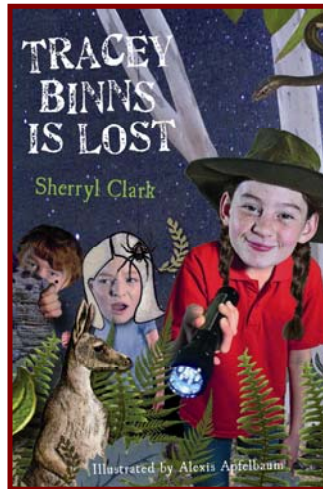


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TRACEY BINNS IS LOST

Sherryl Clark



Teachers' Notes

Written by Sherryl Clark

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SYNOPSIS

Tracey Binns is Lost is the second in Sherryl Clark's *Tracey Binns* series. Together with familiar characters such as Tracey's best friend Isabella and the antagonistic Justin Zit-Face, the students at Tracey's school are forced into a strict exercise and healthy eating regime by their unpopular PE teacher, Mr Gunning.

Determined to increase fitness levels, Mr Gunning (Mr G) plans a strenuous camp that sees the students roughing it, pitching their own tents and using survival skills to fend for themselves.

When Tracey's group gets lost, Mr G comes to their rescue, only to end up hurt and stranded himself. It is up to Tracey to put all she has learnt into practise and push herself beyond her boundaries to help her friends. Tracey Binns is in trouble again!

The first book in the series is *Tracey Binns is Trouble*.

THEMES**Relationships**

- Tracey's friendship with Isabella is strong and lasting.
- Tracey's relationship with her parents is much improved in this second book. They are spending more time with her and this theme has followed on from the first book, *Tracey Binns is Trouble*.
- The antagonist Justin, who teases Tracey constantly, is being harassed by his older brother, Elbow.
- Justin eventually shows his good side by helping to save Elliott.

Bullying

- Justin bullies others by teasing them. The reader later discovers that he does this as a reaction to his own mistreatment by his brother.

Health and Fitness

- The need for fitness and healthy eating are emphasised.

WRITING STYLE

Tracey Binns is Lost is told in the first person. Visual literacy is included through the collage illustrations interspersed throughout the text. These further enhance the story, especially helping the reader to gauge the emotions and qualities of the minor characters. The narration is realistic and contemporary, yet light and humorous.

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AUTHOR MOTIVATION

When I was at high school, I worked in the school tuckshop a couple of days a week. Our “pay” was a free lunch, and it was really hard to choose a healthy sandwich instead of a hot meat pie or a yummy cream bun.

Over the past year or two, I’ve noticed a lot of media coverage of childhood obesity, and some of the blame has been placed on school tuckshops. At my daughter’s primary school back around 1990, there was discussion about changing the tuckshop menu, and they decided if they took away all the junk food, the tuckshop wouldn’t make any money!

I wondered at the time how true that might be.

Now, in my suburb, many schools are choosing to sell healthy alternatives in their tuckshops, and kids are involved in growing vegetables and learning about how to eat better. The schools also include exercise and sports programs, and get the parents involved.

Of course, what makes a good story is not about sticking totally to the facts! A more interesting, entertaining story comes from exaggeration. And I knew if someone tried to tell Tracey what to do, she’d soon object. But Tracey’s school goes totally overboard with their new healthy-eating regime, led by an over-the-top PE teacher!

There are different kinds of bullying everywhere – not just between kids, but between adults and kids, and also between adults. Tracey stands up for herself, but she also stands up for others, which is a really important quality for her to have, I think. And I enjoyed being able to show another side of Justin Zit-face, too.

STUDY NOTES**Health and Fitness**

- Teach students about nutrition, food groups and healthy eating guidelines. Try some of the following websites:
 - The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating
<http://www.healthactive.gov.au/internet/healthactive/publishing.nsf/content/eating>
 - Healthy Eating Tips
http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Healthy_eating_for_children_and_adults?OpenDocument
 - Kids’ Health
<http://www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetailsKids.aspx?p=335&np=284&id=1665>

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- Keep a food journal for a week, noting everything that you eat and drink. Create a graph to show which food groups are present in your diet. Decide on any areas that need adjusting for the following week.
- Identify how healthy the food is that is being sold at the school tuckshop. In groups decide on new suggestions, develop a price list and present to the class for a vote. Meet with the head of the tuckshop to present the changes.
- Plan and enjoy a class healthy food picnic. Have students prepare food to share at the picnic. Make invitations and invite other members of the school community such as the principal.
- Using a software program such as Inspiration 7, create a mind map for the ultimate healthy sandwich, using ingredients from the five food groups on the healthy eating diagram on page 9.
- Decide on a class fitness goal for the month. Gradually build up the exercise each day to achieve the goal. Keep track of exercise being done outside of school hours by each student as well. Record and graph.
- Invite a GP or Dietician to talk with the students about the importance of healthy eating.

School Camps and Survival Skills

- Read this novel with the class before going on camp. In groups, brainstorm what school camps are like using the senses, for example, what would you see, hear, smell, touch and feel (emotionally) at a school camp?
- Write an account of a camp you've attended. Use a story graph to plot the account before writing. Focus on interesting episodes of the camp rather than retelling the ordinary aspects such as the food and the bus trip.
- Tracey learns how to make her own compass. Have students make their own compasses.
- Create an orienteering course around the school and have students use a compass to follow directions.
- Role play a survival situation in small groups. Give students a list of 10 resources – such as, water, matches, a tarpaulin, a tin of baked beans, a compass, a mobile phone, etc – for them to rank in order from the most to the least important if the students were lost in the desert.
- Read stories of real life survival from library books.
- Teach students some basic first aid skills such as bandaging, treatment of sprained ankles, asthma attacks, etc.

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Bullying

- Justin bullies others. We discover that his older brother, Elbow, has been bullying him. Discuss what motivates people to bully others and how to handle being bullied.
- Mr G is also depicted as a bully. Do you think he is a bully? Explain.
- Do you think that Justin will change now that he has helped Elliott? Discuss the value of feeling needed

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Sherryl Clark has been writing poems and stories for children for over twenty years. Her picture book, *Wednesday Was Even Worse*, was a CBCA Notable book and is still being read on *Playschool*. Her verse novel, *Farm Kids*, won the NSW Premier's Literary Award for Children's Books in 2005.

Sherryl has worked in community writing for many years and since 1996 she has been teaching in the Diploma of Arts – Professional Writing and Editing at Victoria University TAFE.