

Teachers' Resource Kit

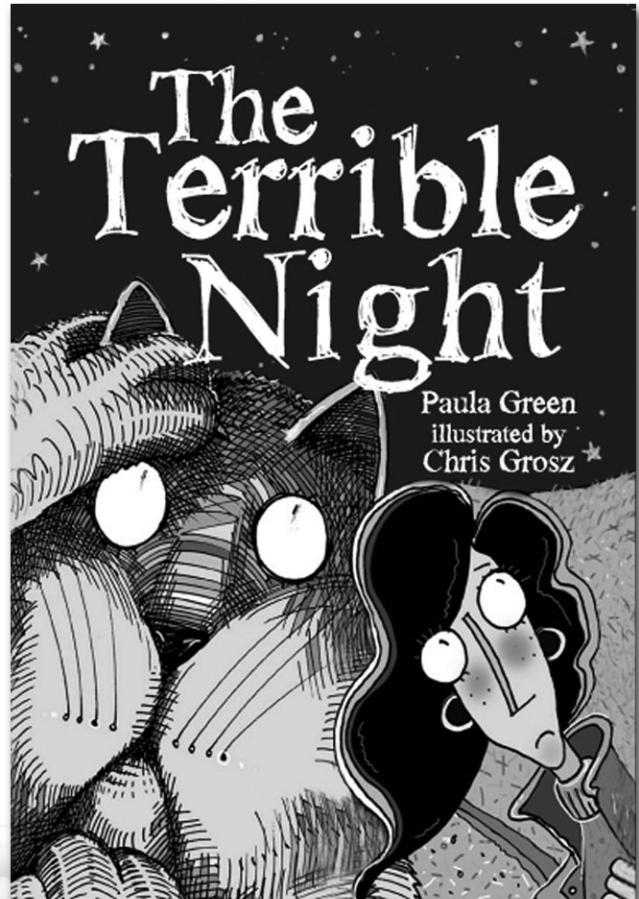
# The Terrible Night

Paula Green

It's parent/teacher night at school and Miss May sits alone in Room 28 looking out at the dark and stormy night. A beautiful cat comes to visit and together their imaginations run wild. They create all sorts of scenarios that are much worse than the terrible night outside. Full of wonderful words, references to much loved children's books, mad adventures and happy endings, *The Terrible Night* is a fun read for children and adults alike.

## PAULA GREEN

**Paula Green** is a well known New Zealand poet for adults and she is also the editor of *Flamingo Bendalingo*, a collection of children's poetry. Illustrator Chris Grosz is an artist who has illustrated many children's books.



Notes include classroom activities for students aged 7–9 in the following areas

- Reading Comprehension
- Language Features
  - Similes
  - Descriptive Words
- Creative Responses
- Written Responses
- Cats
- Reading
- Illustrations

Teachers' notes developed by Raymond Huber



*The Terrible Night* is published by Random House New Zealand Ltd.  
Private Bag 102950, North Shore Mail Centre, Auckland  
tel: 09 444 7197, fax: 09 444 7524  
email: [customerservice@randomhouse.co.nz](mailto:customerservice@randomhouse.co.nz)

## Comprehension Questions

- Why is Miss May so upset about the storm? (p.10)
- What is her reaction to the cat? Is she frightened of the cat? How do you know her feelings? (p.10)
- Why is there a chapter break in the middle of a sentence? (p.11)
- Who do you think the cat is? Where might it have come from?
- What does the word 'compliment' mean? (p.20)
- What is the name of Harry Potter's school? (p.37)
- Why are the words SCREAM (and other words) in capital letters? (p.38)
- What does the word 'divine' mean? (p.41)
- What is a 'deafening sigh'? (p.43) Try to make this sound.
- Why did they get stuck up the tree? (p.44)
- How tall is the Auckland Harbour Bridge? (p.45)
- What is 'brain food'? (p.50)
- Where is Brazil? (p.52) Find it on a map. Do you think this is a true story about people living in a dump?
- What is another name for a dog patrol car? (p.63)
- What is the title of the movie that the cat is talking about? (pp 76, 77)
- How big do you think the cat is? (p.85) Why is it bigger in the illustrations? (p.9)
- At the end, do you think the children will hear Sandy talking too?
- What kind of story is this? Fantasy, adventure, humourous or true?

## Language Features

### Similes

- A simile is a way of comparing things to help the reader get a more vivid picture.
- Illustrate similes from the book using cartoon drawings:
  - 'Wind like a wild beast' (p.8)
  - Wind like being 'in a giant washing machine' (p.30)
  - 'Stomach like a volcano' (p.71)
  - 'A sound like one-metre-long fingernails scraping down a blackboard' (p.71)

## Descriptive Words

- Read page 19 and identify some of the describing words (adjectives) and action words (verbs) that are used in this passage about a mountain. Write a description of being lost in a desert or in a jungle – use creative adjectives and verbs, and similes.
- Make a list of the monster verbs used on pages 70 and 71. Make up your own monster words.
- What scene in *The Cat in the Hat* is being described on page 82? Find the picture in the original book.

## Creative Responses

- Create a comic strip using the events from pages 13, 14 and 15 (or any of the cat's tales). Use comic book conventions such as frames, speech and thought bubbles, capital letters, exclamation marks, sound-effect words and exaggerated characters.
- Paint a picture of the giant wind storm on page 30. Use long and swirling brush strokes to show the wind. Add another layer of collage pictures cut from magazines to show items being blown around.
- Read page 44 and imagine you are at the top of the tree. Sketch your point of view looking down on the rooftops and streets. Then sketch the opposite point of view, looking up at the people in the tree.
- Draw a 'Wanted Poster' using the character of Jed the cat from page 56.
- Draw a comic character of the dog from page 60.
- Draw the beast at the door from page 70. Shade your picture with dark pencil tones or dark, gloomy colours to make it scary.
- Design a new cover for the book.
- Design a poster to advertise the book.
- Develop a board game based on the book. Include some of the disasters from the story and a list of instructions for players.

## Written Responses

- Tall Tales: A tall tale is an exaggerated story based on real life but taken to extremes. Use the opening line ‘It could be worse...’ as a starter for a tall tale about your trip to school this morning. Illustrate your story.
- Poetry: Write a poem about the dramatic storm in the book. Include similes and words that describe sounds, feelings, smells and colour.
- Theme: What do you think is the theme (main idea) of the book? It’s partly about gloomy feelings and how to deal with them. How does the cat help Miss May with her feelings? How does fantasy (story-telling) help? What does ‘counting your blessings’ mean? Make a list of things in your life that you are thankful for.
- Menu: Write your own favourite food menu (p. 23) for a five-course meal. Design a menu to stand on a table.
- Review: Write a review of the book. Consider illustrations, writing style, strands of the story, your personal response, and suggest a suitable age group for the book.
- Endings: Extend the ending of the book. How might the children react to the cat? What strange things happen during class time with the cat?
- Letter: Write a letter to Miss May telling her about a terrible night you had.
- Play: Write a short play called ‘The Terrible Day’ about the disasters that happen in a classroom one day.

## Cats

- Cat Sayings: There are a lot of sayings about cats. Explain the meaning of the following sayings:
  - When the cat’s away, the mice will play.
  - Let the cat out of the bag.
  - To play cat and mouse.
  - Curiosity killed the cat.
  - Look what the cat dragged in.
  - Not enough room to swing a cat.
  - The cat has got your tongue.
- Choose one saying to illustrate in a funny cartoon.

## Reading

- Several children's classics are used in the story: *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Holes*, *Harry Potter*, *Where the Wild Things Are*, and *Boy Overboard*.
- Find one of these books in the library and read it.
- Find some good cat stories for Miss May's class library.

## Illustrations

- How do the illustrations make you feel?
- What attracts your attention in an illustration?
- Do the illustrations go beyond what the story tells you? Or do they show only what the text describes?
- Do the illustrations suit the story?
- What parts of the story has the illustrator chosen to draw?
- Choose an episode from the book and illustrate it.