

## BREAKING POINTE

CHENÉE MARRAPODI

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YEAR LEVEL: Y4–7

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Amelia loves ballet more than anything, but the sudden arrival of an intense new teacher shifts the Academy focus from classical to contemporary dance. Amelia is out of her depth with the edgy choreography and unsettled by its world-ending theme, especially when a shock diagnosis really might bring her life crashing down.

Valentina is completely at home with the new style but has troubles off the dance floor. As she desperately strives to secure a scholarship and save her dance career, money problems and an unexpected romance have her in a complete spin.

With so much at breaking point, the girls will need to decide what really matters before everything falls apart.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chenée Marrapodi is an Australian writer and podcaster. She has worked in media for many years, currently for Channel Nine News, and formerly as a reporter for Channel Seven's Today Tonight, as well as online news and radio. Chenée's love of words is rivalled only by her love of dance. Combining the two, *One Wrong Turn* is her first novel.

### THEMES

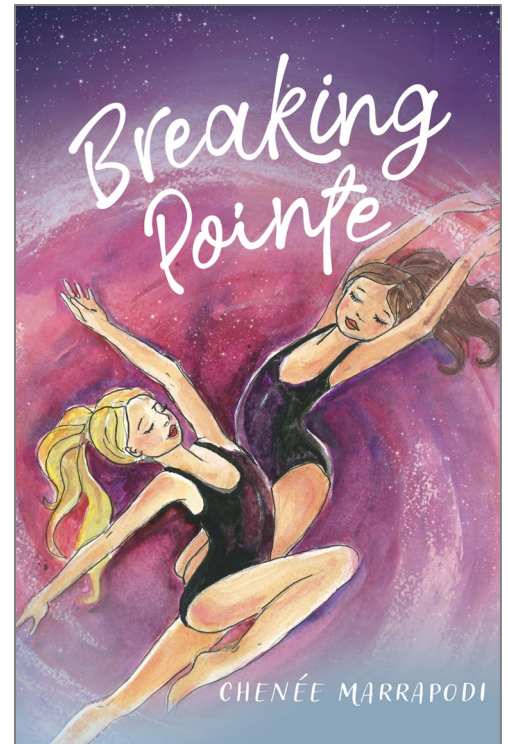
- Chronic illness
- Dance
- Friendship
- Family
- Perseverance
- Gender roles
- Culture
- Traditions
- Language

### AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

- Y4–7 English
- Y4–7 Humanities and Social Sciences
- Y4–7 The Arts: Dance
- Y4–7 Health and Physical Education

### USEFUL WEBSITES

- Author's website: [cheneemarrapodi.com](http://cheneemarrapodi.com)
- Diabetes Australia: [diabetesaustralia.com.au](http://diabetesaustralia.com.au)



## CLASSROOM IDEAS

### Vocabulary and sentence work

1. bickered – ‘**Amelia and Khalila might be friends now, but they still bickered all the time**’ (p. 19).
2. mesmerised – ‘**I slid slowly into a split, mesmerised**’ (p. 24).
3. oblivious – ‘**... he seemed oblivious to their arrival**’ (p. 25).
4. furrowed – ‘**Isaac furrowed his brow**’ (p. 27).
5. versatility – ‘**Versatility is key**’ (p. 27).
6. incentive – ‘**If you need more of an incentive to take this seriously ...**’ (p. 18)
7. feisty – ‘**Ooo ... someone’s feisty**’ (p. 42).
8. trudged – ‘**Amelia trudged quietly beside us**’ (p. 42).
9. mortified – ‘**I was beyond mortified**’ (p. 44).
10. disrespectful – ‘**Teachers always found it disrespectful**’ (p. 51).
11. irresponsible – ‘**Vale, I don’t want your friends thinking we’re irresponsible**’ (p. 57).
12. apocalyptic – ‘**It’s got apocalyptic vibes to it**’ (p. 60).
13. prestigious – ‘**Mamma enrolled me without realising it was one of the most prestigious schools in the city**’ (p. 96).

Students can look over the above list and choose 10 words that they are unfamiliar with. Ask them to look up definitions of these words and then use the words in a sentence of their own.

### Discussion points

1. There are two distinct storylines running through the book. Discuss the main points of each.
2. The book is full of descriptive language, often based around dancing. Get the students to choose one passage they particularly liked and ask them to explain what it is about the descriptive writing that made it so enjoyable to read.
3. Figurative language features extensively in the book. The students can look at the list below and choose one example to explain. Discuss the literal meaning as well. Why does this sort of language make it difficult for Valentina to understand some of the conversations? Encourage them to use some figurative language in their next piece of narrative writing.
  - a. ‘**... and held my breath as I pushed the button**’ (p. 90).
  - b. ‘**Her mouth was moving but the words were washing over me**’ (p. 91).
  - c. ‘**She was trying to lighten the mood, but it wasn’t funny**’ (p. 91).
  - d. ‘**... you’re one tough cookie**’ (p. 112).
  - e. ‘**Silence hung in the air**’ (p. 114).
  - f. ‘**If you don’t know the steps, you stick out like a sore thumb**’ (p. 129).
  - g. ‘**Butterflies swarmed in my stomach**’ (p. 157).
  - h. ‘**“Wow, that’s full-on,” Kate said**’ (p. 175).
  - i. ‘**That’s sick!**’ (p. 218).
  - j. ‘**Woah, no need to bite my head off**’ (p. 243).
  - k. ‘**... let’s give the boys a run for their money**’ (p. 282).
4. Diabetes is one of the main topics in the book. It is not until chapter nine that the reader is told Amelia has type 1 diabetes. What symptoms does Amelia have before chapter 9 that are indicative of diabetes?
5. The book is written in the first-person narrative, with chapters alternating between Amelia and Valentina. Why do you think the author has done this?
6. ‘**... dancers were master storytellers. Part of my job was to make people think everything I was doing was easy and effortless. The same thing now applied to real life, too**’ (p. 184). Why do you think Amelia felt this way? What is she trying to prove to everyone?
7. At the end of the story, in chapter 26, we are told by Valentina that ‘**Isaac’s dance told the story of a world that was falling apart**’ (p. 270). Explain how this could apply to both Valentina and Amelia who were both struggling with difficulties in their lives. How does the contemporary group dance reflect the struggles they are both facing?

## Writing

1. Prepare a report on diabetes. Include the following information.
  - a. What is it?
  - b. How many types are there?
  - c. What are the symptoms associated with diabetes?
  - d. What does a person with diabetes have to do every day to manage the disease?
  - e. What everyday factors can impact the severity of diabetes?
2. After discussing the descriptive passages in the book, ask the students to write a descriptive paragraph of something they enjoy doing. It can be a hobby, a holiday they've had, a special time with family, etc. Revisit one of the descriptive passages in the book to provide a model for them.
3. The book includes a detailed description of Isaac:

**... he was dressed all in black, with baggy tracksuit pants tucked into high socks and a loose t-shirt that reached his knees. His hair was short, spiky and bleached blonde, and his jawline was coated in rough stubble ... His eyes were partly closed and, with one hand, he tapped out the rhythm of the music in the air.** (p. 24)

Discuss the importance of character description in narrative writing. Get the students to write a detailed character description for their next piece of narrative writing. They can use the above description as a model.