

# Pick 'n' Mix Volume 2

## Assorted Kiwi Stories

Authors: Well-known New Zealand Authors

### Text Type

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Pick 'n' Mix Volume 2 follows the hugely popular anthology of New Zealand short stories, Pick 'n' Mix Volume 1. This second book is an eclectic assortment of short stories written by a range of well-known New Zealand authors. Suitable for boys and girls ages 7-11 the stories are short, entertaining and engaging. The collection is humorously illustrated by Jenny Cooper (except for Finnigan and the Pirates which is illustrated by author Sherryl Jordan). The stories range in genre from science fiction to myths to slice-of-life New Zealand stories. Most of the stories contain an important moral or idea that is presented in an entertaining manner. Just like the lollies, there is something to suit everyone's taste in Pick 'n' Mix.

### Vanishing Cream by Feana Tu'akoi

### Questions

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- How does Kelson annoy his sister and her friend?
- What does Kelson find in the basement? What does he decide the cream is for?
- What convinces Kelson that the vanishing cream actually works?
- Why does Kelson approach Miss Packer and Jiwon when he is at school?
- How does Kelson save Tess from Big Georgie? How do Kelson's classmates react to what he does?
- How does Kelson react when he realises that he is not invisible after all?

### Activities

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- Write a paragraph describing Kelson's character. What do you think his experience will teach him?
- Design a poster advertising vanishing cream.
- If you had a jar of vanishing cream, what would you use it for?

## *You Have Mail* by David Hill

### Questions

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- Who is the main character in the story?
- What is unusual about the email that Slade receives? Why does he think that it is from his friend Tyron?
- What does Grark do to try and convince Slade that he is powerful?
- Why doesn't Slade take Grark seriously?
- What does Grark want Slade to do?
- How does Tyron react when Slade accuses him of sending the emails?
- What is missing from Slade's room when he arrives home from school?
- Why does Grark decide to postpone the invasion?
- How do the invaders from Aldebaran contact Slade?

### Activities

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- Do you believe in aliens? Why/why not?
- Design a storyboard that shows 5 important events that occur in the story. Underneath each picture write a brief explanation about what is happening.

## *Cocky* by Elizabeth Pulford

### Questions

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- Who is the narrator of the story? What is the effect of the first person point of view?
- Why is Harry annoyed about having to look after his sister?
- What is inside the box? Who opens it? Why are Harry and his friends so impressed?
- Why does Harry think that Ben has killed the bird?
- How does the cockatoo escape from the cage?

- How does Harry plan to capture the bird? How does Snooky upset his plan?
- Who manages to get the bird back in its cage?
- What does Harry have to give his sister to ensure her silence?

## Activities

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- Have you ever disobeyed your parents and done something that you were told not to? If so, what was it and what were the consequences?
- Write a letter to the author explaining why you like the story.
- Write an alternative ending for the story.

## *Jaws in a Jam* by John Parker

### Questions

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- Why did Paws become Jaws?
- What does Jaws eat that surprises the family?
- Why is Zac so worried when Jaws doesn't show up for dinner?
- Where is the mysterious noise coming from? How did Jaws end up there?
- Why is Dad so concerned when he realises that Jaws is in the heating system?
- Who turns up to find out what all the noise is about? What does he bring back with him to help rescue Jaws?
- What idea does Zac come up with to rescue Jaws? How does Callie help?

### Activities

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- Have you ever had a pet that has been lost or stuck in an unusual place? If so, describe where and how they were rescued.
- Can you think of an alternative way to get Jaws out of the heating system?

## *Shopping At the Mall* by Janice Marriot

### Questions

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- Why doesn't Dylan want to go to the mall?
- What does Dylan see immediately that he wants to buy?
- Who does Dylan see at the mall? Why does he feel embarrassed?
- How does Dylan lose his family? Why does he find shopping so boring?
- What does Dylan decide that he wants to buy after his family find him? Why isn't he allowed? What does he end up buying? Why is this ironic?

### Questions

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- This story suggests that girls enjoy shopping more than boys. Do you agree with this? Why/why not?
- Rewrite the story from a different character's point of view.
- Write an alternative ending for the story.

## *Cold Blood* by Lorraine Orman

### Questions

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- Describe the font that the story title is written in. What does this suggest about the story?
- How do Moana and her mother feel about the sea? Why doesn't Moana's father share their fascination?
- Why does Moana love her Nan's place so much?
- How old is Moana?
- What do Nadia and Nan talk about that confuses Moana?
- Summarise the story that Nan tells Moana. How does this story relate to Moana? How does it help explain her strong connection to the sea?
- What does Nan tell Moana that her mother will do one day? What choice will Moana have to make? Why is Nan so pleased with her answer?
- What does Nan give Moana as a birthday present?

## Activities

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- Do you have a special place where you love to go or feel a spiritual connection to? Describe why this place is special and how you feel when you go there.
- Design a poster for *Cold Blood* that would be suitable for display in your school library.
- Does your family have any special stories? What are they about?

## *Monster George* by Norman Bilbrough

### Questions

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- What do Sophie and Jack discover on the kitchen floor when they arrive at Sophie's house?
- Why is Sophie so worried that her parents will discover what George has done? What does she decide to do with the chicken?
- Who is Anita Angus? Why does Jack think she is a witch?
- What does George bring home for Sophie the next day? Where does Sophie find her father's shoe?
- What does Sophie overhear her father talking about on the phone?
- What does George drag through the cat door?
- What does Sophie's mother find while she is looking for the hose?
- What does Sophie's dad threaten to do with George? How does this make Sophie feel?
- What does Sophie find out about George when she returns from camp?
- What do Jack and Sophie find written on the posters? Who do they think is responsible?
- What does George bring with him when he finally comes home? What does Sophie do with it?

## Activities

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- Have you ever had a cat or dog that brought home presents or offerings for you? What did they bring? Did they ever get into trouble?
- Write an epilogue for the story explaining what happens after Sophie throws the chicken through the window.

## *Happy Lemonade* by Philippa Werry

### Questions

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- What do the girls decide to do to make some pocket money?
- How does Steve react to their plan?
- How does each girl help to get their lemonade stand ready?
- Where do the girls set up their stand?
- Who are the girls' first customers?
- Why do the girls decide that their lemonade is "happy" lemonade?
- How do the tourists react when they see the lemonade stand? Why do you think they react like this?
- How much money do the girls make?
- Why isn't Lisa worried about Steve's idea to run a lemonade stand the next day?

## Activities

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- Have you ever set up a business or made something to earn some money? What did you do? Was it successful?
- What do you think the message of this story is?

## *Dog Tired* by Rachel Hayward

### Questions

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- What is Katie's job in the garden?
- How does the mower get broken?
- What does Katie's father bring home from the garden centre?
- How does Angus react when he hears the new mower?

- Why can't Angus sleep in the shed? Why don't Katie's parents believe that the mower is the cause of Angus's anxiety?
- Why do Katie's parents decide to make the shed darker? What do they try next?
- What advice does the dog specialist give Katie and her parents? How do the neighbours help?
- Why do Katie's parents think that the dog specialist is a genius? Why do they decide to keep the lawnmower in the garage?

### Activities

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- Why do you think that grown-ups sometimes don't listen to children? Has this ever happened to you? How did it make you feel?
- Rewrite the story from Angus's point of view.

### *Excerpt from Finnigan and the Pirates by Sherryl Jordan*

#### Questions

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- Describe Captain Wildbloode. Why is everyone (except Finnigan) afraid of her?
- How is Finnigan related to Captain Wildbloode? Why isn't he afraid of her?
- In what ways is Finnigan different from Captain Wildbloode? Why is Wildbloode disappointed in him?
- Why does Wildbloode enjoy her lifestyle so much? Why does Finnigan decide to that he has to take action?
- What does Finnigan do to try and force her aunt to live on dry land?
- How does Finnigan's plan backfire?

#### Activities

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- Alliteration is when 2 or more words in the same sentence start with the same consonant sound. Find 5 examples in the story.

- Design a storyboard that shows 10 important events in the story in the order that they occur. Under each illustration write a brief explanation about what is happening.
- Write a job description for a pirate.

## *Jesse Ray's Mum* by Alison Robertson

### Questions

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- How does Jesse's mum react when he says that he put her name down to read at the school? Why do you think she reacts like this?
- What shocking news does Jesse's mum give him at breakfast? How does Jesse react to the news? Why do you think that his mother hasn't told him before?
- Why does Priscilla tease Jesse at lunchtime? Why does Jesse lie to her?
- Why do you think Jesse's mum is reluctant to learn to read? Why do you think she changes her mind?
- How does Jesse know that his mother is serious about learning to read?
- How does Jesse's mum react when he shows her the book that he wants her to read to the class? Why does she react like this?
- Why is his mum's reading such a success with Jesse's class?
- How do we know that Jesse is proud of his mother at the end of the story?

### Activities

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- Write a paragraph explaining why it is so important to be literate.
- What do you think the main idea or message of the story is?
- Why do you think Jesse's mum learns to read successfully?

## *The Monster Under My Bed* by Melinda Szymanik

### Questions

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- Why does the narrator think that there is something unusual under his bed? How are his fears confirmed?
- Describe the monster.
- Why does the narrator feel better when he realises that the monster is made up of his own things?
- What does the narrator call the monster? Why is the monster so grateful?
- Why does the narrator start having trouble with Frankie?
- Why does the narrator decide not to tell his mother about Frankie?
- Why does the narrator begin to dread having to go into his room?
- Why does the narrator keep giving Frankie everything that he asks for?
- Why do you think Frankie keeps getting bigger and bigger?
- How does the narrator have power over Frankie?
- Why is the narrator's mum so surprised when she enters her son's room?

### Activities

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- Write a paragraph explaining the main message or theme of the story.
- Design a poster advertising *The Monster Under My Bed*.
- Rewrite the story from Frankie's point of view.
- Write and illustrate a children's book based on this story.

## *Rudy the Rat* by William Taylor

### Questions

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- Why does the family in the story have no luck with pets?
- Where does the narrator (Matt) find Rudy the rat? How much does he pay for him? Why do you think the previous owner sells him so cheaply?

- How do the rest of Matt's family react when the narrator brings the rat home?
- What games does Matt enjoy playing with Rudy?
- Why is Matt so careful with Rudy when he takes him out of his room?
- What is Mum's good news? What is the bad news?
- Why don't the family like Aunty Betty?
- What sorts of things does Aunty Betty criticise while she is visiting?
- Where does Rudy go after he climbs out of Matt's pocket? Why do you think his granny doesn't tell her sister about the rat?
- What does Rudy do that alerts Aunty Betty to his presence? Describe her reaction.
- Why does Granny tell Mum that she "did well this time"?
- Why does Rudy become a welcome member of the household after this incident?

### Activities

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- Write a paragraph describing a pet that you own (or have owned in the past).
- Write a paragraph describing Aunty Betty. What does she look like? How does she act? Does she get what she deserves at the end of the story? Why/why not?
- Write a letter to the author explaining what you liked about the story.

### *Do Not Push* by Kyle Mewburn

#### Questions

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- What does Cam find in the forest? Why do you think he pushes it? What happens?
- What does Cam see outside in the yard when he arrives home?
- What is unusual about the house?
- What is Cam's mum doing when he goes inside? What is his dad doing?

- Why is Cam's mum so surprised to see him home?
- Why is Cam reluctant to turn off the taps and the lights?
- What does Cam see when he leaves the house? Why is having no rules so dangerous?
- Why does Cam look forward to going to school? What happens when he gets there? How are the teachers behaving? Why does Cam think that the game would be more fun if there were rules? Do you agree? Why/why not?
- What does Cam promise to do if he finds the lever again?
- What is different when Cam returns home?
- Why did Cam only pull the lever half way?

### Activities

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- Write a paragraph explaining why you think people are sometimes tempted to do something when they know they are not supposed to.
- Design a poster advertising the story that would be suitable for display in your school library.
- Write a letter to a friend explaining what you liked about the story and why they should read it.
- What is the theme or author's message of the story?
- Write 5 advantages and 5 disadvantages of having no rules.

### *High Time for Change* by Jennifer Beck

#### Questions

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- What is John's problem? Can you relate to this?
- What advertisement does John see that interests him?
- How does John convince his mother to let him give stilt walking a try?
- Describe how John learns to walk on stilts. What do you think the key to learning to do something new might be?
- Who does John meet at the class who becomes a new friend?
- Why is it difficult for John to practise while Abby is around?
- Why do you think John's new interest increases his confidence?

- What announcement is made at stilt walking? How does John feel about this?
- What theme is adopted by the group? Who is John playing? How does John feel as he walks in the parade in front of teachers, family and friends?
- What happens when Abby joins in the walk? How does John prevent an accident? Why is he considered a hero?
- Why does John feel less ordinary at the end of the story?

### Activities

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- Identify the theme or main idea in the story. Illustrate this theme in a static image.
- Write a paragraph explaining what this story teaches you and how you could use this lesson to improve your own life.
- Write a funny poem based on the story.

### *Back Seat Brigade* by Janice Marriott

#### Questions

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- Who are the main characters in the story? How do you know that the boys' parents are no longer together?
- Why are the boys so naughty during the car ride?
- What surprise does Mum have for the boys when they arrive home? How do the boys feel about this?
- What is wrong with Mum's car?
- What plan do the narrator and Lance concoct to try and get out of the trip? How does this backfire?
- Do you think the boys enjoyed their trip? Why/why not?
- What do the boys notice when they arrive home?
- How do the narrator and Lance turn their accident into a business opportunity?
- What part does Dad play in the business?
- How do we know that the boys made money from their business? What was another positive spin-off?

## Activities

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- Design an advertisement for fully mobile greenhouses.
- What is the message of the story? What lessons can you take away from the story that might improve your life?
- What qualities and characteristics do you need to have to be a successful business person?