



# *Her Serenity*

By SFCC Melton Team 3



# THE KIDS' CANCER PROJECT WRITE A BOOK IN A DAY

## Parameters Form

### Team Details

STATE: VIC  
DIVISION: Upper School  
SCHOOL/GROUP: St Francis Catholic College (MELTON)  
TEAM NAME: SFCC Melton 3  
TEAM ID: 1290

### Parameters and random words

#### Parameters

Primary character 1 Juggler  
Primary character 2 Optometrist  
Non-human character Whale  
Setting Music festival  
Issue A new pet

#### Random words

swept  
dazzling  
faded  
wrinkled  
quirky

### Instructions

- Start no earlier than **8am**
- Write an original story:
  - based on all **five parameters** (above)
  - including all **five random words** (above) as written, 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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To all the young souls that are reading this, may we inspire you to look beyond the horizon of the oceans and into the stars that you're made of— *you're magic*.

Yours sincerely.

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## *CHAPTER ONE: DISCOVERY*

I always knew I was different. It was never a secret. My pale white hair, my light skin, with all signs of colour drained from my appearance. I stare at myself in the mirror, not able to keep my eyes off myself. Or at least, the most that I can see, considering my situation. My dad always talked about my eyesight with my mother. I know he wants to help me the best he can, but there really is no cure for my vision. It was always like this, even when I was younger. Every month it was always,

“It’s time for your eye check Adella.”

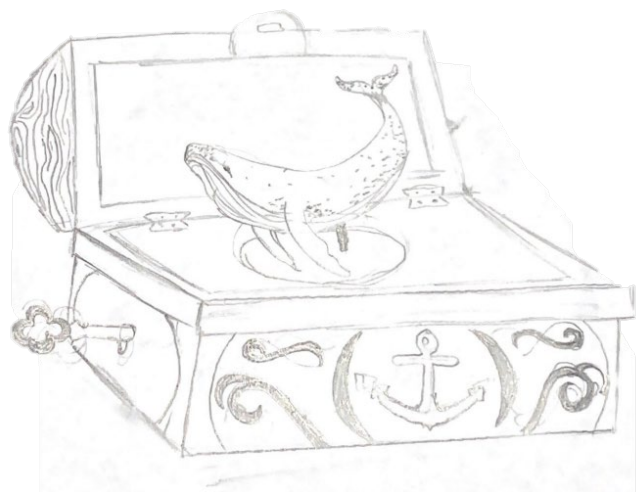
My dad tries to cheer me up as he performed the multiple tests, but I'm not entirely sure if the results he tells me is the complete truth.

"Don't fret, everything's going to be okay. There's nothing to worry about," he tells me every single time.

But what if he's wrong? What if my degrading eyesight is progressing faster than he anticipates?

My drawings posted up on the wall surround me. I can't help but feel disheartened in a way, as if this entire fantasy world I made in my head of fun-filled jugglers and whimsical animals floating in the air was just pretend. That I can never gain back my wild imagination, and that optimistic piece of me is long gone. I can barely see what I drew originally, only able to make out faint silhouettes of each character. I can't even remember what my most favoured drawing looked like, the juggler. I take a deep breath, forcing a smile onto my face, and mentally prepare myself to face the day.

The gentle notes emerging from my music box fill the room, as the whale with chipping paint slowly makes its way around and around in a circle, bringing a soft smile to my face. I've memorised exactly how the song goes, taking notice of the soft tune hidden behind the louder, more prominent melody. This music box is the only thing that helps to calm me down. It's been in my life ever since I was born, and I can't imagine living without the serene and demure sounds playing in the background.



Like routine, I head to my father's study to greet him good morning. The floorboards creek beneath my feet as I approached the study room door. However, I hear him speaking, not to himself like he usually did, but as if he was speaking to someone. I slowly open the door, allowing for a small sliver of what is occurring to be visible to me.

"Marrisa it's not looking good. Her eyesight is worsening faster than we anticipated. I'm so sorry, there's nothing I can do!" he expresses to my mum on the phone, with sniffles and deep breaths going in and out occurring in between each sentence.

All of a sudden, it's as if my hearing begins to fade and my face is frozen in shock. My heart pounds rapidly, like a race car zooming down the track at maximum speed.

"I can't do this. I have to get out," I think to myself.

Within a split second, I find myself running down the stairs, and out the door heading straight for the pier. I don't want to think about what's happening to me. I don't want to worry about whether or not I can see or not.

*I just want peace, is that all too much to ask for?*



## *CHAPTER TWO: FOLLOW THE MUSIC*

I took a walk along the pier to clear my head for a bit, I was so shocked to hear my parents speaking about my vision and how it is worsening, I just kept hearing the same sentence in my head of my dad telling my Mum,

“Her eyesight is worsening faster than we anticipated.”

This sentence just made me think so much about what it will mean for me in the future and how my eyesight will only get worse from here. I knew I was always different to the people around me, but now my vision too? I've noticed a slight change in my vision, but I didn't think too much of it.

As I walk along the pier, I felt a strong gust of wind that nearly **swept** me off my feet, after that gust of wind I heard music in the distance it sounded so familiar then it hit me, it was the song from my music box my grandmother gave me. I knew that tune too well. Every time I heard the song, it always made me feel calmer and more relieved, it was like a childhood memory that brought me a lot of joy. Therefore, I decided to follow the music. As I walked along, it got louder and louder, I knew whatever was playing the music was close. I started to run, I wanted to know where the music is coming from. Finally, as the edge of the pier arrived, I caught up to whatever it was. It was the whale from my music box! His glistening skin reflected a bunch of vibrant colours while also flying in the sky, with his dazzling trail of music notes behind him. I rub my eyes in confusion, only to find that what I'm seeing is the truth. The Whale was flying high into the sky, causing me to wave at him. A slight smile outstretched onto his face, and he slowly descended down in front of me. I finally take my eyes off him, only to be met with a music festival right in front of me. It was filled with bright lights and loud music, looking so big as if there was a lot to explore.

*Everything felt so familiar, like I've been there before.*

*It felt like a memory.*

### *CHAPTER THREE: THE FIRST MEETING*

My eyes widened in bewilderment; I'd only ever seen this in my wildest imagination. I mean, up until this moment, I was only wishing to see all of my imagination come to life. I never knew my wishes could come true. I didn't have to see the festival to understand it. There were notes—musical notes—that escaped from the rides and people there; it felt like my music box was alive. However, none of the sounds were the same as my whale; they were all new and different in their own way. I liked this variation of music; there was something cozy about it. Everyone had some sort of essence about them.

I couldn't quite place why it all felt so family-like, almost like home. I walked into the festival to further explore this place. There were stalls on every corner, and the people running them looked oddly familiar. I ignored it and continued on my path. There was food vendors, games, and multiple concerts going on. I had never seen a more dazzling music festival, just off the shore of Bondi Beach. I looked down and noticed that my shoelace had gotten undone and bent down to tie it, only for a large gush of wind to appear, causing me to lose balance. I tumbled down in confusion and turned my head in every direction, trying to spot the cause of the rapid wind. I looked left, then right, and left again; I couldn't spot anything. I finally got up in confusion, fixing my dress with my still-**wrinkled** hands from the ocean. And that was when I heard cheering. Slowly and anxiously, I turned, being met with a huge crowd exclaiming out a familiar name.

"NOLAN!"

*That name, I know that name: Nolan, Nolan, Nolan. The name rang a bell; why couldn't I place it?*

By the third or fourth chanting of his name, I finally got close enough to get a glimpse of his face. Nolan looked young; he looked around my age. As I stared more intensely, some of his features became more familiar; they looked like something I'd seen before. Then it hit me. It was him. It was really him. Nolan, the juggler, my imaginary best friend. *I never thought I would see him again.* I began to bolt towards him, hitting multiple others in my race to get to him. His personality that I created reflected myself, but even more **quirky**. A personality I wasn't able to express. As I got closer, the crowd around him slowly began to disperse, as if the second I realised who he was, their thoughts were focused on something else. With the extra room, my pace quickened, and I reacted to him in a matter of seconds.

"I can't believe my eyes," I declared.

"Well, you better believe it, Ella!"

We stared at each other, taking in each other's presence with a never fading smile leaving either of our faces.

*"Do you want to go on an adventure?"*



## *CHAPTER FOUR: ROUND AND ROUND*

“Hurry up!” Nolan called over his shoulder, “We will miss the ride!”

He grabbed my hand and lead us through a flurry of **dazzling** lights, and glowing lanterns. The ocean wind ran its sandy hands through my hair as I laughed to myself, relishing in this strange world. We ran towards a secluded corner of the festival where a solitary carousel nestled in an assembly of food stalls near the shores. The carousel was a breathtakingly beautiful display of oceanic decorations with billowing fabrics draping over the roof, and carvings engraved along its base, depictions of sea creatures, evidently eroded by the high tides.

“Wow” I whispered under my breath.

“Pretty cool, right?” Nolan grinned as he handed me a **wrinkled** ticket from his coat pocket.

As I placed the crumpled ticket in a peeling wooden box resting on the low fence surrounding the carousel, the gates groaned open. I drew closer to the carousel, and noticed instead of horses, there were lavish seahorses, varying in shades of deep blues to soft greens. Just as I sat on the cool, marble spine of a white seahorse, the carousel came to life. Instantaneously, a gentle chorus erupted from seemingly nowhere and lights flashed on all around us. The carousel churned around and started gaining speed rapidly, as if waking from a long slumber.

“Just on time!” Nolan exclaimed, from a bright pink seahorse behind me, “Oh, I forgot to mention but hold on tight!”

“What?!” I cried back.

The carousel was so fast now, that the sea lanterns became a blur and all I could make out was Nolans echoing laughter. The salty wind scratched and stung my eyes, only Nolans silhouette in front of me was visible. I closed my eyes tightly and clung on for my life. As the carousel

was finally starting to slow down, a sudden icy wave slaps me in the face, I frantically gasp for air and wipe away the water from my face.

“You can open your eyes now,” Nolan encouraged somewhere to my left.

Slowly the carousel came to a halt, I rubbed open my eyes and brushed the salty water off my lips.

“What...?” I breathed, bewildered by the sight in front of me.

*I was underwater.*

Still seated on my white seahorse and completely dry, apart from my face, we were fully submerged under water. I gazed in awe at the scene surrounding me. The vast expanse of rolling deep blue and a seabed covered in flourishing coral, littered in dozens of exotic fish and sea life. I stared in shock and confusion. It must have been apparent as Nolan taps my shoulder.

“You alright?” he asks amused.

“Um I think so, but what-?” I utter before he cuts me off.

“Don’t think about it too much, it's better not to question things here”

I glance over the reef once more, before reverting my focus to the other seahorses their once colourful marble now breathed with life. Nolan hopped off his seahorse and it moved on its own towards the rest of them. I followed his lead questionably and slipped of my seahorse onto the cold sand. The seahorse hesitates, it edges close to the group but hovers at a distance from the others. I approached the seahorse and prompt it to join the rest of them, placing a reassuring hand on its back. Nolan watches from a distance and smiles approvingly. The seahorse cautiously joins the herd and turns around, for a second, *I think it's expressing its gratitude.*



“Come on let's head back,” Nolan calls, echoing in through the open ocean.

“But how?” I say walking over to him, the soft sand swirling at my feet.

He gestured to an empty clearing of the coral reef. I follow his lead and as soon as we step into the clearing, I notice what he meant, a current. A mass of water twisting and spiralling up towards the surface of the water. Before I can question him, he grabs my hand and throws himself and inevitably,

me into the current. The force sweeps me off my feet and pulls me through the cool water, swiftly carrying us up towards the surface. I break through the surface of the water, blinded by the illuminating glow of daylight. The sunlight glints sleepily over the waves as the current continues up above the serene waters. We are moving so quickly that I can't tell where we're going, Nolan's hand anchor us together as we are washed up on to the shores of the festival, Landing on the grainy sand. Still astonished, I look towards the ocean waves, rolling drunkenly as they crushed into the warm sand, I couldn't help the feeling of nostalgia even though time has barely passed, a blissful euphoria. For some reason I felt a wistful affection towards that seahorse, I can't put my finger on it.

*It vaguely reminds me of something, someone?*

## CHAPTER FIVE: TASTE OF MAGIC

My eyes fluttered softly against the breeze of the ocean wind, the scent of salt and coral lingering under my nose. An uncomfortable churn settled at the bottom of my stomach; my thoughts centred on the distant whispers of waves, the sand between my feet and the memory of my parents.

“You alright, mate?” Nolan questioned, almost reading my thoughts with a sympathetic smile splayed on his lips and I shook my head.

“I think I’m just homesick,” I admitted quietly.

The juggler beside me barked out a laugh. An embarrassed flush heated behind my ears and neck as I turned away from his fit of laughter, my heels pressing harder against the sand.

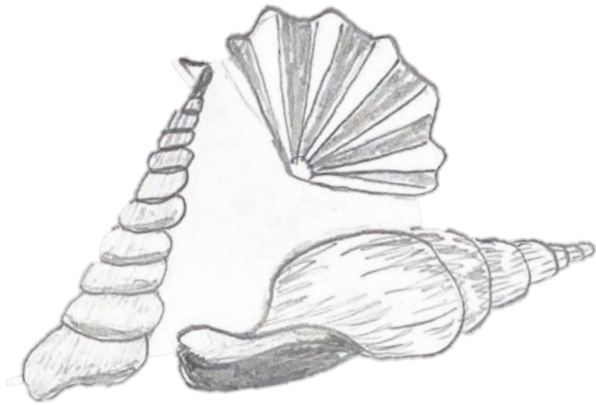
Calming down, Nolan nudged my side adamantly as he looked around the glowing sea lanterns before his eyes widened. I could almost imagine a light bulb going off above his matted brown hair.

“Ya’ know what this calls for?” He grinned, swiftly pointing over to the undergrowth of luminous orbs and stalls within the square of the festival.

“Let’s get some food!” *Food?* I realised, after the whole deal with the family of seahorses, coming across the mysterious whale and Dad’s phone call with Mum, I had completely forgotten to eat breakfast. Nodding, Nolan held out for my hand, and we found ourselves racing past the stalls decorated with dried kelp and glittery shells. My lungs filled with the briny ocean air as he led me through the empty workshops, dodging colourful banners and floating bubbles.



I yelped as I bumped into the juggler's sturdy back, his running footsteps slowing down to a small stall that glowed in a warm hue of oranges and vibrant pink. I watched him quietly as he ducked under the curtain, arm reaching out under the bench top of the stall.



Standing solemnly in the breeze, I shivered under the cool touch, trying to catch my breath as I squinted to gaze around our surrounds while Nolan continued his foraging. *It's beautiful*, I concluded, my eyes flickering over the hum of the abandoned festival with pearl buntings and the beaming sun that glinted heavenly above us.

“What're ya' looking at?” Nolan chirped in my ear, my heart nearly stuttering out of its rib cage.

I swivelled around to push him lightly, about to complain at the startlement he gave me, but my eyes landed on the 2 teacups within his hands.

Tilting my head curiously, I questioned the beverages with a raise of my eyebrows and Nolan gave me a mischievous look. Passing one of the teacups into my grasp, he insisted for me to follow him down the shore, where the cerulean waves lurched forward to kiss the golden sand. Making our way upon the wooden decking decorated in grey barnacles, we sat shoulder to shoulder at the edge, legs rocking over the ocean that giggled under us in waves of sea foam and floating seaweed.

“Thank you,” I muttered, breathing out to blow at the warm steam that rose from the teacup in my hands.

Carefully lifting the drink towards my lips, the familiar scent of citrus and wax swirled in my senses, and I gasped, turning to the boy sitting next to me, “Lemon balm tea...”

“With two cubes of sugar,” Nolan finished off for me, smiling cheerfully as he took a sip.

*Just how Mum makes it.*

I looked at him for a moment before taking my own taste, my fingertips grazing over the chipped rim of the old porcelain cup. As the succulent taste of sweetness and a slight sour twinge basked onto my tongue, my thoughts settled onto the faint memory of my mother’s touch and the warmth of summertime in my grandmother’s garden. Crystal droplets swelled at the corner of my eyes and before I knew it, I had Nolan’s hand comfortably squeezing my wrist.

“Here,” he prompted, rummaging through the pockets of his pants and pulled out a wrapped parcel in pink, “Open it.”

Blinking away at the salty tears fogging my vision, I delicately untangled the coral pink ribbon that tied the baking paper around the parcel and found a simple shortcake, decorated in chocolate and remnants of salt. “What’s this?” I croaked out in a hoarse voice, staring at the confection in my lap.

“A special dessert!” Nolan announced, nudging at me to take a bite.

Reluctantly, my teeth sank into the spongy cake as a rush of creamy and ripe flavours filled my tastebuds, with the hint of sunshine and ocean sea salt on my tongue.

“What did you put into this?” I gushed, relishing at the taste as I delved into take another bite.

Giggling at my expression, Nolan looked back out into rippling ocean, watching the whale leap out into the cloud riddled sky in a blur of blue bubbles and murmured.

“*Magic.*”

## *CHAPTER SIX: CONTROL*

Nolan and I are walking down the shore when we are greeted by the Whale, I take this as a signal it's time to start heading back. I turn to face Nolan and wrap my arms around him, I bid him one final goodbye and hop onto the back of The Whale. As we make our way back, I can't help but close my eyes and take in my surroundings again. The gentle breeze across my face, blowing my hair away from my ears, allowing me to fully indulge in the melodious songs that echo in a hauntingly beautiful manner. I rest my head onto the whale and ran my fingers across his smooth, yet **wrinkled** skin. I took a deep breath and lift my head, taking a lungful breath of fresh air that I've never stopped to appreciate. I open my eyes to nothing but a haze image. I start trying to focus my sight on the scenery around me, which begins to take away from my other senses. Eventually I'm met with the familiar feeling of disappointment. That I wouldn't get the sheer privilege of sight. I close my eyes once again strengthening all my senses once more. This time, the wind whistling in my ear and the slight breeze picks up into a gusty wind against my face, regaining my senses I'm met with the satisfaction I so desperately desired.

We are nearing home, and I can't help but reminisce about recent adventures. Thinking back to all the new encounters, the people that have helped me learn new things, not only about myself but how my experiences have shaped me. I've grown to learn that I am the only one that controls how I perceive these things, and how I perceive them plays a big part in how they play out. The pressure against my face gets lighter and lighter, the rustling and whistling I could so prominently once hear, was now faded into a faint whisper. I open my eyes to take in my surroundings and once again, I'm met by a blur. I take notice to the stillness around me and by this, I can recognise we're back home. I gently hop down from the whale and turn to face him.

With my hand against the upper part of his face, there's a moment of silence before I can muster up a heartfelt expression of gratitude.

“Thank you... For everything.”

I smiled and eyes shutting for a moment as a gentle tear trickles down my face. I walk back inside into my room and see a mystical stream gust through my windows and spiral around the music box the whale had once sat on. Whimsical chimes fill the atmosphere, and a gust of air lifts the hair from my shoulders, closing my eyes once again under the weight of the wind. The magical lights following the stream forms a silhouette of the whale and fall onto the box, everything turning still and silent. Before, a bright light flashes from the box and chimes a harmoniously roar— the once old and rusty music box that sat on the table was now glistening in youth and ocean glow.

*It's almost as if the sea has become my serenity.*

*Blurb*

Adella is slowly losing her vision. So, she embarks on a journey alongside a mysterious whale and a high-spirited juggler, helping her realise that despite the challenges she must face due to her condition, she is still able to enjoy the little things.

Little things as simple as a music box.

