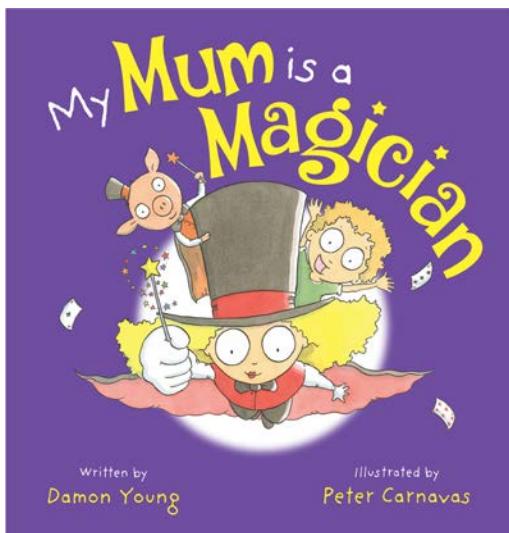


UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND PRESS

MY MUM IS A MAGICIAN

Written by Damon Young,
illustrated by Peter Carnavas



Teachers' Notes

Written by a practising teacher librarian
in context with the Australian curriculum
(English)

ISBN: 978 0 7022 5994 4 / AUS \$24.95

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SYNOPSIS

Mothers everywhere are renowned for their ability to make the impossible happen, and this mum is no exception. She's a magician! Able to pull piglets from her hat, perform card tricks and cast secret spells, she is one amazing mum. And best of all, she has a special magic trick for bedtime.

My Mum is a Magician celebrates mothers of all shapes, sizes and talents everywhere.

THEMES

- Mothers
- Poetic Devices
- Magic and Magicians

WRITING STYLE

My Mum is a Magician is written in first person, present tense. Like the other titles in this series, it shares Damon Young's signature wit and poetic rhythm, coupled with Peter Carnavas's humorous illustrations that invite visual literacy. It would appeal to an early childhood audience, and also has classroom applications for middle readers.

STUDY NOTES

- Before reading, discuss mothers. Share with a friend what is unique about your mother. What does she do during the day? What are her hobbies? What are her special talents? What do you love most about her?
- Using the title and front cover, discuss the sorts of things this mother is likely to do in *My Mum is a Magician*. What if your mum was a magician? What magic would she perform?
- Read the text, allowing students to enjoy the narrative and illustrations. Discuss the use of rhyme, rhythm, alliteration and other poetic devices. How do these add to the mood and pace of the story?
- The illustrations in *My Mum is a Magician* invite readers to carefully explore each of the four mothers in more detail. How do the illustrations add to the written text?
- In *My Mum is a Magician*, we are introduced to four very different mothers. Create a Character Profile of each mother, including:
 - How they dress
 - What they do for a job
 - What their hobbies/pastimes are
 - How they tuck their children in at bedtime
 - What their special talents are

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- Create a Character Profile of your own mum using the above criteria.
- Discuss how *My Mum is a Magician* breaks stereotypes of mothers. How do the illustrations and text work together to break these stereotypes?
- Imagine you are one of the mothers. Write a blog or diary entry about your day.
- Make a list of the magic tricks the mother in *My Mum is a Magician* can do. What ‘magic tricks’ can your mum do, for example, make your sore knee feel better, or make your vegetables taste nicer?
- Do you know any magic tricks? If not, try to learn a card trick or another magic trick. Share with a friend.
- Look carefully at the illustrations of the mother who kicks ‘high in chorus lines’. What do you notice about her? Why does this make her achievements even more incredible?
- Take note of any cameo appearances that characters from the other titles in the series make, such as the Nanna Ninja, the Pirate Pop and the Beast Brother. Why have they been included in this text?
- Discuss the sepia-coloured vignettes that tell us more about the magician mum, as well as her son. What are we being told via these vignettes? How do these help us to gain a better understanding of the mother? In what ways is the scene in which the mum catches her son taking cookies from the jar relatable?
- Some mothers learn other languages. Can you speak any other languages? Share what you know with your friends. As a class, learn some basic words in other languages.
- Each of the mothers has a ‘sidekick’ in the form of an animal. Discuss the role these sidekicks play in *My Mum is a Magician*.
- Imagine you are the mum who studies science. Create an information report on one of the sea creatures in the illustration.
- What spells does the magician mum place on her sidekick pig? Give evidence from the text to support your ideas.
- Write a reflection about the relationship you share with your mum.
- Write a story about one of the mothers in the text, using ideas from *My Mum is a Magician* to help you.
- Using a suitable graphic organiser, compare *My Mum is a Magician* with one of the other books in the series, such as *My Pop is a Pirate*, *My Nanna is a Ninja*, *My Brother is a Beast* or *My Sister is a Superhero*. How are they similar to and/or different from one another?
- Create and illustrate another verse suitable to include in *My Mum is a Magician*.
- Create your own story that celebrates fathers: ‘*My Dad is a ...*’

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AUTHOR MOTIVATION – DAMON YOUNG

Writing *My Mum is a Magician*, I had one big guiding idea: mums are ace, so let's celebrate the heck out of them, in all their varied ace-ness. I also wanted to give illustrator extraordinaire Peter Carnavas some challenges: 'One glowing bedroom, please.' Sure enough, he did it and it looks beautiful!

ILLUSTRATOR MOTIVATION – PETER CARNAVAS

Illustrating Damon's picture books is always a joy, and this one is packed with fun. The magic mum is such a wonderful character to draw – the hair, the cape, the disappearing cards and never-ending coffee – but once again, the animal sidekicks steal the show for me. Who couldn't love a piglet as the magician's assistant?

For me, this series is all about celebrating the different types of family members we all have. I try to bring as much fun and diversity to the characters as I can, and I love adding little subthemes and visual delights for readers. This might be in the form of the animal sidekicks, a glimpse of a mum's prosthetic leg, or adding characters from previous books in the series. I hope readers enjoy the book as much as I enjoyed illustrating it.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Damon Young is a prize-winning philosopher and writer. He's the author or editor of eleven books of nonfiction and fiction, most published internationally in English and translation. His philosophy works include *The Art of Reading*, *How to Think About Exercise*, *Philosophy in the Garden*, and *Distraction*. Damon's books for children include *My Brother is a Beast*, *My Sister is a Superhero*, *My Pop is a Pirate*, and *My Nanna is a Ninja*. He's currently working on a novel for middle readers. He's written opinion and reviews for *The Guardian*, *The Age*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Australian*, the ABC and BBC, and written essays, poetry and short fiction for literary magazines. He lives in Hobart with author Ruth Quibell, and their two editors (also known as children).

www.damonyoung.com.au

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Peter Carnavas writes and illustrates books for children and the grown-ups in their lives. His first book, *Jessica's Box*, was shortlisted for the Queensland Premier's Literary Award and the CBCA Crichton Award for Emerging Illustrators. He has since created many books, including *Last Tree in the City*, *The Children Who Loved Books*, *Blue Whale Blues*, and *The Elephant*. He is a popular presenter in schools and his work has been translated into many languages, including Italian, Portuguese, Korean and Dutch. Peter lives on the Sunshine Coast with his wife, two daughters and a small, charming dog called Florence. www.petercarnavas.com