

## KILLER BOOTS

WENDY JENKINS

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YEAR LEVEL: Y6–10

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Killer Boots, all right. They'd kicked some wicked goals, but Greg was worried. It'd kill him if he had to give them back, and if things went real bad, his mum would kill him too. Greg lives for footy – playing and watching. Will this be his best season yet?

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Wendy Jenkins was born in Perth in 1952 and has been based in and around Fremantle for most of her life. Her early childhood was spent in a football family in the heart of Bulldogs territory (South Fremantle) and a love of Freo and Aussie Rules was unavoidable. *Killer Boots* is her second of four novels for young readers.

### THEMES

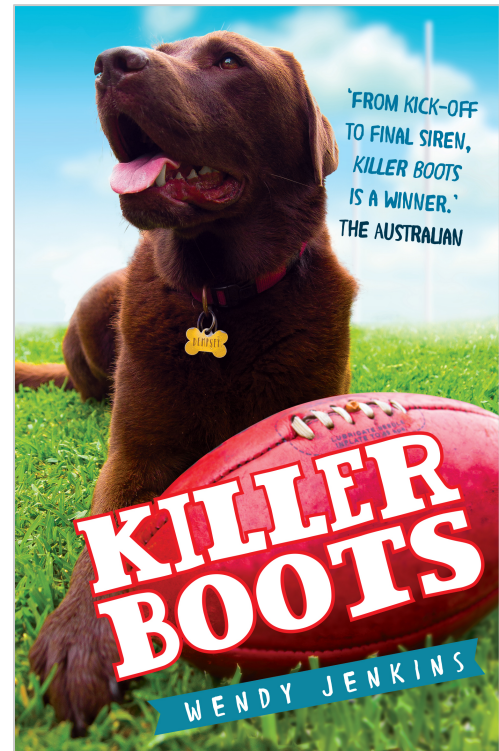
- Australian football
- Self-esteem
- Sportsmanship
- Healthy lifestyle
- Adolescence
- Competition
- Teamwork
- Family
- Honesty

### AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

- English Y6–10
- Health and Physical Education Y6–10
  - Food and nutrition (FN)
  - Health benefits of physical activity (HBPA)
  - Mental health and wellbeing (MH)
  - Games and sports (GS)

### USEFUL WEBSITES

- Fremantle Dockers schools link: <http://www.fremantlefc.com.au/schools/welcome-to-freo>
- Write to an AFL player: <http://auspost.com.au/education/afl/students/index.html>
- AFL rules explained: <http://www.afl.com.au/afl-hq/the-afl-explained/afl-football-today>



## CLASSROOM IDEAS

### Discussion questions

1. Do you think Greg should have taken Toggo's boots? What would you have done?
2. *He was a natural, they said. Sure, he'd trained really hard as he got older ... But this was just to make the best of what he already had – a 'feel', a gift.* (p. 13) What special talents/gifts do you have? Are they in the sporting field? Or creative, academic or social gifts?
3. As an elite sportsman, Toggo is under a lot of pressure. Why is it impossible to perform perfectly one hundred per cent of the time? Why is it important to maintain a healthy mind as well as body? What are some of the negative effects of stress on your health? Brainstorm healthy ways through which Toggo could better deal with the pressure of playing for the Dockers.
4. *'Jazz', as they called her, had been a star winger in the under thirteens but she'd been told she couldn't play any more.* (p. 74) Why is this the case? Do you think this is fair? How would you feel if you were Jazz? Do equal opportunities exist for female AFL players in Australia today?
5. Greg claims that carbohydrates are good for athletes and always eats spaghetti before a match. Is this true? What are carbohydrates and what kinds of food are they found in? How do they fit into a balanced diet? Why is a healthy diet important, particularly for athletes?
6. Greg becomes distressed when there is no spaghetti for his breakfast before the big match. Do you have any pre-competition rituals or superstitions?
7. Do you think the boots were magic? Why/why not? Do you have any 'lucky' items of clothing or jewellery that you wear during competitions?
8. Why do you think celebrities like Toggo are often recruited into advertising campaigns like Give Smoking the Boot? How does smoking damage your health?
9. *... he didn't want to drive his own car. The red convertible had become so recognisable.* (p. 128) What are the positive and negative consequences of being famous like Toggo?

### Research

1. Create a list of the definitions for the AFL terminology encountered on p. 76, e.g. snaffle, handpass, tap out, mark. Add other terms you know from the game.
2. Greg has a dream: *to play full-forward for the Dockers like Matt Tognolini.* (p. 118) He works hard to achieve this goal: running to improve his fitness, following a diet that aids sporting performance, reading about and watching AFL, and playing for his local team. Research your own dream career. Create a goal-setting chart to map how you might achieve this.

### Creative writing

1. Greg idolises Toggo. Who is your hero? (It can be anyone – not only a celebrity.) Why do you look up to this person? Write a letter to them. What would you like to tell them about yourself and their work?
2. Greg is passionate about AFL. What sport or activity do you love and why? Write a short story about a teenager who excels in this sport or activity.
3. Greg believes in the power of the Killer Boots. Write a short story on the theme 'Superstition and Luck'.
4. Continue the story – how will Greg fare in the under seventeens? What will become of the Killer Boots?

### Debate

In teams of three, debate for/against the validity of the following claims:

1. 'AFL is a man's game.'
2. 'The Killer Boots really were magic.'
3. 'Pressure in competition improves your performance.'
4. 'Being famous makes your life easier.'
5. 'Mental strain is tougher than physical strain.'

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