

TEACHERS' RESOURCES

Title: My Brother, the Orangutan

Author: Heather Gallagher

Publisher: Stag Beetle Books

ISBN: 979-8-88917-066-2

Target age: 8-12 years

(recommended for Years 3-6)

Key Curriculum Areas: English and

Science

REASONS FOR STUDYING

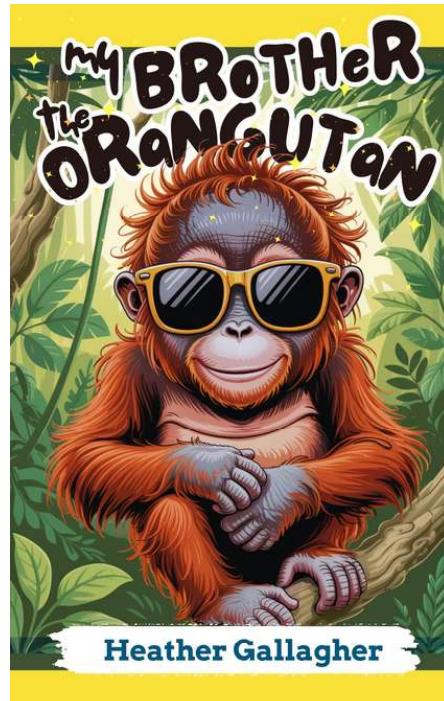
- Language – characterisation, tone, setting, voice
- Cross curricular study – Links English with Science – endangered animals/ sustainability

THEMES

Family relationships, siblings, grief, moving house, animals in captivity, endangered animals, bullies

This hilarious middle grade novel seamlessly blends humour with more serious themes like losing a loved one, moving house, family and friendship. It's packed with laugh out loud moments and a heap of action to keep you turning the pages.

Dee White, author of *Beyond Belief* and *The Hullabaloo about Elephant Poo*



A funny story about a boy who swaps bodies with an orangutan.

PLOT SUMMARY:

Esther Powers, 11, has a lot to deal with:

- She's just moved from the country to the city
- She's started at a new school and already made an enemy of the school bully
- She's grieving her much-loved grandfather
- Oh, and there's just the tiny matter of her brother, Rex, swapping bodies with an orangutan.

A fun-read for reluctant readers with learning opportunities around sustainability and conservation.

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AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION



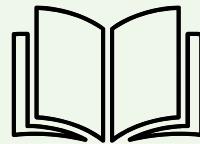
Two things inspired this story. One my love of the movie, *Freaky Friday*. Two a visit to Melbourne Zoo where I first learnt about palm oil and its impact on orangutans. The zoo's Don't Palm Us Off campaign is designed to pressure manufacturers and educate consumers.

Palm oil is big business in Asia and is used in fifty per cent of items found on our supermarket shelves. Many companies using palm oil in their products, list it as 'vegetable oil' on their labels making it difficult for consumers to avoid. You can find out more about it here: [Don't Palm Us Off](#) | [Sustainable Palm Oil](#) | [Zoos Victoria](#)

And, just like Esther, while I was at the zoo, I saw kids tapping the glass trying to get the orangutan's attention. It got me thinking...

As for *Freaky Friday*, I loved the old movie starring Jodie Foster. But there's any number of body-swapping movies and stories you can explore.

READING ACTIVITES



BEFORE READING

Look at the cover, title and blurb – what do you think will happen in this book?

What do you know about orangutans?

Do you have a sibling? How well do you get along? Or not?

DURING READING

Do you think Esther will solve her problem?

What would you do if you were Esther? What would you do if you were Rex? What would you do if you were Harta?

Have you ever met someone like Brodie? Why do you think Brodie is the way he is?

AFTER READING

Revisit the predictions you made before reading this book. Were your predictions accurate?

Discuss: Who was your favourite character? Which character changed the most?

Discuss: Did you like the ending?

Write a review of the book. Include a brief description, your opinion and a recommendation of who would enjoy the story.

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ASSIGNMENT IDEAS



Like Esther and Rex, you can design your own endangered animal poster. Find out some Fun Facts about your animal, why it's endangered and draw a picture or make a collage of photos of your animal.



Write a story about someone who swaps bodies with another person or animal? What happens? How does it happen? Do they swap back? If yes, how?



In the book, Esther and her family find out about ways they can stop using palm oil. Can you investigate easy ways you can stop using palm oil? Design a poster with your findings.



What environmental cause would you like to adopt or find out more information about? Maybe you could investigate as a class and pool your findings.

www.heathergallagher.com.au

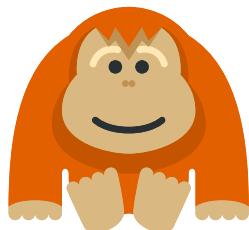
contact: heather.gallagher@bigpond.com

BONUS WORD FIND

My Brother the Orangutan

R	O	H	A	A	S	U	M	A	T	R	A
N	H	G	O	M	U	R	P	H	Y	E	W
N	D	R	C	C	S	I	C	I	C	X	S
O	O	A	R	O	U	T	N	H	N	G	U
R	S	N	G	C	I	S	A	D	E	W	S
Z	I	N	N	G	H	N	T	I	M	I	T
P	R	Y	E	R	E	T	U	D	A	T	A
A	E	R	T	O	T	A	G	R	C	C	I
L	H	Z	T	R	O	A	N	A	A	H	N
M	T	O	I	I	T	A	A	G	R	J	A
O	S	O	G	R	A	E	R	O	E	G	B
I	E	N	A	O	N	A	O	N	N	E	L
L	I	H	M	A	G	I	C	C	A	L	E
Z	I	S	W	A	P	J	A	M	E	S	E

ORANGUTAN
TIGER
PALM OIL
ESTHER
REX
GRANNY
ZING
MURPHY
HARTA
HOCUS
MAGIC
DRAGON
COIN
ZOO
SUSTAINABLE
WITCH
SWAP
MACARENA
SUMATRA
JAMES



Tip: Some words are spelt backwards