

NO KIND OF *Superman*

Written by Danny Parker
Illustrated by Matt Ottley

Published by Windy Hollow Books 2011

Teachers' notes

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Danny Parker was born in the UK in 1967.
The youngest of 6 children, 3 girls and 3 boys.

Danny has worked as a nurse, an undertaker, a street entertainer and an actor.

Danny and his family moved to Perth in 2005.
The plan was simple. He would stay at home and write, while his wonderful wife went off to work to pay for it all.

Why is it that simple plans never really work out?
He is now a full time Drama teacher working in an independent boys school in Perth WA.
Most importantly he is married with two children, the most rewarding job to date. A boy and a girl.

He has always written, mostly very short stories, though *No Kind of Superman* is the first story to make it into print.

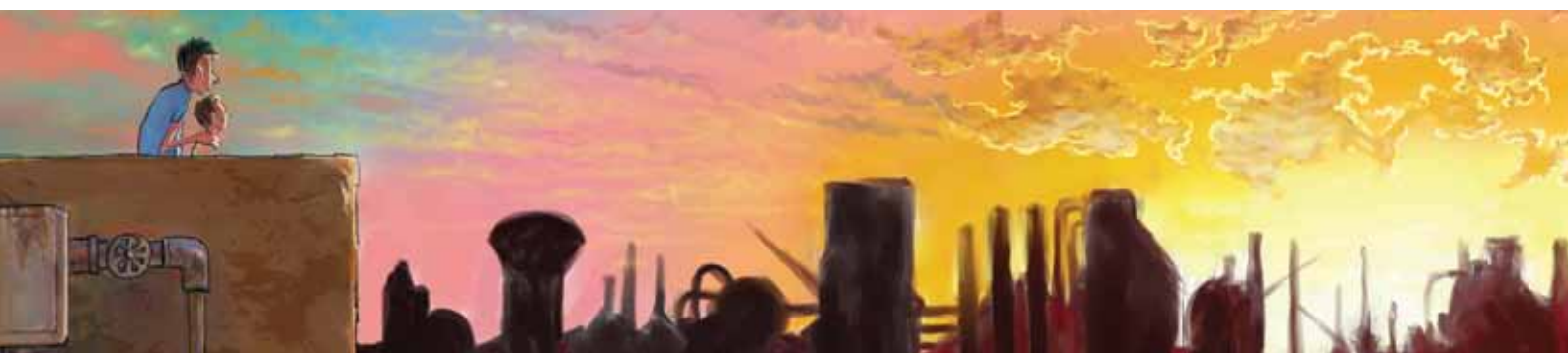
A note from the author:

I was motivated by a change in our family circumstance, we moved house and everything was new. Of course to us as parents this was just part of the scheme of things, but to our two children everything was different. All change. The move was made necessary by my wife taking a new job. Her sudden move into a new and very full on challenge meant that we seemed to swap domestic roles a little, or perhaps share them out more fairly than previously!

I wished very much that I could take the difficulty of change away from the kids, that they would settle in quickly, new friends, happy times and great adventures. About this time I really began to think about my role as a parent. I mean of course I had thought of it often, but here we were in something of a new world and I just wanted to take away the strangeness.

So *No Kind Of Superman* was really a love song for my kids, a promise that although I might not always get the basics right, I will be there for them whatever happens.

Matt Ottley is a multi-award-winning picture-book writer and illustrator. He spent his childhood in Papua New Guinea, and has travelled widely throughout the world. His controversial work for young adults, *Requiem for a Beast* was awarded the Children's Book Council of Australia's Picture Book of the Year in 2008, and the Queensland Premier's Award for Young Adult Literature in the same year. Matt's work has been translated into many languages and his picture book *What Faust Saw* was an international bestseller.





A note from the illustrator:

I used a graphics tablet, and all work was done on screen using virtual pencil, ink and pastels.

I chose to interpret the words in as gentle a way as possible, making use of the backgrounds around the characters as metaphors. There is occasional use of fantasy, but most of the work is set within the local environment of the father and son. I made use of the industrial look to some of the backgrounds to highlight the notion that love rises above environment.

My difficulties were in coming up with enough material that each image could be multi-layered in its meanings.

Before Reading

Prediction

What clues do the front cover and the title give you about the book?

After reading

What do you think were the main themes in the book?

Why do you think it is called *No Kind of Superman*?

What do you think the narrator means by "Sometimes my words are just too crumbly and don't seem to make the right shapes?"

Look at the author's use of language. How does it create mood and emotion?

Look at the author's use of metaphor. Why does he say I can help carry your burden?

How do you think this story may be different if it were written from the mother's perspective?

Illustration

On the page where there father says "There's lots I'd change", what ideas or feelings do you get from the illustrations?

On the page where the father and son are walking on a winding wooden boardwalk, why do you think the illustrator has chosen this particular scene?

