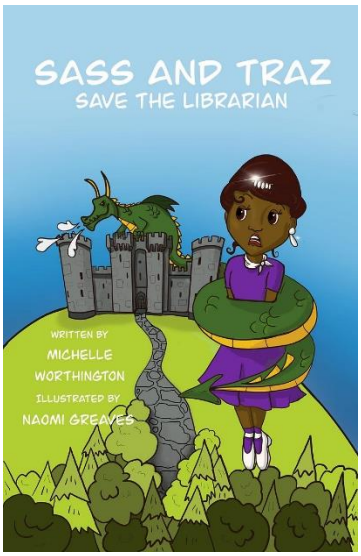
Teacher Notes



Sass and Traz Save the Librarian

by Michelle Worthington

with illustrations by Naomi Greaves

Publisher: Daisy Lane Publishing

ISBN:978-0-6489045-3-3

Recommended for 5 – 8-year-olds

Contents

About *Sass and Traz Save the Librarian*

- The blurb
- Synopsis

About the author

Relevance to the Australian Curriculum

Activities and discussion suggestions

Links to the Australian Curriculum

About *Sass and Traz Save the Librarian*

In *Sass and Traz Save the Librarian*, our two heroes are back in another adventure. After saving the library from being demolished in the first of the series *Sass and Traz Save the Library*, now they must use their knowledge, intuition, problem solving skills and courage to save their friend the librarian who has gone missing.

Sass and Traz Save the Librarian is a stereotype-busting celebration of friendship, books, knowledge and story. It encourages children to use their imaginations as they interact with and create their own versions of familiar stories. At the same time, they are encouraged to understand that stories are told for different purposes by different authors and that stories, even histories, may differ according to who is doing the telling.

The blurb

Sassafras and Alcatraz are twins who couldn't be more different, except for the fact that they love their local librarian Ms Burns.

When she goes missing, they must do everything in their power to save her, even travelling back in time.

Synopsis

Sass and Traz are twins who share 'the same-coloured green eyes and golden hair, but on the inside, apart from an annoying ability to speak at the same time, they hardly agreed on anything … (but) there was one thing they did agree on. Ms Burns was the most wonderful friend that anyone could wish for'. (p 11–12)

While their mother is coaching their big brother's football team on the weekend, they spend time in the library, which overlooks the oval. Ms Burns, the librarian and their mother's best friend, keeps an eye on them.

One Saturday when Sass and Traz arrive, the library is eerily quiet. Ms Burns is nowhere to be found. Traz finds an open book lying on the library floor. It is *The legend of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table.* The children remember how much Ms Burns had liked Sir Lancelot when King Arthur and the knights had come to life when they were trying to save the library. And when they see Tea, Ms Burns's pet T-Rex that had also come to life, they know something really is wrong. Ms Burns would never leave Tea.

The children realise that, instead of Sir Lancelot coming to life out of the pages of the book, this time Ms Burns has been sucked into the book. Soon they are sucked in too on an adventure to save their friend.

With a pop and a flash of light, they find they have travelled back in time to King Arthur's library in Camelot. When they inform the king that the librarian is missing, King Arthur tells them that one of his knights is missing too — Lancelot.

As they endeavour to solve the mystery of the missing librarian and bring their friend back home, they encounter many other things familiar from fantasy books, including characters, fantastic creatures and magic.

First, they meet Queen Guinevere who is definitely not happy at the thought that *her* Lancelot may be missing with the librarian. When she orders the knights to imprison them with 'the others', they are aided and rescued by a wizard named Merlin and a dragon called Daisy, neither of whom are quite like those they know from books.

While their entire adventure takes place in the past, time stands still in the current world, and they return home at the same moment they left.

About the author

Michelle Worthington is an international award-winning author having published 20 children's books. Two-time winner of the International Book Award and finalist in the USA Best Book Awards. Michelle also received a Gellett Burgess Award and a Silver Moonbeam Award for her contributions to celebrating diversity in literature. She is also an award-winning Screen Writer, loves coffee and camping and is a real-life book fairy.

Find out more about Michelle from her website: https://www.michelleworthington.com/.

Relevance to the Australian Curriculum

Sass and Traz Save the Librarian is a useful resource for teaching in the Literature and Literacy strands of the English Curriculum Years 2 and 3. It is great for reading aloud or used as a set class text.

It can be used as a springboard for developing skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing and creating as children listen to and engage with the text for enjoyment.

Extension suggestions provide ways of linking the story with other curriculum areas including HASS, Science and the General Capabilities.

Activities and discussions

Myths and Legends

Myths and legends are not the same. What do the children know about myths and legends?

List myths and legends they know. Compare them. How are they similar? How do they differ?

In *Sass and Traz Save the Librarian*, Queen Guinevere asks Sass and Traz if they know the difference.

Traz says, '*A myth is a story almost all told with symbols and metaphors. It's a story that might only be a little bit true*." (Page 31)

Traz says, '*Legends are different because they are about people. The adventures of the person might be told over and over again, with extra detail added or exaggerated*.' (Page 32)

Do the children agree with Traz's definitions?

The book that Queen Guinevere read from was a 'handwritten diary'. How does a handwritten diary differ from a printed book? What does it tell you about the story the queen was reading?

Write your own myths and legends.

Time Travel

In *Sass and Traz Save the Librarian*, Sass and Traz travel back in time to King Arthur's Camelot. Time Travel is a feature of many stories. List stories in which involve time travel.

If you could, what time in history would you travel back to and why?

Nicknames

Sass and Traz are nicknames. They are shortened versions of longer names.

Discuss the children's names. How many of them are shortened (or lengthened) to create nicknames? Discuss reasons for using nicknames.

Character descriptions

Write character descriptions for each of the main characters:

Sass (see page 11 for starting ideas)

Traz (see page 11 for starting ideas)

King Arthur (see page 23 for starting ideas)

Queen Guinevere (see page 27 for starting ideas)

Merlin (see page 43 for starting ideas)

Daisy (see page 43 for starting ideas)

Compare Sass and Traz. They are twins. How are they alike? How are they different?

What twins do you know? How are they alike? How are they different?

Goals, achievements and stereotypes

What did Queen Guinevere really what to be? (Page 36)

How did she feel when she couldn't be a knight?

What did she decide to do?

Finish the sentence, 'Instead of using her knowledge for good, she would …'

What would you like to be? Is there anything stopping you? How can you change that?

Discuss how these characterisations bust stereotypes:

Merlin is a girl. (Page 42)

Daisy the dragon 'wouldn't hurt a fly'. (Page 44)

Who is helping who? (Page 52)

Why did Ms Burns say she went to Camelot?

Why did the children go to Camelot?

What did Lancelot think he was doing?

Why didn't the merry maidens want to stay in Camelot?

What comes next?

Lancelot asks if anyone can smell smoke? (Page 76)

What do you think he might be smelling?

Cleo, the twins mother asks if she smells smoke and 'A thick white mist was rising, clouding the outside of the library windows. The floor beneath their feet felt warm. Every now and then, it rumbled.' (Page 80)

What do you think it might be?

What happens next? Write the first chapter of the next adventure.

Quotes about books, learning and life

These are suitable for discussion or for presenting on posters or bookmarks.

Queen Guinevere: '*Books hold the answer to everything*.' (Page 34)

Merlin: '*What she (Queen Guinevere) doesn't understand is that even though books can be important tools for knowledge, the real magic is when they inspire you to seek the truth for yourself.'* (Page 46)

Merlin: '*The story, the picture, and the song are totally different from one another because they are written by different people. Sometimes they're not wrong, or right, just different. History books are different. They are written by the winner*.' (Page 47)

Merlin: '*Knowledge by itself isn't dangerous. It is how people use that knowledge*.' (Page 47)

What Queen Guinevere learned from fairy tales: '*Life is difficult, bad things happen to good people and the people who love you don't always love you back. The only person you can rely on is yourself.*' (Page 67)

Traz: '*In our world, the good guys aren't always courageous and true. The bad guys don't have pointy horns or black hats so you can tell who they are, and you can't always defeat them and save the day.*' (Page 68)

Sass: '*You can be powerful without being mean*.' (Page 70)

Figurative language

The author has used many similes and metaphors throughout the book. Discuss some of them and how they are used to enhance meaning. Write some of your own.

Examples:

Similes

P 10 the library smelt like vanilla ice cream, wild flowers and sugar-coated almonds

P 23 as sharp as a butter knife

P 23 the heavy red cloak that hung from his shoulders made him look like a walking circus tent

P 24 bumping into each other like windchimes

P27 looked like it would drip blood when she moved

P 31 Traz felt like he was in the tractor beam of an alien spaceship

P 55 fell backwards like bowling pins

P 70 bristled like a cranky cat

P 76 like streams of melted chocolate

Metaphors

P 33 the grace of a flamenco dancer

P 60 The blazing sun was about to explode. (in reference to an angry Guinevere)

Vocabulary development

Some words may need to be explained or children can be encouraged to look them up, for example:

P 34 lodestone

P 35 chivalry

P 51 ricocheted

P 51 hand churned butter

P 54 iridescent

P 57 minions

P 65 translucent

Why did Queen Guinevere refer to Traz's wheelchair as a metal chariot? (Page 36)

History / Critical thinking

'It made him (Traz) think about what he had learned from books and taken it as truth and whether any other history books might have got some details wrong.' (Page 44)

Merlin: '*The story, the picture, and the song are totally different from one another because they are written by different people. Sometimes they're not wrong, or right, just different. History books are different. They are written by the winner*.' (Page 47)

Discuss the quotes. Read different versions of history. (We have some different versions of history even in Australia.) Discuss how history may differ according to the viewpoint of the author.

Discuss that an author's purpose and viewpoint influence the way information is presented or a story is told. Encourage children to interrogate what they read for an author's viewpoint, purpose and position.

List any discrepancies children may notice in viewpoints between stories, including histories.

Science

Physical sciences

Magnets, pushes and pulls

Traz: '*A magnet doesn't just push things away. It can attract*.' (Page 48)

Investigate pushes and pulls.

Biological sciences

Features of living things

'*glow worms lit up the cave roof*' (Page 51)

Investigate glow worms and what makes them glow.

Why did the queen refer to Tea as a dragon? (Page 36)

What is Tea? (T-Rex)

What are the similarities and differences between a dinosaur (T-Rex) and a dragon?

Links to the Australian Curriculum

English

Literature Strand

Literature and context

Year 2	• Discuss how depictions of characters in print, sound and images reflect the contexts in which they were created (ACELT1587)
Year 3	• Discuss texts in which characters, events and settings are portrayed in different ways, and speculate on the authors' reasons (ACELT1594)

Responding to literature

Year 2	• Compare opinions about characters, events and settings in and between texts (ACELT1589)
Year 3	• Draw connections between personal experiences and the worlds of texts, and share responses with others (ACELT1596) • Develop criteria for establishing personal preferences for literature (ACELT1598)

Examining literature

Year 2	• Discuss the characters and settings of different texts and explore how language is used to present these features in different ways (ACELT1591)
Year 3	• 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) • Discuss the nature and effects of some language devices used to enhance meaning and shape the reader's reaction, including rhythm and onomatopoeia in poetry and prose (ACELT1600)

Creating literature

Year 2	• Create events and characters using different media that develop key events and characters from literary texts (ACELT1593)
Year 3	• 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)

Literacy Strand

Texts in context

Year 3	• Identify the point of view in a text and suggest alternative points of view (ACELY1675)

Interacting with others

Year 3	• Listen to and contribute to conversations and discussions to share information and ideas and negotiate in collaborative situations (ACELY1676) • Use interaction skills, including active listening behaviours and communicate in a clear, coherent manner using a variety of everyday and learned vocabulary and appropriate tone, pace, pitch and volume (ACELY1792)

Interpreting, analysing, evaluating

Year 3	• 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)

Creating texts

Year 3	• Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts demonstrating increasing control over text structures and language features and selecting print, and multimodal elements appropriate to the audience and purpose (ACELY1682)

Science

Science Understanding

Biological sciences

Year 2	• Living things grow, change and have offspring similar to themselves (ACSSU030)
Year 3	• Living things can be grouped on the basis of observable features and can be distinguished from non-living things (ACSSU044)

Physical sciences

Year 2	• A push or a pull affects how an object moves or changes shape (ACSSU033)

HASS

Inquiry and skills

Analysing

Year 2	• Explore a point of view (ACHASSI038)
Year 3	• Examine information to identify different points of view and distinguish facts from opinions (ACHASSI056)

General Capabilities

- Literacy
- Critical and Creative Thinking