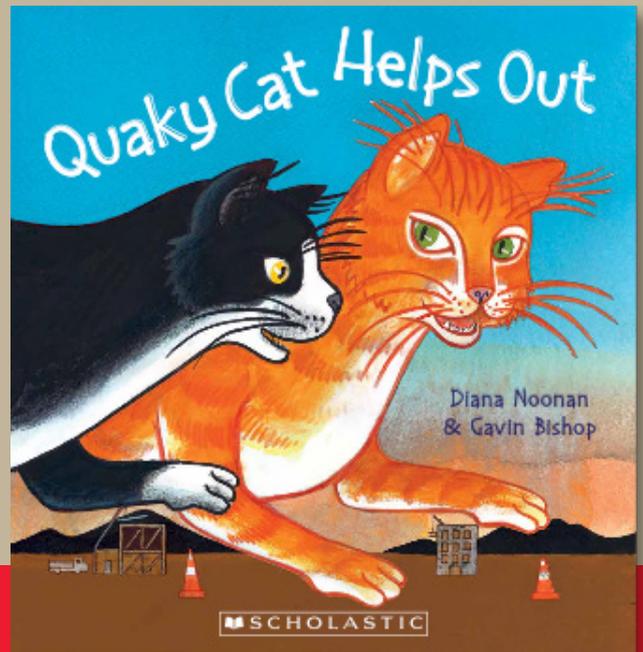


Quaky Cat Helps Out

By Diana Noonan & Gavin Bishop



• Reading • Writing • Drama • Art

Synopsis

Tiger, the ginger moggy and star of *Quaky Cat* is back. His home and neighbourhood are now fully repaired and life is good. However, Tiger still cannot sleep. He knows that other cats in earthquake-ravaged Christchurch are not as fortunate as he is. There's Samantha, who still lives in a caravan and sleeps on a thin mat; there's Toffee, whose friends have moved away; and May, who is too nervous to come out from under the dining table. There's also Bill, who used to hunt mice in the old city buildings but who cannot find a home in the modern cat-proof constructions.

At last, Tiger comes up with a plan. One by one, he invites his less fortunate friends to his home. That evening they all arrive, and Tiger's owner, Emma, is thrilled. She understands that the only thing Tiger has to offer is his home and his warm bed, and so he has done just that. When bedtime arrives, Tiger and Emma curl up to sleep on the floor, content in the knowledge that the other cats are happy for once.

This heart-warming books finishes with a page of comments from children telling how *Quaky Cat* helped them cope with the aftermath of the Christchurch earthquakes and how it inspired them to help others.

About the Book's Creators

Diana Noonan is an award-winning author of more than 200 publications. Her writing has included early literacy material, young adult novels, picture books, non-fiction, poetry, radio stories, television material, feature film treatments and short film scripts. She lives in South Otago. Her picture book *Quaky Cat*, written in response to the Christchurch earthquake, has raised more than \$150,000 for Christchurch charities.

Gavin Bishop is one of New Zealand's most well-known children's book authors and illustrators. He has published more than 40 books. His works have been translated into nine languages and won both the NZ Children's Picture Book of the Year and the NZ Children's Book of the Year three times. He has also appeared as a teacher and a guest speaker at many international forums. The Storylines Gavin Bishop Award was established in 2009 in recognition of his contribution to children's literature. In 2013, Gavin was named an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit (ONZM) for his services to children's literature.

Writing Style

Fans of *Quaky Cat* will love this sequel: *Quaky Cat Helps Out*. It is a warm and touching picture book with a serious message. Readers learn that in the years since the first big Christchurch earthquakes, much has improved. Many people and their pets are now living in rebuilt homes and communities. However, they also learn that for many cats and people, life has not improved: they are still living in desperate conditions. In the story, Tiger's kindness and friendship help brighten the lives of many of the unhappy cats in his neighbourhood. The rhyming text and colour-drenched illustrations will capture the hearts of young readers throughout the country.

Shared Learning and Discussion Points

ASK YOUR STUDENTS:

- This is the second book about Tiger, or Quaky Cat. Has anyone read the first book? What happened? (cover)
- Look at the cover. Where do you think Quaky Cat lives? What clues can you find? What do you think is going to happen in this book? (cover)
- What worries might be keeping Tiger awake at night? (p.4)
- What does this page tell us about Tiger's home? (p.4)
- What has improved since the first big quake? What is still a problem? Why is Tiger worried? (pp.6–7)
- Why does Samantha live in a caravan? (p.8)
- What has happened to make Toffee lonely? What has happened to make May so scared? (pp.10–11)
- How has old Bill's world changed since the quake? Why is this a problem for him? (pp.12–13)
- What do you think Tiger plans to do? (pp.14–15)
- How do the pictures show us what life is like during the rebuild after an earthquake? (pp.16–17)
- Do you think Bill gets enough food? What clues are there? Why do you think he's watching the seagull? (pp.18–19)
- What helps May feel braver? (p.21)
- What was Tiger's plan? How does Emma feel about it? (pp.22–25)
- Why do Tiger and Emma give up their bed? What does this tell you about them? (pp.26–27)
- Here are some quotes from readers of the first book about Quaky Cat. How do they make you feel? Why do you think they're included here? (p.28)

Activities

ACTIVITY 1: LOOKING AT RHYME

Discuss the rhyme scheme in *Quaky Cat Helps Out* (aabb). Encourage your students to identify the rhymes. Create class lists of rhyming pairs. Divide the words into pairs with the same spelling pattern (e.g. park/dark) and pairs with different spelling patterns (e.g. late/eight). Encourage the students to think of more words to add to each pair (e.g. park/dark/mark/bark). If appropriate, also discuss how some pairs contain near rhymes or assonance rather than perfect rhymes (e.g. lean/seem).

Display the lists where the students can see them. Then model creating a new sentence pair using rhymes from the lists. The sentences could be about Quaky Cat or a topic you are studying (e.g. *Tiger is a ginger cat. He looks sweet on his brand-new mat.*). Encourage the students to write their own sentence pairs, which can then be shared with the class. They could also be illustrated and displayed on the wall.

ACTIVITY 2: PET PROTECTION

Discuss how pets can become victims of natural disaster. Talk about how cats and dogs are sometimes lost or abandoned. Together, investigate some websites such as <http://catrescue.org.nz> and www.cats.org.nz, but check out their various sections first to ensure they are suitable for your students. Be sure to show them some of the success stories.

Divide the students into pairs or small groups, and ask them to think of ways in which families could prepare to help their pets in a natural disaster (e.g. keeping extra food in the cupboard, keeping the pet's carry box handy in case they need to evacuate, etc.). Discuss the ideas as a class and list them on the whiteboard.

Model designing a poster about protecting pets in a disaster. Show your students how they need to include a heading or a catchy phrase. Point out that the text should be sparse, perhaps laid out as a list with bullet points. Then let the students create their own posters. Display their finished artworks around the school, or if possible, the local community.

ACTIVITY 3: QUAKY CAT HELPS OUT – THE PLAY

Ensure the students are familiar with the book *Quaky Cat Helps Out*. Assign students to different roles including: a narrator, Emma, Tiger, Toffee and May. With a copy of the book on hand, encourage the characters to talk and act in ways that retell the story in dramatic form. For example, for page 10, the child playing Toffee could say, 'I'm Toffee, and I'm terribly lonely. My friends have moved away with their families. Our neighbourhood feels empty and quiet now.'

The students could practise their parts, make costumes and perform the play for another class or the whole the school.

Written by Mary Atkinson



teacher toolkit

 SCHOLASTIC