

## HOUSE

DAN GIOVANNONI AND CHARLOTTE LANE

ISBN (HB): 9781760994709

YEAR LEVEL: Y1–4

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Feeling lonely, House abandons its foundations and launches into the sky, searching for a friend. From above, it spies someone just like it, someone lonely – a child all by herself in the middle of a storm. House whisks her away to safety, and as the lonely little girl slowly makes her way through each room, she discovers the wonders inside – the fantastical contraptions, the kitchen preparing anything you please and the periscope that lets you watch the world roll by down on the ground. House is a place of calm, of distraction and of rest – the perfect place for a child in need.

Inspired by the Barking Gecko Theatre play.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dan Giovannoni is an award-winning playwright and theatre-maker. Dan's plays for families, young people and adults have been produced across Australia in theatres, school halls, parks, tents and even a barn outside of Hobart. A graduate of NIDA, Dan lives on Wurundjeri country in Melbourne with his husband, daughter and two dogs.

### ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Charlotte Lane is an award-winning set, costume and production designer. She has worked all over the world in theatre, television, film and opera, and is currently based in Naarm (Melbourne).

### THEMES

- Friendship
- Loneliness
- Resilience
- Imagination
- Journey
- Home

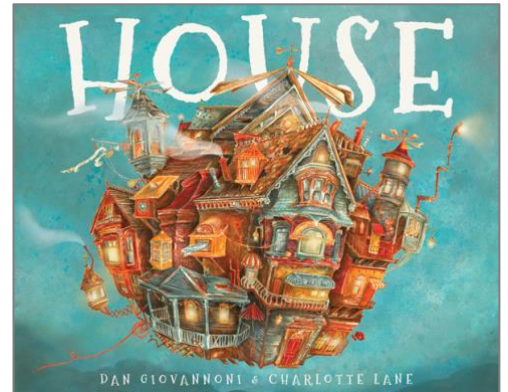
### AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

- Y1–4 English
- Y1–4 The Arts
- Y1–4 Health and Physical Education

### USEFUL WEBSITES

- Barking Gecko's website: [barkinggecko.com.au](http://barkinggecko.com.au)
- Author's website: [barkinggecko.com.au/news-stories/artist-profile-dan-giovannoni](http://barkinggecko.com.au/news-stories/artist-profile-dan-giovannoni)
- Illustrator's website: [charlottelanedesign.com/house](http://charlottelanedesign.com/house)
- The Journey of a Show – House: [barkinggecko.com.au/news-stories/the-journey-of-a-show-house](http://barkinggecko.com.au/news-stories/the-journey-of-a-show-house)

Please note, some learning activities in this document have been adapted from the creative learning resource developed for the Barking Gecko Theatre stage production of *House*.



## CLASSROOM IDEAS

### Discussion questions

1. If appropriate to your context, 'set the scene' for this story by welcoming students into the class with relaxing music, a warm drink and a biscuit. Consider as a class what feeling/s these gestures evoke.
2. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: picture books are only for young children and babies.
3. The book's blurb starts, '**Once, there was a lonely little house, all by itself ...**' Describe what you think a lonely house would look like.
4. Before reading, look at the cover and pose 'I wonder' questions:
  - a. I wonder how ...
  - b. I wonder what ...
  - c. I wonder where ...
  - d. I wonder when ...
  - e. I wonder why ...
5. The author has 'personified' the house in this story, giving it some human characteristics and actions. How does personification help authors explore difficult themes and emotions?
6. Recount the story using the letters of the alphabet as prompts, for example: **A** lonely, little house went searching for a friend. **B**y magic, it launched into the sky. **C**louds passed by as the house flew across the big, wide world. **D** ...
7. Look at the assorted household items depicted in the front endpapers (the illustration inside the front cover). What feeling do these items evoke for you? Why?
8. Identify the audience and purpose of this book.
9. What do you think is the overall message of this book?
10. Other than 'lonely', what are some other words or phrases you could use to describe the house?
11. Write a character profile for the girl in the story, including a physical description, personality, likes and dislikes.
12. When the house finds the girl, it recognises the same lonely, stormy feelings in her that it's experiencing itself. Do you think people with similar feelings often seek each other out? If so, why?
13. What point of view is this story told from? How would the story be different if told from the girl's point of view?
14. What are the basic needs of humans? Which of these needs does the house meet? Give some examples.
15. Some of the items that comfort the girl include a plush chair, a fire and a lovely old blanket. What are some of your comfort items?
16. Find the illustration spread with no words. What effect does the wordless page have on the reader?
17. Find examples of the author comparing feelings to weather and temperature. Make a list of feelings, then come up with a weather metaphor for each feeling.
18. Can you find examples of these literary devices in the story?
  - a. alliteration
  - b. repetition
  - c. metaphor
  - d. personification
19. Based on prior knowledge and context, what do you think these words from the story mean:
  - a. predicament
  - b. launched
  - c. blustery
  - d. tempestuous
  - e. teeming
  - f. clusters
  - g. on-demand
  - h. contraptions

Use each word in an original sentence.

20. Discuss what you think this line from the text means: **'Somewhere with spots to mend, and spots to be mended.'**
21. When do you think this story is set? What parts of the story give you this impression?
22. Can you think of any other stories that include moving or personified houses? What themes do they explore?
23. The final line in the story is: **'Even the very worst storms don't last forever.'**
  - a. What do you think this means?
  - b. What feeling does this leave with the reader?
  - c. Do you think this is a good way to end the story? Why?
  - d. What do you think will happen next? What information from the story makes you think this?
24. Read the interview with Dan Giovannoni on the Barking Gecko Theatre website. What question would you like to ask him?

## Creative Writing

1. The story reads, **'Sometimes it feels like all you need is a little shelter from the storm. Somewhere to keep you safe, and warm. Where you can shut the curtains tight on the world which can feel like such a dark and terrible place sometimes.'** Describe a place you feel safe and warm.
2. Write a short story based on this quote from the story: **A feeling that connected the two friends like a golden thread, through clouds and storms, over oceans and seas.**
3. Write a book report on *House*, including your opinion of the book, a summary and a recommendation of who will enjoy the book.

## The Arts

1. Compare the colour palette used at the start of the story and at the end of the story. What differences can you see? How is colour used to evoke a mood or feeling?
2. Consider the different page layouts in the story. Some spreads have only one illustration across both pages, while others have many smaller images. What effects are created by the different page layouts?
3. Compare how perspective is used to make the girl seem bigger or smaller at different points in the story.
  - a. How is she feeling at the points where she looks smallest?
  - b. How is she feeling at the points where she looks biggest?
4. Draw a 6-panel illustration to show the house's initial journey across the world, before it meets the girl.
5. Construct a diorama showing a room from the house.
6. Design a house that would make you feel comforted. You can include ideas from the story, as well as your own ideas.
7. What do you think the letters, notes, cards and illustrations on the back endpapers represent? Create a similar display with mail for your home or classroom.
8. In pairs or small groups, act out these quotes from the story:
  - a. **'With all its might, the lonely little house launched right into the sky.'**
  - b. **'Somewhere with all the things you need to forget the world outside.'**
  - c. **'Sometimes, you just need someone to listen to your story. To share a little of your load.'**
  - d. **'As big as the storms can be, they always pass, eventually.'**
  - e. **'A feeling that connected the two friends like a golden thread, through clouds and storms, over oceans and seas.'**
9. Read the article 'Journey of a Show – HOUSE' on the Barking Gecko Theatre website. Which step in the process of creating a professional theatre production interests you the most? Why?
10. Using a range of musical instruments or digital sound effects, explore which sounds suit each page of the book.

## Health and Physical Education

1. The girl in this story is lonely. What are some ways you can help friends and classmates feel less lonely?
2. The house is cosy and makes the girl feel welcome and safe. What are some ways your school and classroom make you feel welcome and safe?



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