

## KELPIE CHAOS

DEB FITZPATRICK

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YEAR LEVEL: Y3–6

### ABOUT THE BOOK

A kelpie puppy is about to be sent to the pound and Eli knows he has to do something. After adopting the flame-chested kelpie, now named Zoom, the family falls in love, but they soon learn there's a lot involved in raising a dog. Especially a working dog, who is hardwired to round up pretty much everything ... even socks.

When Zoom goes missing on a family bushwalk, the family sets out on a frantic search. With each passing moment, anxiety mounts, but they refuse to give up hope. As night falls, their strength is tested, both physically and emotionally. Will they be able to find Zoom? What mischief could a dog get up to in the bush?

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Deb Fitzpatrick writes fiction and creative non-fiction for children, young adults and adults. Her books have received awards in Australia, been published in the US and optioned for film. Deb loves using stories from real life in her books and regularly teaches creative writing to people of all ages. She has a Master of Art from UWA and shares her life with a lovely family and their kelpie, who is absolutely not a failed sheepdog.

### THEMES

- Family
- Dogs
- Pet care
- Adventure
- Perseverance
- Safety

### AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Y3–6 English

Y3–6 The Arts

Y3–6 Health and Physical Education

Y3–6 Mathematics

### USEFUL WEBSITES

- Author's website: [debfitzpatrick.com.au](http://debfitzpatrick.com.au)



## CLASSROOM IDEAS

### Discussion questions

1. What is a kelpie? What characteristics are kelpies known for?
2. What is your favourite breed of dog? What appeals to you about this breed?
3. Does your family have a dog or other pet? List some of the positives and negatives of pet ownership.
4. The first chapter is titled 'Home is where the dog is'. What common saying has been changed to make this saying? What do you think it means?
5. Describe how Eli felt before meeting their pup.
6. The farmer describes his dogs as **'working dogs'**, rather than pets (p. 6). How do the lives of working dogs on farms and pet dogs differ? What other jobs can dogs do?
7. Discuss some ways to train a pet dog. What can they be trained to do/not do?
8. What does Mum mean when she says, **'We have to begin as we mean to continue'** (p. 22).
9. What are some ways the author builds tension when Zoom is lost?
10. Where and when do you think this story is set? How can you tell?
11. The author has used figurative language to express characters' feelings. What feeling is being expressed in these examples:
  - a. **'I can see Dad's face lose colour'** (p. 82).
  - b. **'My heart has relocated to the soft part of my throat'** (p. 82).
  - c. **'Feeling a big weird hole in my tummy'** (p. 90).
  - d. **'Zoom's tail sweeps wide like the biggest smile'** (p. 99).
12. What do these metaphors from the story mean? Can you come up with an alternative metaphor?
  - a. **'No wonder the gardener was grumpy, having a furry bullet running rings around his machinery'** (p. 42).
  - b. **'He always was a mountain goat'** (p. 85).
  - c. **'Not on a cold day in hell'** (p. 89).
13. Eli's parents sometimes use idioms or sayings when speaking, such as: **let's get out of your hair** (p. 15). Find three other examples and explain what each of them means. Why do you think the author has included them in the story?
14. What does Farmer Grub's use of language suggest about his character? For example, does it make him seem easy-going, friendly, busy, rude, etc?
15. Does this story follow the typical narrative arc? Plot each chapter on a 'story mountain' to identify the introduction, build-up, conflict, climax and resolution.
16. Did the story end the way you thought it would? Did you find the ending satisfying?
17. How does Eli grow or change throughout the story? Did any other characters grow or change?
18. What is the purpose of this story? What do you think the author would like readers to take away from the story?
19. Have you read any other stories by Deb Fitzpatrick? How is this story similar and different?

### Creative Writing

1. Zoom does some cheeky things like collecting socks and getting into the birthday cupcakes. Make a list of cheeky things a dog could do. Write a short story focusing on one of these.
2. Write a review of *Kelpie Chaos*. Include your opinion of the story, your favourite part and who you would recommend the story to.
3. When Grub introduces himself, Dad remarks that there must be a story behind his nickname. Come up with an inventive story about someone getting the nickname 'Grub'.
4. Write a paragraph describing what it would have been like to search the bush at night-time. Include sensory descriptions: what would Eli have seen, heard, smelled and felt?

### The Arts

1. Reread the description of Zoom on pages 13 and 14 and draw a picture showing what he looked like as a puppy.
2. Work collaboratively to script and perform a dramatic performance based on a scene from the book, such as meeting Zoom for the first time or searching for Zoom in the bush at night. Consider elements of drama, including character, voice and movement.
3. Create a 'missing' poster to help find Zoom. Use visual conventions to communicate meaning and draw attention

## **Health and Physical Education**

1. What personal qualities did the family demonstrate during their search for Zoom?
2. What community resources supported the family in their search for Zoom? (ranger, hospital)
3. How did the family's emotional response to Zoom being missing influence their behaviour? Do you think they would have made the same decision to bushwalk at night had they not been emotionally invested in finding Zoom?
4. In what ways can dog ownership lead to improved health and wellbeing?

## **Mathematics**

1. Predict which animal will be the most common pet in the class, then conduct a class survey.
2. Based on the result of question 1, create an appropriate data display, such as a table, graph or infographic. Which pets are most common and least common? Was your prediction accurate?