

Rita wants a Ninja

Máire Zepf and Mr Ando
Publishing 27 January 2022

Rita is trained in the art of stealth by a ninja in the latest Rita book about sibling relationships

A great way to open up conversations about sibling relationships with younger children, *Rita wants a Ninja* continues the imaginative adventures of Rita and her family. In this story, Rita dreams up a ninja to help train her in the art of being stealthy, but when the ninja steals something close to her own heart, Rita has to come to the rescue.

A high-kicking story of bravery and sibling love, *Rita wants a Ninja* is perfect for use in nurseries and reception classes as a way of opening up conversations about their siblings, younger and older, as well as being an ideal story to introduce mindfulness activities to the classroom and inspiring imaginative play. Children can also have fun trying to find Rita in the various illustrations that accompany the text.

Written by award-winning author Máire Zepf and illustrated by celebrated illustrator Andrew Whitson (Mr Ando), *Rita wants a Ninja* is the third book in the Rita series, following on from *Rita wants a Witch* and *Rita wants a Robot*, both published at the end of last year. *Rita wants a Ninja* was originally published in the Irish language and will now be published by Graffeg in English and Welsh.

Máire Zepf says, 'I do a lot of work with children – in classrooms, libraries and at literary festivals. When we brainstorm characters and invent new story-worlds together, ninjas manage to sneak their stealthy ways into the children's imaginations with great regularity. They are fascinated by them! So for this book, I started with that character and worked my way outwards into the plot of the story.'

With four further Rita stories in production, including *Rita wants a Fairy Godmother*, publishing in February 2022, the Rita series will continue discussing family relations as well as Rita's many vividly imagined wishes.



Rita wants a Ninja

Author Máire Zepf

Illustrator Mr Ando

Format Paperback, 250 x 250mm

Pages 44

Age 2+

Publication 27 January 2022

Price £7.99

ISBN 9781802580426

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Máire discusses some of the upcoming books, saying, 'Rita is a little girl with VERY big ideas. She has lots of adventures coming up in which she dreams up fantastical solutions to ordinary problems, often with hilarious results! Each book is based around a different character and centres on a new theme. There will be dragons, genies and a fairy godmother, who will help her explore notions from fairness and order to the genderisation of clothing and emotional regulation.'

Notes to Editors

Review Copies & Editorial: To request review copies, interviews or images for editorial use, please contact media@graffeg.com, bethan@graffeg.com.

Máire Zepf has written 12 books for children, from picture books to a YA verse novel. Winner of the KPMG Children's Book of the Year, the Réics Carló Award and a White Raven in 2020, her books appear in eight languages worldwide. The Co. Down author was the first Children's Writing Fellow for Northern Ireland, based at the Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry at QUB (2017-19). She is Artistic Director for Quotidian - Word on the Street.

Andrew Whitson is an award-winning artist and Belfast native who likes to be called Mr Ando! He lives in an old house which is nestled discreetly on the side of a misty hill at the edge of a magic wood, below an enchanted castle in the shadow of a giant's nose. His house looks down over Belfast Harbour, where the Titanic was built, and up at the Belfast Cavehill, where an American B-17 Flying Fortress bomber plane once crashed during World War II! Mr Ando has illustrated over twenty books under his own name, the most recent of which being the Molly series with Malachy Doyle and the award-winning Rita series of picture books with Máire Zepf.

Graffeg produce and publish children's and illustrated books with an amazing team of authors, illustrators, designers and photographers. We believe great content, good design and high-quality production values make our books stand out. Our wonderful children's authors and illustrators include Jackie Morris, Nicola Davies, James Mayhew, Joyce Dunbar, Malachy Doyle, Andrew Whitson, Máire Zepf, Ian Brown, Eoin Clarke, Nick Cope, Max Low, Karin Celestine, Roy Noble, Julia Rawlinson, Tiphannie Beeke, Tracey Hammett, Jan McCafferty, Sara KilBride, Mark Llewelyn Evans, Karl Davies, Jason Korsner, Jon Roberts, Hannah Rounding, Zeb Soanes, Cathy Fisher, Michelle Robinson, Catalina Echeverri, Tim Budgen, Dom Conlon, Anastasia Izlesou, Ian Brown, Eoin Clarke, Steve Smallman and Abbie Cameron.

Other titles in the series:

- Rita wants a Witch
- Rita wants a Robot
- Rita wants a Fairy Godmother
- Rita wants a Dragon
- Rita wants a Genie



