'm glad I'm not a lawyer. Or a small child. Both are horrible life-path choices.

While Ollie and Eden squabble about the drastic **event** at hand, I roll my squeaky wheels into the corner and practice my favourite activity. Reorganizing my chalk basket. I have a three-by-three chalk box clipped to my side with one row of white chalk, then red, orange, yellow, green, blue and purple, in that order. Unfortunately, my yellow chalk went missing. Even more unfortunately, my next chalk order doesn't come until next month.

Well, I guess you're tired of hearing from a chalkboard wingman; I'll pass over to Eden; see if they have some sense. They really do make a good pair, Eden and Ollie; I hope they get along in the end.

## Chapter 4 - Eden

This lawyer is so tea and her suit, my GOSH! Her suit is beautifully **crisp** and neat! Could use some more colour and maybe some glitter to spice it up. And this office is unfortunately so bland. Where is the colour in the wall decor! There aren't even any sculptures.

Despite all of the gaudy decor, there is something more important. WHY AM I GETTING SUED! I thought Ian and I were friends, why does he think I would do something so ludicrous?

I turn to Ollie and start to complain, "I didn't even do anything! How could he do this?"

Ollie just shrugs her shoulders, and starts talking about 'reasonable suspicion' and 'Probably because' and then I catch the mention of a motive.

"WAIT a *motive*? What is my *motive*? Ian and I were friends, did the hours of complete *slavery* to our friendship mean nothing!" I contort my face in shock. "Ian is a great trapeze artist! What would I have against him?" I couldn't help crossing my arms, sipping my Solo as I contemplate the **event**.

Ollie sighs. "As I was trying to explain before, your motive could be that you were jealous because Ian was better regarded than you. It's also reasonable to assume because you were right before him," Ollie explains. I think I fell asleep just nodding along to her mind-numbing explanation.

I lost my only friend, I think, while tapping my hands on the table. I start contemplating how I used to make friends, people always thought I was insulting them. Ian knew me, I think, maybe he just never felt insulted, and I really looked up to him but he seemed really hurt. I hope I didn't do anything.

"OI MATE, are you listening? This is important. I'm explaining our course of action" Ollie smashes her fist on the table in front of me and gestures to the... chalk board?

"I'm going to get a drink, read through my notes and make sure you commit it to memory. I guess in your case you should at least try." She stands up and marches out the door.

After that strict woman saunters out, I stand to look at the chalk board.

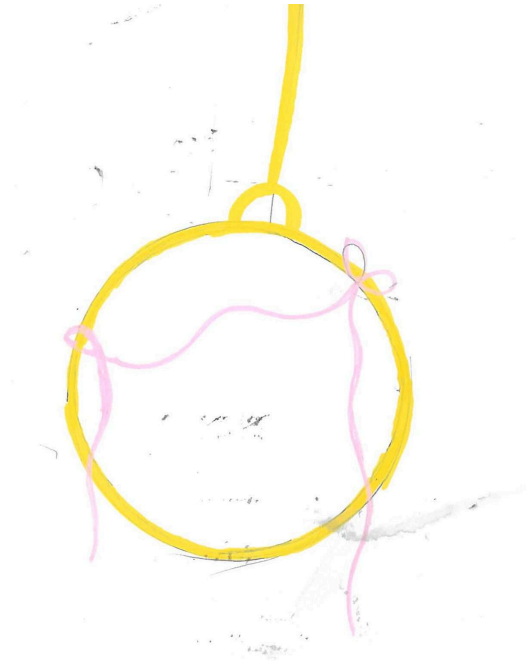
"What an old thing... Who even uses these scratchy, screechy antiques?" I yawn, my eyes flitting over the notes; 'don't argue with Ian, don't go near him, deny everything, don't make statements, dates for court, I'm not old you feral yobbo'... *Feral yobbo?*

The words are erased and are quickly replaced by a face and the message: "OI! It's rude to stare, how you gonna make friends like that yah wombat headed sook!"

My face pales and I quickly swoon into the seat next to me. What on God's earth was I looking at? The board keeps changing, asking questions and being quite rude and insulting.

“What *are* you!?” I practically screech. I grapple for something near me in case I need to protect myself from whatever the heck is happening. The Board keeps frantically erasing words all by itself and writing things.

Finally the door opens and I can only imagine what Ollie’s face looks like, probably still bland.



## Chapter 5 - Ollie

"He's harmless." I look from Maggie to Eden, expression never softening.

"He's talking!" Eden exclaims, breathing into my brown paper bag I provided after I set my lunch on my table instead.

"He's a chalkboard," I say calmly, gently patting his head with zero sympathy.

"He shouldn't be talking!" Eden yelps indignantly, flinging my poor paper bag as Maggie feigns a lunge forward, writing in large bold letters on his flat face "HAHAHAHAHA!"

"He's here to help," I assure, slapping Maggie away with a frustrated glare, startling Maggie into wiping his screen clear of the mocking letters. I turn back to Eden, who's now fainted. I grab my chia seed water filled bottle and splash it over his face. He jolts sharply, eyes wide. I smirk, real amusement on my face before I mask it, sitting down beside him with a heavy thud, hands folded in my lap. "Maggie's my great-grandmother's chalk board when she was a teacher in her day. I found it in her attic." I don't flinch when Maggie buzzes violently, eyes darkening with acceptance. "He doesn't like it when he's called an inanimate object, do you, Mag?" I taunt, leaning back comfortably, smirking. "But you are, so deal with it." He buzzes louder, glitching before storming off, words being brutally scribbled on his chalk board. I turn to face Eden who's stunned, but hiding a smile.

"Wow," they grin, watching this chalk board wheel itself out of a room. I nod, completely composed.

"How immature of a supposed chalk board" I say loud enough for Maggie to hear, turning back to look at Eden. "I'll meet you back at the MCG after your performance." I stand abruptly, opening the door for him as he walks through. "Drive safely and I'll see you soon."

## Chapter 6 - Eden

Today I had another **event** at the MCG. I could hear the crowd and the cheers for the AFL teams. Everything was normal, going how it always did. I arrive, I get ready, I line up. I try to talk to my team, but they are even more wary of me than usual. Everyone I attempt to talk to nods and turns away, a couple even just ignored me completely.

This is because of Ian, but no one here believes in me. This is infuriating, I can even see him getting sympathy for a bruised rib. Everyone gets those, even in training! Throughout the entire performance I let my anger simmer, nothing, not the calls from the audience, not the **bright** lights, not even my ring brought comfort. Especially since Ian refused to partner with me and everyone was frowning at me. By the end of the performance, I'd had enough.

I strut straight to Ian afterwards. "Ian, do you seriously think I sabotaged you? We're friends, why on earth would I do that?" As I continue my anger-filled speech I see Ian stand up and before I know it, we are in a ginormous argument.

"Oh, I don't know, Eden, you were right next to me and you know you're rather **clumsy!**" He starts mocking me and yelling at me as the fight escalates.

When the coach finally breaks it up I expect him to defend me and maybe make Ian apologise. As I keep my poised posture and try to relax my expression, I hear the coach ask for *my* apology. Despite my protests I am humiliated into giving in and apologising.

I just wish Ian didn't think I made him fall.

## Chapter 7 - Maggie

I roll from side to side on the dark red patterned carpet of Ollie's office, trying to get her attention. Eventually she steps off her treadmill and turns around to face me. My chalk rises and hurriedly scribbles down the news.

"Eden and Ian met in the change rooms at the MCG." My chalk duster glided across the writing, making space for this next bit. "Eden accused Ian of framing them. A fight broke out and escalated quickly. There was yelling, mocking, and things were gonna get physical if the coach didn't step in when he did."

Ollie sighs and rubs her temples. "I told them not to speak with Ian; this is going to seriously screw over their case. I'll call them into my office. Thanks, Maggie."

"They're already waiting in the corridor." I scrawl.

"Alright, send them in."

I roll into the green button, and the slide door smoothly slides open, revealing Eden awkwardly standing in the corridor with their hands behind their back and a sheepish smile on their face. They step inside and walk around to Ollie's desk.

I know it may not look like much now, but young'uns change and grow. They're perfect for each other. I really do hope they become best friends. At least Ollie believes Eden got framed now. It's interesting; none of this would've happened if it weren't for that little kid. My goodness, did I forget to mention? The reason Ian fell was that when I was watching the half-time show, a small child, maybe around 7 years old, came up to me and stole my yellow chalk. Just took it! Without a care in the world! But that's not the worst part; the small child then proceeded to throw the chalk at Ian's performance, and it hit a piece of equipment, causing him to fall. Eden had nothing to do with it.

Well, there you go, the real reason behind this calamity. But also the reason behind a new friendship.

## Chapter 8 - Eden

At Ollie's office we were in a heated argument, somehow she'd find out about Ian's and my argument.

"WHAT WERE YOU *THINKING*?!" Ollie screams in my face, her usual composure lost.

"I WAS THINKING I COULD FIX IT!" I cried back, tears streaking down my face. My makeup was ruined, mascara running, face splotchy.

"I thought—"

"That's the issue! You *thought*! You didn't ask or even talk to me about your plan!" She yells, exasperated. I could see her fighting not to scream at me and to regain her composure.

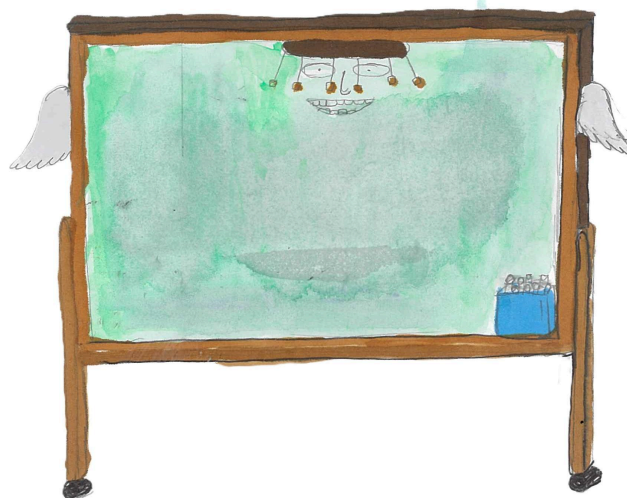
"You would've told me not too!" A sad attempt to defend myself.

"FOR THIS EXACT REASON. YOU INTERFERING AND CAUSING AN ARGUMENT MIGHT'VE JUST RUINED OUR CASE!" She finally exploded, continuously picking and needing every action I took.

All I can do is weakly defend myself. What was I supposed to do? I just wanted to be Ian's friend again and no matter how hard I try to explain, Ollie doesn't care at all.

"What do you want me to do!? HONESTLY!" She continued to grumble until she sat down at her desk

Finally the argument had begun to calm down and Ollie, though she was still insulting me, began to reorganise folders and talk about 'rearranging the whole strategy' I couldn't help but fiddle with the pen in front of me, thinking of my ruined friendships; Ian and now Ollie.



## Chapter 9 - Ollie

As we finished up with the argument, I couldn't help but continue grumbling insults. What were they thinking?

"Honestly Eden, do you want to win this case at all, because with the way you're going we'll get nowhere you know that right?" I absentmindedly mutter.

From the corner of my eye I saw Eden angrily fiddle with the pen in front of them. "Want to *win*? I don't care, I'm just furious that my supposed friend thinks I hurt him! OH RIGHT I guess we aren't friends anymore." I could see them getting increasingly more agitated and worked up.

Maggie began writing a message for me "Oi, ya drongo! Go sort out ya mate, they're having a proper shocker."

Of course Maggie would say that.

I looked towards Eden and I realised I really did sympathize with him. "Hey Eden, I know it isn't.. er, fair to you and uhhh everything, but you know." I paused with my apparent realisation that I'm really *really* miserable at comforting people. "Not only will I make sure to win but I don't doubt once we find who did push Ian, that you two will become friends again."

At that, Eden smiled weakly and agreed hopefully. I think I just made a friend...Even so as we continued to work on our defence in the case, I suddenly saw a message from Maggie.

"Nek minnit, I pretty much figured it out. Some little scrub nicked me chalk and chucked it straight at that bloke Ian." He stated, a smug looking chalk drawn face next to it.

Even as I jumped out of my chair in shock and mumbled about the revelation I could see the confusion on Eden's face as he asked what that even meant.

"It means that you didn't make Ian fall, some weird kid did!" I exclaimed. Finally we just need to find some footage and this is our case. I couldn't help but clap Eden on the back as I ran to get the evidence from the stadium.

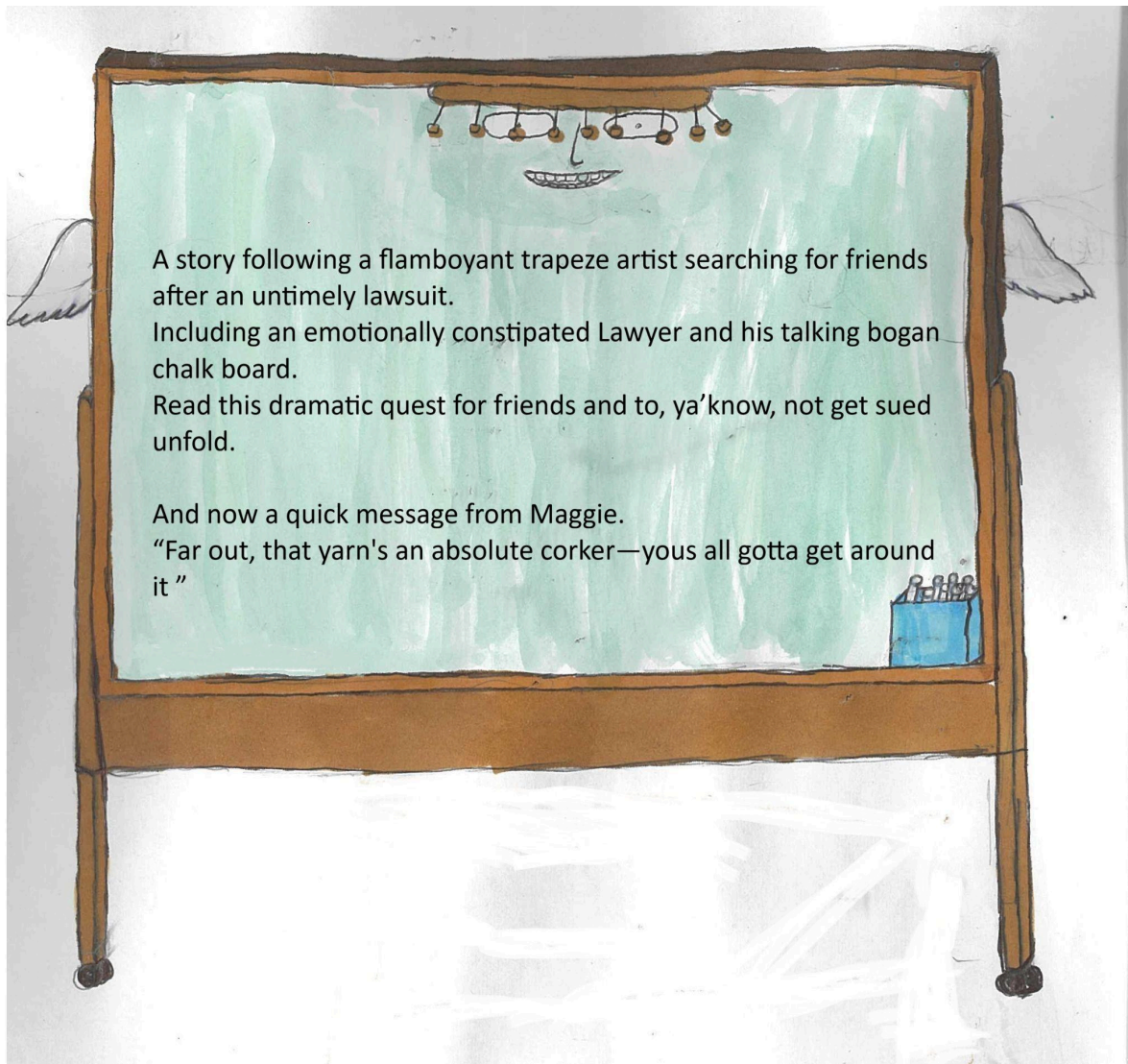
## Epilogue

Eden walked onto the platform. The crowd erupted in cheers as the spotlight was on them. They took a deep breath, watching the ring swinging towards them and flung themselves off the platform, arms outstretched. Their hair flew from beneath them and for a moment everything was still, nothing mattered, only Eden, the beautiful bird in flight. They grabbed the ring and flipped, now sitting in the center ring, performing a series of tricks, before balancing in the rim of the ring and... falling into a sea of white feathers. The lights went dark, only one spotlight was still glistening and from the feathers they rose.

"Here, have a Golden Gay...time." Ollie offers the Golden Gaytime clasped in her outstretched hand.

"Thank you." Eden responds, with a small smile playing on their lips. "And to Maggie. Here is a new yellow chalk," Eden says, turning over and placing the new chalk into the container.

And then at that moment, Eden realises that they finally have friends.



A story following a flamboyant trapeze artist searching for friends after an untimely lawsuit.

Including an emotionally constipated Lawyer and his talking bogan chalk board.

Read this dramatic quest for friends and to, ya'know, not get sued unfold.

And now a quick message from Maggie.

"Far out, that yarn's an absolute corker—yous all gotta get around it "

### Reviews

"Next time I need a wingman I will call upon a sentient whiteboard. A thrilling piece of media!"

Ava

### Age Recommendation

12-15 years of age