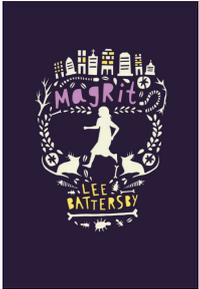




Walker Books Classroom Ideas



Magrit

By Lee Battersby
Illustrated by Amy Daoud
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*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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Outline:

A wonderfully strange yet poignant tale about accepting the truth about oneself. Magrit lives in an abandoned cemetery with her friend and advisor, Master Puppet, whom she built from bones and bits of graveyard junk. She is as forgotten as the tiny graveyard world that surrounds her. One night as Magrit and Master Puppet sit atop of their crumbling chapel, a passing stork drops a baby into the graveyard. Defying Master Puppet's demands that the baby be disposed of, and taking no heed of his dire warnings, Magrit decides to raise the baby herself. She gives him a name: Bugrat. Magrit loves Bugrat like a brother, friend and son all rolled into one. But Master Puppet and the newly discovered skeleton girl know all too well what will happen when Bugrat grows up – that the truth about them all will be revealed. Something Magrit refuses to face.

Author/Illustrator Information:

Lee Battersby is the author of several adult novels and over 70 short stories, published in Australia, the US and Europe. His work has been praised for its consistent attention to voice and narrative muscle, and has resulted in a number of awards, including the Aurealis, Australia Shadows and Australia SF "Ditmar" gongs. Lee lives in Mandurah, Western Australia, with his wife, writer Lyn Battersby and an increasingly weird mob of kids. He's been a stand-up comic, tennis coach, cartoonist, poet, and tax officer in previous times, and he currently works as Arts Officer for a local council, where he gets to play with artists all day. *Magrit* is his first novel with Walker Books Australia.

After graduating from the University of Technology Sydney in 2009, Amy spent time in a handful of design studios before accepting the role as Junior Designer at Walker Books Australia in 2011. Since then, she has worked across a diverse range of genres, creating covers and internal design for junior fiction, young adult and non-fiction titles. Working as Designer today, Amy now also art directs illustrators on picture book titles from storyboard to finished art. *Magrit* is her first book.

How to Use These Notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

These notes are for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary years 4-6 • Ages 9+ 	Key Learning Areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English 	Example of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Novel 	Themes/Ideas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance • Babies • Emotional and Physical Journeys • Growing up
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National Curriculum Focus:*			
English Year 4 ACELA1492 ACELA1494 ACELA1496 ACELT1603 ACELT1605 ACELT1607 ACELT1794 ACELY1690 ACELY1694	Year 5 ACELA1511 ACELT1608 ACELT1609 ACELT1610 ACELT1612 ACELT1798 ACELY1701 ACELY1704	Year 6 ACELA1518 ACELT1613 ACELT1617 ACELT1618 ACELT1800 ACELY1709 ACELY1711 ACELY1714	*Key content descriptions have been identified from the Australian National Curriculum. However, this is not an exhaustive list of National Curriculum content able to be addressed through studying this text.



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Discussion Questions and Activities:

Before Reading

Before reading *Magrit* view the cover and title and identify the following:

- The title of the book
- The author
- The publisher
- The blurb

Identify the shapes that are used to make up the cover illustration. Do they give you clues as to what the story is about? What genre do you think this story is? Revisit your answer to this question after reading the book to see if your predictions were correct.

Find examples of similes, metaphors and alliteration used in *Magrit*. How have these literary devices been used to enrich the story?

Why are some sentences in a different font? What effect does this have on the reader?

“Magrit had been born in one of the apartments overlooking the cemetery, although she could recall nothing beyond the cold concrete floor and the sharp edged plastic furniture, and the constant smell of cigarette smoke and chip fat.”
Page 16

What does the description of Magrit’s place of birth evoke in the reader? Does it sound like a nice place? Why has the author described it like this?

Draw a picture of the octagonal cemetery as described in chapter 1. Create a map and label the different locations that are described in the book as you read it.

Create a diorama of Master Puppet using found material.

Write an extra chapter to follow at the end of the book, detailing what Magrit finds when she leaves the graveyard.

Guided Reading Questions

Chapter 1

Describe the relationship between Magrit and Master Puppet. Why does Magrit defy Master Puppet?

Chapter 2

Why does Magrit believe her *“happy life would come to an end”* if she were to be seen by one of the apartment residents? Page 21

“Magrit grinned. That was clever, grown-up thinking, the kind that Master Puppet kept all to himself.” Page 28
Why does Magrit feel proud of herself about this?

Chapter 3

How does Magrit feel about her mother? Do you think this affects the way Magrit tries to look after Bugrat? Why?

“Master Puppet did love her. His love was real, but it was a cold, hard skeletal love.” Pages 40-41
Are there different kinds of love? Describe the differences between the love of a couple, friends and siblings. Can you love someone and still get angry at them?

Why do you think Master Puppet asks Magrit what she will do when Bugrat grows up? Do you think Magrit has thought about this at this point? Is Master Puppet concerned for Magrit or does he have some other purpose in asking her?

Chapter 4

Describe the changes that happen in the cemetery following Bugrat’s arrival.

Chapter 5

How does Magrit and Master Puppet’s relationship change in this chapter? What caused it?

Who do you think the new voice belongs to? What does it tell Magrit? Why do you think it tells her this?

All Magrit knows of the world is her octagonal cemetery. What does she think the rest of the world is like? Imagine you spent your entire life in your house. Write a short story about the first time you leave. What do you see, hear and smell? How do you feel?

Chapter 6

Master Puppet uses persuasive language to manipulate Magrit. Find examples of Master Puppet’s manipulation. Why do you think he does this?

The author uses classic horror tropes throughout the story and particularly in this chapter. Identify some examples of this. Why do you think he does this? How does that affect the reader or enrich the story?

Chapter 7

Compare the illustrations on pages 82-83 to those on 84-85. What is different about them? Why do they change? What do they symbolise?



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What does Magrit's description of the skeleton on page 84 tell you about the life this child had?

Chapter 8

What drives Magrit to argue with and ultimately destroy Master Puppet?

"She stopped, her attention drawn into the gap between the chapel and the wall, as if finally listening to what the voice was saying, not with her words, but with the spaces in between them, where a different meaning was revealed."
Pages 97-98

What meaning is Magrit taking from the "spaces in between" the new voice's words?

Chapter 9

Why does Magrit put so much effort into rebuilding Master Puppet when in the previous chapter she was very angry at him and destroyed him?

Chapter 10

Why do you think Master Puppet's voice is now "tinged with sadness" (Page 112)? What has changed the original Master Puppet to this new Master Puppet?

Why do think Master puppet does not want Bugrat to knock on the window? Why do you think the skeleton girl is very eager for Bugrat to knock on the window?

Stop reading at the end of this chapter for a class discussion. What do you think will happen now that the child in the apartment has seen Bugrat?

Chapter 11

Discuss the author's description of the boy's mother. Is he describing her positively or negatively? How do you think the author is trying to make the reader feel about this new character?

How does Magrit feel about these strangers entering her graveyard?

"You decided to grow up," he said. "This is growing up. I'm so sorry, Magrit. Growing up has consequences." Page 134
What consequences is Master Puppet referring to? Do you agree with Master Puppet that Magrit secretly wanted to grow up? Or did she not believe looking after Bugrat would have consequences?

"He inhaled, and as Magrit's hands moved to cover her mouth, he screamed the only word he would ever say to her. 'No!'" Page 141

Why does Bugrat scream "No" at Magrit? What is Magrit trying to do with him? What does Bugrat want?

Chapter 12

How did the revelation of what Magrit truly is make you feel? Had you guessed it before this chapter?

Why do you think Magrit chose to ignore the fact that she hadn't aged in the many decades she had been in the cemetery?

Why do you think the author decided to end the book with Magrit and Master Puppet leaving the cemetery? How would it have been different if they decided to stay in the cemetery?

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