

3 Keys



Written and illustrated by The Bubbly Goats



Write a Book in a Day



**THE KIDS'
CANCER
PROJECT**

Science. Solutions. Survival.

PARAMETERS FORM

TEAM DETAILS

STATE: QLD

DIVISION: Middle School

SCHOOL/GROUP: Xavier Catholic College (HERVEY BAY)

TEAM NAME: Xavier Catholic College

TEAM ID: 484

PARAMETERS AND RANDOM WORDS

Parameters

Primary character 1 .. Butcher

Primary character 2 .. Skateboarder

Non-human character .. Zombie

Setting .. Abandoned house

Issue .. Love is in the air

Random words

Whistle

Light

Gold

Hungry

Bubbly

INSTRUCTIONS

- Start at 8am
- Write an original story:
 - based on all **five parameters** (above)
 - including all **five random words** (above), and in bold type
 - with some identifiable **Australian content** (in theme or setting or characters, etc)
 - keeping within the allowed word count (remember every word on every page counts)!
 - include this parameters form in your book **immediately after the front cover**
- Remember: **Every** word on **every page** counts. This includes your front cover, back cover, blurb, acknowledgements and copyright form.
- **Be sure to give yourself enough time to submit your book and complete the following checklist before 9pm.**

Log on to the Team Coordinator Portal to:

- Check the spelling of your team name and team members' names (how these are spelt on submission will be how they are displayed on certificates)
- Complete the Declaration
- Submit your finished book in **both** PDF and plain text format by 9pm

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Dedication

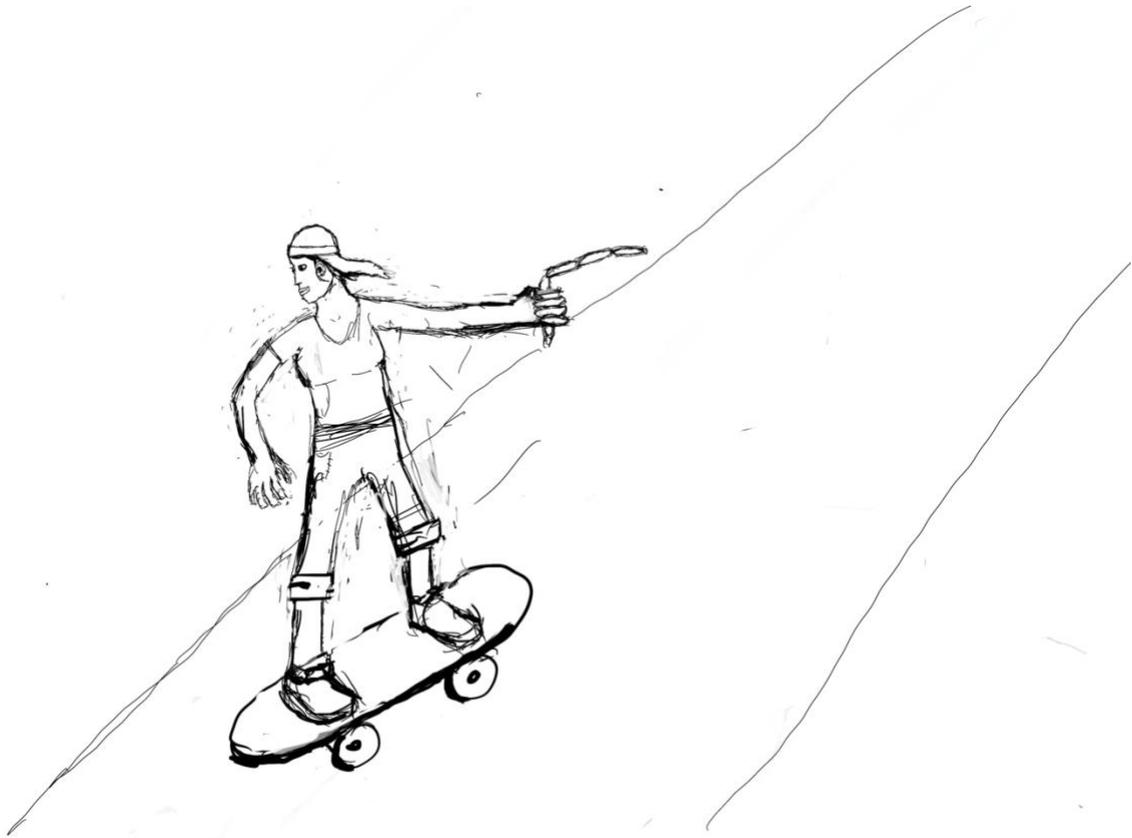
To all the courageous children. We had so much fun writing this book for you, we hope you guys can enjoy it just as much as we did. Always remember you are so brave. Thank you so much for helping bring our book to life, for without you we would never have had this opportunity!

Chapter 1

The Butcher's Shop

Sweat trickled down her face as she dashed down the rugged bitumen. Tossing her skateboard to the ground, she leaped into the air and landed on the board, acquiring extra speed. She glanced behind her to see an angry figure waving a fuming fist in her direction. Focusing her attention back to the road, she realised her hand was damp with perspiration. She clutched onto the package she had snatched. A car came rushing over the crest ahead of her. The driver must not have seen her, as they continued to speed along the highway. The girl swerved off the main road and onto a musty, dirt path. She followed the path until it ended abruptly, and a house, filthy and ravaged, loomed over her.

Sam's stomach rumbled in desperation as she flicked her blonde hair over her shoulder. It was the third foster home she had run from, and every time she forgot to bring food and water. Of course, it was a dumb idea not to pack supplies when running away in the middle of nowhere. Sam hated her foster homes. They reminded her that she couldn't trust anyone. This was because foster parents she had had would take you in not because they love you, but just because they wanted children or were looking for the "golden child". Sam kept all this in mind as she wandered down the sidewalk.



Sam began to hallucinate, and her brain pounded against the walls of her skull, while her steps grew staggered as seconds slurred by. In one of her dizzy spells, she could have sworn she saw a farm or a shop in the distance. It looked as though it was easily five minutes away, but Sam's persistence was wavering. Until she had a resolution, she was not coming this far just to chicken out, turn around, and walk back from where she came. She rolled her jeans up to her knees and raised her skateboard over her head to protect her face from the unyielding sun. Determination pumping through her veins, Sam was ready to endure the walk to civilization.

Sam was so deep in thought that she almost walked past the composition of buildings to the left of her. A vending machine was leant up against what looked like an old servo. Sam patted her pockets

down finding \$3.55, just enough for a water bottle. Smashing the keys on the machine, as quickly as possible, Sam grasped the water and gulped it down. However, even though her thirst was extinguished, she was ravenously **hungry**. There was only a butcher shop in sight, and Sam would do anything to have something to eat. Stealing was bad, but Sam was starving. The quenching need to survive overtook her and before she knew it, she was climbing through the window of the Butcher's shop.

Running from the butcher that caught her was the only option. Sam used her skateboard for speed. She quickly lost sight of the butcher, only to be run off the road by a car. Sam followed a dusty, forgotten path to a house that protruded out of the ground, desolate and degraded.

Once Sam's mind was back in the present and the hallucinations had finally ceased, she dismounted her skateboard and walked towards the house with caution. *The butcher would never think to enter a creepy house, right? It couldn't hurt to spend one night's refuge here...* Sam approached the stairs taking them one at a time. They creaked and moaned taking weight they were unaccustomed to, and tentatively Sam reached out and turned the rusty doorknob unsealing the door from its crusty frame.

Chapter 2

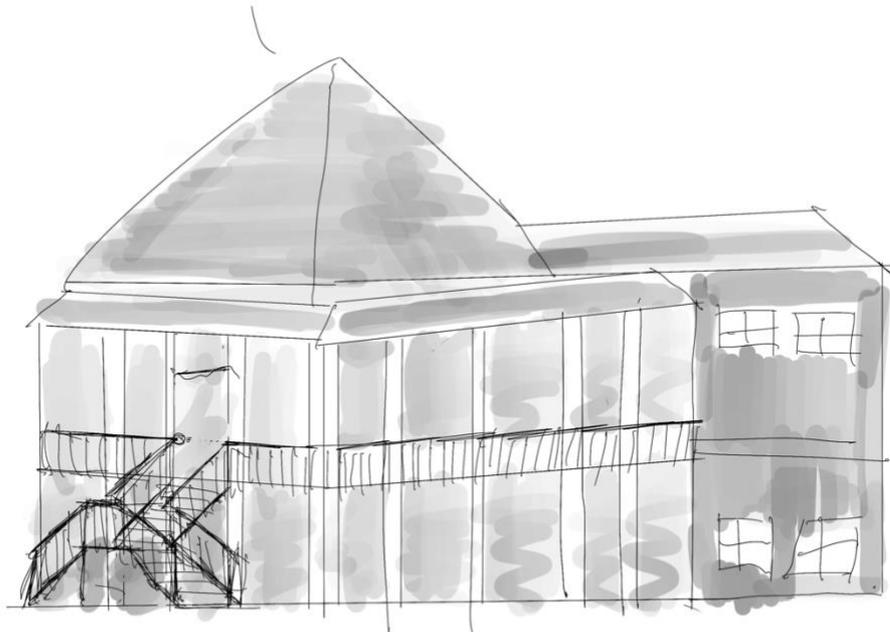
The Adventure Begins

Sam trudged through the ancient wooden door into the stench ridden corridor of the old rickety Queenslander. Her first cautious steps taken rattled the termite infested floorboards, sending bellowing echoes through the halls. The foul taste of rotting flesh plagued her pristine tastebuds, a sensation she would never forget. The dark essence of dread ran through her purpled veins. The string of thawed stolen sausages plummeted to the ground. A trance like state enveloped her wholly, the distress began to set in. A corridor of perplexing dark oak doors presented an ominous atmosphere to the darkened interior. She approached the doors with a wary stride, a hesitant touch to the cold copper doorknob. A heavenly **light** bled through the tight gap in the doorway. She jolted in fear as an ear-piercing cry from the butcher himself broke the tension like a hammer to glass. Her trembling hand grasped the doorknob with excessive force. Sam was not alone.

...

Bill's blushing cheeks flushed his dark complexion. A huffing sensation brought him to his knees; hunched over, perspiration dribbled down his neck. An old Queenslander stood before him, blocking out the blazing Australian sun.

"That punk must've ran into that old dump."



He crawled up the dilapidated stairway, the house crying out a rumble of pain. He approached the ancient wooden door with a cautious tremble in his step. The intricate designs were marked in oak. His unsteady hand grasped the boiling doorknob.

One, two, three.

The door flung open with an ungodly creak. BANG. It slammed shut, rattling like a bag of bones. A sense of despair suddenly entered his bloodstream. There was something lurking in the shadows, he was being watched. Rotten flesh lingered in the air as a mangled figure flew out of the smothering

shadows. The figure surged towards the prominent scent of the butcher meat and latched onto his side. Bill screeched in horror as creature gnawed on his bony shoulder. As he turned in pain, his eyes captured the blond figure. His mind went hazy as he laid eyes on the love of his life. While only for a split second, he became infatuated with her beauty. Overwhelmed, he knew that he must follow her through the door.

Chapter 3

A Night at the Opera

As Sam cautiously stepped through the dark oak door, she was presented with a message:

“To collect the first key,

Become a VIP,

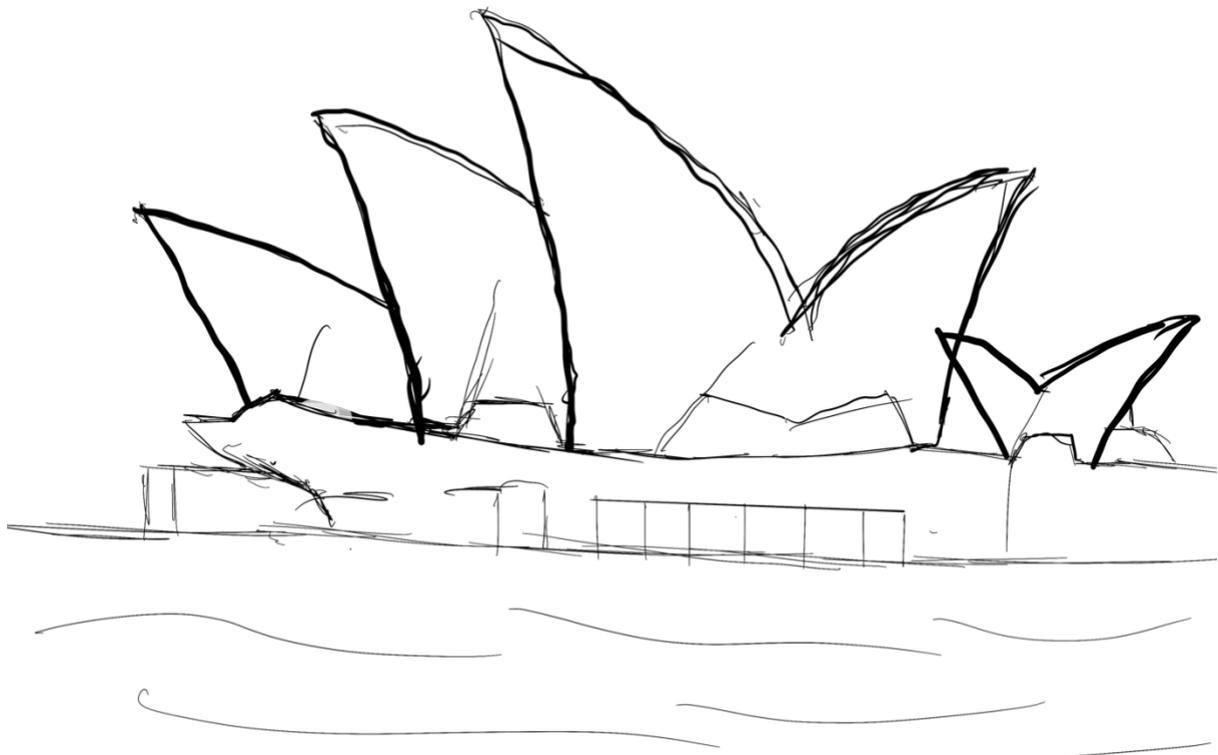
Sing a song on a stage,

Don’t be scared to engage,

Remember to be quick,

While time goes tock tick.”

Sam read the riddle engraved on a **gold** plaque that captured her attention. Her mind was spiralling with thoughts as she wondered what this was supposed to mean. *Where am I? How do I get out of here?* Millions of thoughts passed through her mind as she stood frozen to her spot. When she finally came to her senses, she quickly spun around in the direction of the door. It had completely vanished! However, in its spot was a huge building. It was unmistakably, the Sydney Opera House. She stood stunned in her place staring at the famous Australian landmark.



“Sing a song...” Sam mumbled, “on a stage...” her voice drifted off as she re-read the scripture on the gold plaque.

Sam turned around and looked in the direction of the Opera house. She knew what she had to do. Sam began in haste towards the astonishing structure. As she ran up the numerous steps, she heard someone chasing her. When Sam glanced behind her she saw the butcher running after her, holding

a cleaver in one hand and the string of thawing sausages in the other. She gasped and continued to run expeditiously towards her destination.

Time was scarce and she couldn't worry about the butcher if she wanted to escape in time. When she entered the Opera house, Sam listened to the loud shrieks of the performers on stage. Nearly every seat in the theatre was full. *How am I supposed to sing to an audience this big?!* Sam gulped looking at the individuals in front of her. The audience's faces were distorted, and Sam now understood she was inside some upside-down, topsy-turvy universe. She ran down the steps towards backstage, ignoring the people and prepared to perform. Once the previous performer strutted off stage in her ravishing dress, Sam walked unsteadily towards the centre of the stage, her knees knocking, sweat dripping from her palms.

She stared down towards her rugged old clothes frowning but looked back towards the audience confidently. Sam's heart was beating out of her chest and a sickening feeling like butterflies arose in her stomach, however, she ignored these unpleasant feelings and waited for the music to begin. Slow and melodic music began playing, echoing throughout the whole theatre. Sam began to quietly sing as the still audience stared back at her. Suddenly, the microphone let out an undesirable shriek causing the audience to instantly cover their ears with their hands. The audience booed as Sam screeched and squawked on the stage.

When the music finally stopped, the restless audience did not applaud. Relieved, Sam immediately threw herself off stage. She looked behind her and noticed that the butcher was standing in the other wing backstage with the cleaver clutched tightly in his hand. Sam widened her eyes in horror, and at that moment she experienced the most fear she had ever experienced in her whole life. As her heart leapt into her mouth, a scream was stifled by a glistening, luminescent glow caught that caught the corner of her eye. Without hesitation, Sam grabbed a key that was sitting in the pile of trophies and medals. She jumped on her skateboard and rode towards where the door had once been.

Sam continued to ride as fast as she could so she could lose the butcher behind her. When she returned to the gold plaque, and once again saw the dark oak door. She grabbed the key from her dirty, dusty blue jeans. It fit perfectly in the keyhole!

Chapter 4

Mounting the Rock

The door creaked open and Sam raced out. She slammed the door behind her, but almost instantly it groaned open again. Sam had no idea what was going on. *What is this house?* She thought. After being burst into what seemed like the Sydney Opera House, Sam was completely disoriented. This house was not a normal house. Sam couldn't understand what was going on. She raced down the hallway and could see two other rooms. Sam ran to the first one on the right, praying it wasn't locked. The handle mercifully went down. She jumped inside, slamming the door behind her. The chilly feeling of the house vanished and was replaced with a sweltering heat. She looked around at the door and was surprised to see that it was now encased within rock. The familiar plaque appeared.

***“Scale the dusty red rock,
You shall be rewarded,
With the answer to the lock,
Don't fall off the plateau,
Or it will be your time to go.”***



Uluru, Sam thought. She had once again been transported to another place. First the Opera House, now Uluru. The first location had a challenge to get back. She looked at the door and sure enough, a lock had appeared there, before the door vanished altogether once again. She didn't want to climb, but it was the only way. Her fear of heights had held her back from doing anything like a flying fox or zipline. But she had to do this to get out. In her mind she knew the key was up there. She mustered up all the courage she could find and started to climb. She placed one foot in front of the other, slowly, painfully, fighting against all her mind screaming GET DOWN FROM HERE! But she kept going. After what felt like hours of climbing, she reached the top. Her legs were shaking like crazy, and she

flopped down on the ground, exhausted. But she didn't let her fatigue overtake her. She still had to get down the enormous rock.

She picked up the key. It felt hard and dirty in her hands, most likely from the dust of Uluru. Her jeans were stained red from the climb. She made herself stand, and then started the descent. It took almost twice as long, as she was so incredibly careful with it. After she got down, Sam took 30 minutes to regain the feeling in her legs. She placed the key in the keyhole and twisted. She felt the chilly updraft from the house and stepped inside.

Meanwhile, Bill, feverishly waited for the door to open. His mind was consumed with the **bubbly** feeling of true love. Once that door opened, Sam, the love of his life, would be his forever. That zombie, or whatever it was, had not cursed him but blessed him.

Chapter Five

An Unexpected Turn of Events

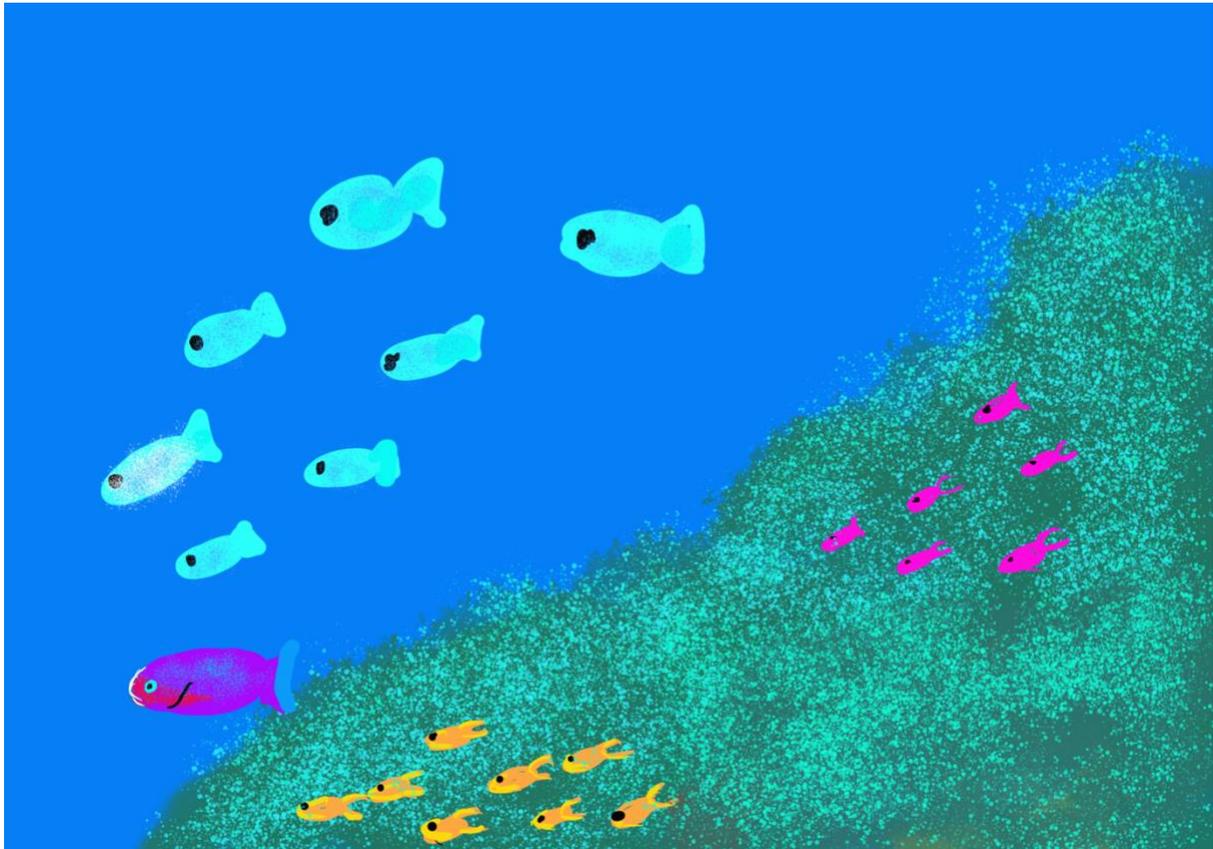
Her body fell limply to the hardwood as pure exhaustion overtook her. The once sunlit hallway was now as dark as the other side of the moon. The distant noises of a wandering butcher and a flying zombie now blended with her own raspy breaths, in an eerie harmony. Clutched in her right hand was the second key. It was only now she had really taken much notice of it. The key was a rusty red, with erratic incisions encompassing its dusty structure. Despite the key's inconspicuous appearance, to Sam, it felt like an essential piece to her own sanity. She securely placed it in the pocket of her blue patchy jeans.

She sat there for a moment and then with wavering composure, she stood up and stumbled towards the next door. Her bony hand reached forth and twisted the rusted copper handle.

Creak.

The door slowly opened.

The bright sunlight beamed on her feet as they moved towards the source. The **whistle** of the wind pierced her ears. The ground beneath her feet was unstable and rocked in a sporadic manner, as if she had landed herself on a ship that was being tussled about by an unforgiving sea.



Once her eyes had adjusted to the harsh lighting, all she could see was the vast expanse of sea. Sam stood on a lone platform, that stretched on for twenty meters in all directions. Beyond that there was nothing bar the deep blue. As she had come to expect, the door had disappeared making her feel ever more alone, the only piece of familiarity, gone like it had never been there at all.

In its place a gold plaque. Engraved with a message reading;

“The sea holds no grudges,

It never judges,

It shall never leave you alone.

To find what you seek,

You mustn't be meek,

And delve yourself into the bleak,

Unknown."

Why must they be so vague? Can't they just tell me what to do. Thought Sam.

She could guess that they wanted her to go diving, but so many more questions flooded her already occupied brain. *How would she dive? Where would she find the next key?* She felt lost and confused.

But before she even had a chance to answer any of this for herself, she noticed a flash of dull green and white in the sky. Followed swiftly by a thump about ten metres to her left. A figure lay in a heap on the ground. It slowly gathered itself and began to rise to its full height, almost eye to eye with Sam, who stood at a meagre 5'6.

Its appearance was quite contrary to what Sam would have anticipated a zombie to look like from her immense viewership of TV shows and movies. It had pale green mangled skin, covered in cuts, bruises and dried blood. Its smell as foul as milk left on the bench for eternity. But unlike what she had expected its back was decorated by a pair of intricate white wings, clean and well kept. A great contrast to the filthy appearance of the zombie and his clothes.

"Loveeeee," he said in a deep murmur, "loveeeee."

His arrival had quite frankly scared Sam down to her last nerve. Her body was now controlled by pure adrenaline. No more time to think. She must just do. Her body propelled toward the edge of the platform and into the water.

Sam thrashed about, in a desperate attempt to escape the creature that would surely follow. Her mind willed her body to dive deeper. Beneath her lay an extensive bed of multicoloured coral, with brightly coloured fish and other sea creatures. All glittering in the sun's rays. However, there was something unusual about this reef. Everything was distorted. The fish were misshapen with absurd features such as wings and horns, and the coral was coloured in unnaturally vibrant colours. Things that may have been unusual to most, but these oddities were the least of Sam's worries. The pale green zombie had burst through the water, gaining on her with every second. He was swimming in erratic patterns. His white wings now sodden and not as pristine as they had been prior.

Out of the corner of her eye she noticed a glint of a pearl. Not just any pearl but one shaped just as a key. Excitement overwhelmed her senses. She'd almost forgotten her ultimate quest in this foreign land. The only thing that stood between her and that key was the clam that had it grasped in its shell and the gaining zombie. Two seemingly difficult blockades. But she must at least try.

She quickly swam towards it. Her mind willing her body to hurry. She clawed at the clam in a desperate attempt to pry the key out of the clam's grasp. The zombie rushing towards her with even more must than before. Sam's fear growing with every passing second. Then in a moment most unexplainable, another figure burst down into the ocean blue. Cleaver in hand, Bill the Butcher dived towards the zombie, knocking him out of the way, in a mesmerising move with unhuman athleticism. With one swift move he pushed past Sam and shattered the clam with his heavy metal cleaver.

The pearl key hung suspended in the water, glittering in the sunlight. With great urgency Bill wrapped an arm around Sam's waist, key in hand, and swam to the door that had miraculously appeared in the coral reef. The zombie behind them had regained his composure and was beginning to continue the pursuit of the pair with great haste. Just as Bill reached the door and shoved the key into the keyhole, the zombie had caught up to them and grasped onto Bills leg. In a last-ditch effort to save Sam he hoisted her through the door. Bill continued to claw at the zombie's hand on his legs, finally the zombie lost his tight grip. Bill quickly entered the room and slammed the door behind him. In a turn of

events most unexpected Bill had saved Sam's life. In his mind an act of the greatest love, but in hers a rather great showing of friendship.

Chapter 6

Love Is in the Air

Sam had finally escaped the horrors of the doors. Taking a breath of relief, Bill traced behind her as they approached the door. But to her surprise he didn't say anything. He just stuttered closer, with wide, loving eyes. He seemed... in love? She waved with a slight, confused smile, but he didn't stop. He just continued to wander closer in his world of happiness. The world around them was silent, except for the odd cry of a bird. The sunrise shone on Bill. His eyes sparkled. But Sam was intrigued. *What was he doing?* She thought. A wave of realization stung her. She remembered what she was here for. *Home! We're free.* She remembered. She could feel the salty water drip from her clothes after her diving adventure. She smiled, finally she could go home and leave, but what about Bill?

Sam gasped. Suddenly, she felt a wet hand on her shoulder. Eyes widening, Sam slowly twisted her head to be greeted with the sight of Bill. Sam smiled.

"You're funny Bill. Come with me."

She fished with her hand in her pocket and pulled out the three keys she had worked so hard to find. It was the key to escaping the ragged old house. Suddenly, moaning echoed through the house. As it got louder, she slotted the keys in the key holes hoping for the best. A whirring mechanism sound echoed around the lobby, until suddenly the lock clicked, and the door creaked open.

Sam slammed her body against the heavy mass as she pushed it open. As it slowly swung open Bill grabbed her arm and pulled her out of the house, leaving the door ajar. Bill smiled at Sam as she got her skateboard under her arm, she pivoted her head around to look at the house that had caused them so much grief, and noticed the zombie flying erratically into the distance.



"I guess love really is in the air," mumbled Sam as the two of them slowed to a walking-pace.

"Yeah, I guess it is."

They smiled together as they walked down the path in the sunrise.

"So why did you become a butcher?"

"It's a family business" Bill laughed "But, I'm also vegetarian."

Blurb

After stealing a string of sausages from the butcher, Sam the skateboarder finds herself at the entrance of an old degraded Queenslander in the middle of nowhere. Hungry, thirsty and desperate for shelter, she enters through the weighted door into a musty corridor in a complete trance. Ahead of her lay three dark oak doors. She was unaware of the exhilarating adventures hidden beyond those doors. Minutes behind her, Bill the butcher trudges along the dirt path still determined to catch her completely oblivious that his one true love lies ahead.



A story of love, mystery, and a flying cupid zombie.

Recommended for ages 10-16