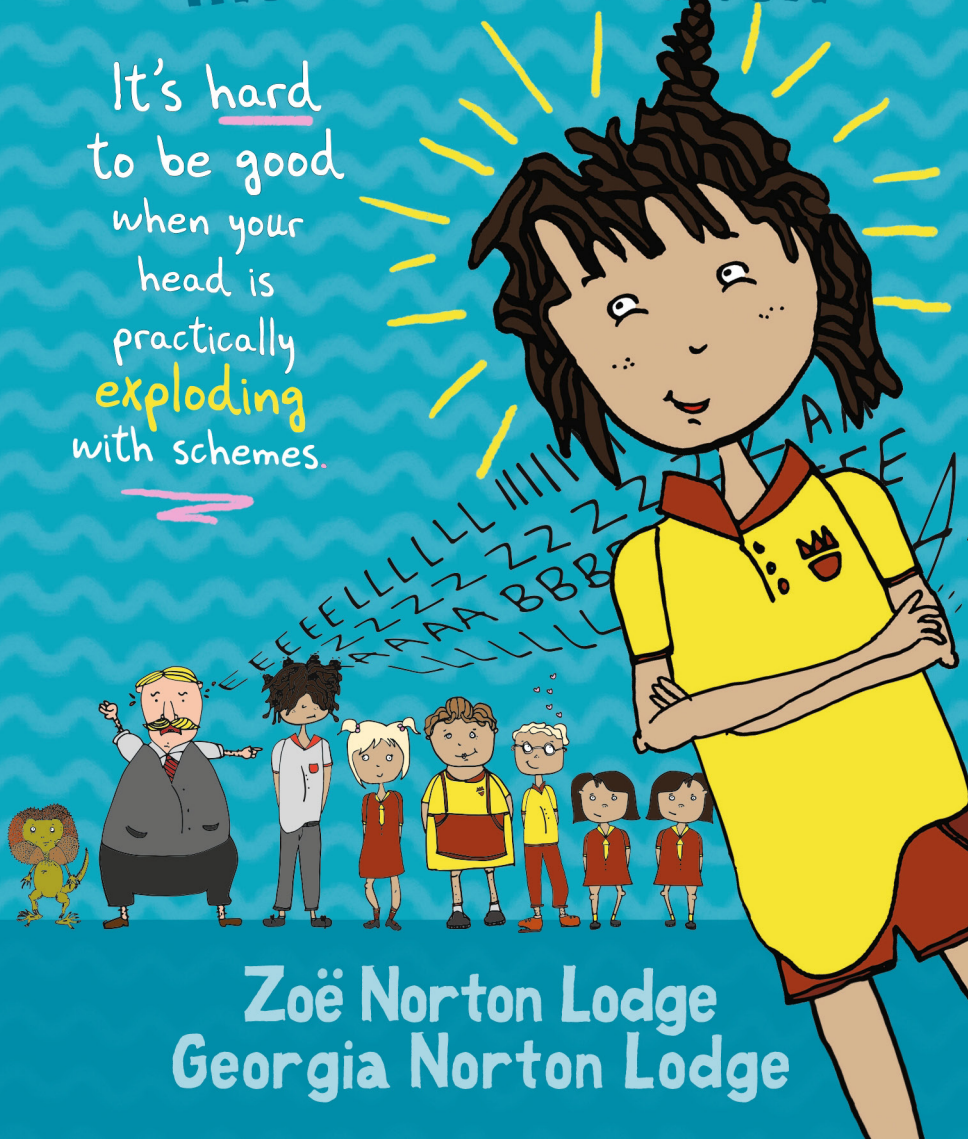


ELIZABELLA

Meets Her Match

It's hard
to be good
when your
head is
practically
exploding
with schemes.



Zoë Norton Lodge
Georgia Norton Lodge

ELIZABELLA

Meets Her Match



Zoë Norton Lodge

★ with illustrations by ★

Georgia Norton Lodge

CHAPTER SAMPLE



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Chapter One



Roses are red
Violets are blue
Sorry I was mean
IOU a haiku

Elizabella finished scribbling the poem on a sticky note. Every time she thought she might have upset someone, Elizabella would write a Sorry Poem to make amends. But this morning she had run out of

time, having spent an awfully long while, even longer than usual, dealing with a giant knot in her hair.

While some people would spray some detangling conditioner and brush it out, Elizabella was quite proud of her knot. She would tease it with her fingers, making it grow a little bigger each day, like a science project.

Elizabella was ten and a quarter. She had brown hair and brown eyes and brown freckles on her cheeks. And even though she wasn't notably tall or short, she was always in the back row of school photos because her giant knot gave her bonus elevation.

This particular morning, Elizabella had spent so long working on her knot that she didn't have time to compose a proper Sorry Poem. She needed to write one for her brother Toddberry because the day before she had replaced the cheese sandwich in his lunch box with a picture of a cheese sandwich that she had drawn. Elizabella didn't get to see her brother discover it, because he was in Year Eight at Bilby Creek High School. But just the thought of him opening the box, pulling out the picture and staring

at it completely confused made her laugh.

Even though she thought it was an excellent joke, when Toddberry had discovered an apple, a muesli bar, a tub of yoghurt, a chocolate frog and a picture of a cheese sandwich in his lunch box, he was baffled and cross. So a Sorry Poem was in order. But it would have to wait.

She had some regrets about promising her brother a haiku, given she had no idea what a haiku was, but it was the only type of poem she had heard of that rhymed with “blue”. **Being a writer is hard**, thought Elizabella as she stuck the placeholder poem to her brother’s door.

“Bye Toddberry!” she yelled. She wasn’t planning on waiting for a reply, yet as she spoke, Toddberry emerged ...

His hair was long and black and it tended to conceal most of his face. It was also full of knots, although they weren’t intentional like Elizabella’s. He had a habit of swishing his hair away to momentarily reveal his expression before the hair would fall back into place, covering him up, like

curtains closing at the end of a play.

Toddberry swished his hair curtains and stared at his little sister. His expression: betrayal.

"I've left you a Sorry Poem," she said. "Well, a placeholder one, anyway."

"Can I *eat* it?" he asked, pointedly.

"Ummm, sure," said Elizabella. "If you're a termite or a silverfish or a cockroach! See ya!"

She thundered down the hallway and flung open the front door, calling out goodbye to all the other humans and animals on her way out. "Bye Dad, bye Larry, bye worms!"

Elizabella was excited to get to school. The sooner she got there, the sooner the term would end, and at the end of this term was the Bilby Creek Fete. She was opening the gate when her dad, Martin, ran out of the house behind her. He was very tall, with big, friendly, brown eyes like a labrador. He had dark, knotty hair too – knots ran in the family. He was holding her backpack, her lunch box, her homework, her recorder and her shoes. "Elizabella, you forgot your ... everything!"

Elizabella plonked herself down on the porch, while her dad put her shoes on for her and filled the backpack with all the things that had slipped her mind. “Thanks, Dad!”

He was just zipping up her backpack when Larry the Frillneck Lizard popped his head out of it.

“Larry, what are you doing in there?” Martin pulled him out, then he looked at Elizabella, one eye squinted.

“You weren’t going to take Larry to school for some Elizabella-type scheme, were you?”

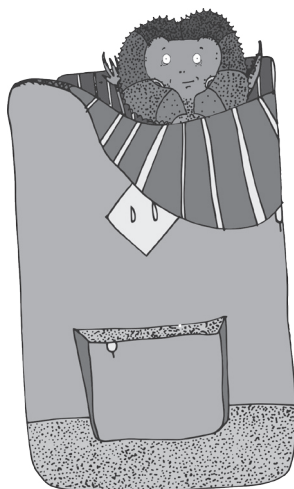
“No, Dad ...” said Elizabella, truthfully. “But, thanks for the tip!”

Martin sighed. “Please don’t get into any trouble today, my little entrepreneur, okay?”

“Dad, I will try my best.”

“Promise?”

“I promise that there is a possibility that I won’t get in trouble today.”



Martin looked at her. He knew that was about the best he was going to get.

Elizabella shut the gate and started scuffing down the street. **She liked to really push her feet into the dirt as she walked**, kicking it up and coating her sneakers and socks in a pleasing powdery layer of brown.

“Why did we give her that idea?” said Martin to Larry, as he waved goodbye to Elizabella.

“Don’t ask me, that was all you,” said Larry, in his native tongue Lizish, which to Martin sounded like meaningless croaks. Larry was completely versed in the English language; after all, he’d been listening to the whole family speak it his entire life. However, he hadn’t worked out how to make his lizard mouth form the words correctly, so he was never really sure if anyone could understand him. It was incredibly frustrating.

Elizabella began walking to school, past all the little houses with their neatly trimmed bushes, freshly painted fences and shiny garden gnomes. Her house stood out in comparison. While it did

have a flourishing lavender bush, the front garden of Elizabella's house was mostly adorned with old shoes and her unfinished household projects – half a homemade sundial, a pile of toilet rolls that may one day become a telescope of sorts, the old TV she was going to convert into a fish tank ...

As Elizabella walked, she started thinking about all the things she could do if she brought Larry with her to Bilby Creek Primary School. She could put him in a teacher's drawer, in the bubblers, on a toilet seat, or maybe in Daphne's hair?

At the end of her street the houses disappeared and the path to school became wide and bushy. She was thinking so much that she didn't even realise she'd walked straight into a prickly acacia shrub.

“Elizabella, is that you?”

It was Huck. Huck had glasses and sandy blond hair and one pair of slime green sandshoes that he wore every day even though one of the shoes had a big hole in it. Huck lived with his mum, Leanne, on the street parallel to Elizabella's. Their houses shared

a back fence, so if they both stood in their gardens they could have a conversation.

Huck liked Elizabetha because he never knew what she was going to do. She eventually appeared out the other side of the shrub.

“Elizabetha, you have prickles all over you!” said Huck. He began to pick them off her shirt.

“Don’t throw them away!” said Elizabetha.

“What could you want with them?”

“I have no idea, but definitely something.” Elizabetha started putting the prickles in her pocket.

Sometime later, Elizabetha and Huck arrived at school. Bilby Creek Primary was a two-storey brick building that stood alone in the bush. Because it had no neighbours, the school looked like a doll’s house that belonged to a giant – a giant who had accidentally dropped her doll’s house on the ground and left it outside to weather the elements.

Elizabetha surveyed the empty school playground, pleased.

“Elizabetha, nobody is here ...”

“Oh, we must be really early!”

“No, Elizabella,” said Huck, nervously. “I think it’s the opposite.”

Elizabella glanced at her watch. It was 9.10 – the bell had gone ten minutes ago.

Mr Gobblefrump, the Acting Principal, walked purposefully towards them. He was obsessed with the rules. So much so that he wrote the Bilby Creek Primary School Rule Book and **did playground duty every day**. Mr Gobblefrump looked a bit like Humpty Dumpty with a toupee.

“Elizabella, do you know what the time is?”

“Why yes Mr Gobblefrump, it’s 9.10.”

“And what time does the bell go, Elizabella?”

“That would be o-nine-hundred hours, sir.”

“And why are you late?”

“The thing is, I walked into a–”

Mr Gobblefrump stopped listening to her – he was distracted by Huck.

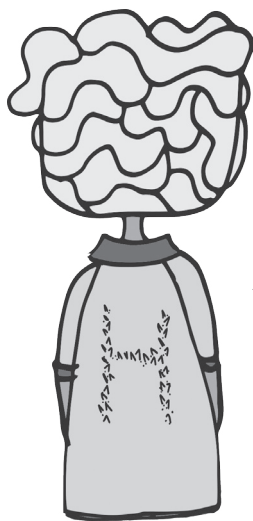
“Huck, why are you covered in–”

Mr Gobblefrump pulled a prickly off Huck’s shirt.

“–prickles!”

“Like I was saying,” said Elizabella, “I walked into

a prickly acacia shrub and Huck was trying to help me pull off the prickles and when we were walking to school I started sticking them onto the back of his shirt in the shape of an 'H.'" She spun Huck around. "See, 'H' for 'Huck'!"



"What?" said Huck, surprised. Such was Elizabella's sleight of hand, Huck had absolutely no idea any of this had occurred. He started running in little circles on the spot, trying to see his own back.

"Huck, go to the bathroom and de-prickle yourself. And Elizabella, you must spend fifteen minutes in the Think About What You've Done Corner this morning. That's the rule."

"For putting prickles on shirts?" asked Elizabella.

"No," said Mr Gobblefrump, "for lateness." He briefly consulted the Rule Book, which he kept in his breast pocket. "Seems there is no prickle rule ...

hmmm, I might need to update that for the next edition!"

In the bathroom, Huck turned his back to the mirror and craned his neck around to see it. And sure enough, there in the middle of his back was a giant "H".

How did she do that without me noticing? thought Huck. *Very cool.*



Elizabella walked down the corridor with Mr Gobblefrump right on her tail.

"Sir, I can find my own way to class, you know," she said.

"If I don't escort you, who knows where you might end up?" he said. "In a frangipani tree, probably!"

Elizabella thought about this for a moment.

"Fair enough."

They were just about to reach her classroom, when Elizabella remembered something. "Can I ask you something, Mr Gobblefrump?"

Mr Gobblefrump sighed. “Yes ...?”

“What’s a haiku?”

Mr Gobblefrump stopped in his tracks. His yellowy moustache stood on end, sensing danger. This was the last thing he was expecting Elizabella to ask. He paused. *Could Elizabella possibly use the knowledge of what a haiku is to cause trouble?* He couldn’t imagine how that might be.

“Well,” he started, “a haiku is a Japanese poem, traditionally made up of seventeen syllables over three lines. The first line has five syllables, the next line has seven and the final line has five. So it goes **Da-da-da-da-da**, then **da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da**, then another **da-da-da-da-da**.”

“Does it rhyme?”

“It doesn’t have to, though I suppose it could.”

“Thanks,” said Elizabella, entering her class. “Bye, sir!” She tried to close the door, but something was stopping her. She looked down and saw Mr Gobblefrump’s big, blue plastic sandal jamming the door open like a giant squishy piece of LEGO.

“Not so fast,” he said. “Miss Carrol?”

Miss Carrol taught Elizabella's Year Four class. She had bright red hair and she wore blouses tucked into high-waisted trousers almost every day.

She looked to the door. So did all of the children.

"Elizabella needs to spend fifteen minutes in the Think About What You've Done Corner," said Mr Gobblefrump.

Miss Carrol sighed. "Okay, thank you."

Satisfied, Mr Gobblefrump left.

Elizabella went and sat there.

"Now, where were we?" said Miss Carrol, getting on with the lesson. "Ah, yes. What is eleven times six?"

Daphne's hand shot up. Daphne always wore her blonde hair in two little pigtails with pink baubles. Her eyes were the bluey-green of an emu's egg and she had a voice like a baby emu's to match.

"Yes, Daphne?"

Daphne scratched her head for a moment. Maths was her favourite subject and she often got so excited that she would put up her hand to answer the question before the answer had fully formed in her mind. Daphne started counting on her fingers.

“Ummmm ... ummmmm.”

Elizabella couldn't stand it any more. “Sixty-six!” she blurted out.

“Sixty-six!!” said Daphne, immediately afterwards.

“Elizabella, no answering from the Think About What You've Done Corner, you know that. But ... yes, you are right.”

Daphne looked annoyed. She turned to Elizabella and stuck out her tongue.

“Sorry, Miss Carrol,” said Elizabella. She decided to use the rest of her time in the corner working on her Sorry Poem for Toddberry.

Once in your lunch box
You had a nice cheese sandwich
I took it, my bad

Elizabella paused. *Wow*, she thought. *Haikus are easy.*

She tried another one:

I took your sandwich
Replaced it with a picture
My apologies

She was on a roll!

There was a picture
Instead of a cheese sandwich
Inside your lunch box

Elizabella thought, *That last one doesn't really have an apology in it.* She was just wondering how to rework it when Huck came into the room. A new haiku formed in her mind:

Huck, you're a cool dude.
Sorry about the prickles
Please don't think I'm rude

She paused. *Where did that come from?*

The Creators!

ZOË NORTON LODGE is a writer, actress and television presenter. She was a writer/presenter on ABC TV's *The Checkout* for the past five years, and has written and performed in various Chaser television shows. She often guest appears on other ABC shows including *The Book Club* and *Insiders* (Talking Pictures) and has also guest hosted programs on ABC Radio Sydney. She performs regularly at writers' festivals and other live events. She is co-creator of Story Club, the live storytelling night, ABC TV show & podcast.

Her work is widely published in Australian anthologies including *Best Australian Stories*, *Women of Letters*, *Best Australian Comedy* and many more. Zoë always wanted to write for children; she loves stories that are inventive, surprising, smart, magical and a little bit naughty. *Elizabella Meets Her Match* is her debut children's novel.



By day **GEORGIA NORTON LODGE** leads her graphic design team at an award-winning interior design and branding agency. By night she is an illustrator, married to her side project Georgia Draws a House where she delights people with deliveries of their hand-drawn homes. She's also Zoë's younger sister. This is their second book together.

A messy mix of Matilda,
Pippi Longstocking and
Horrible Harriet!



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