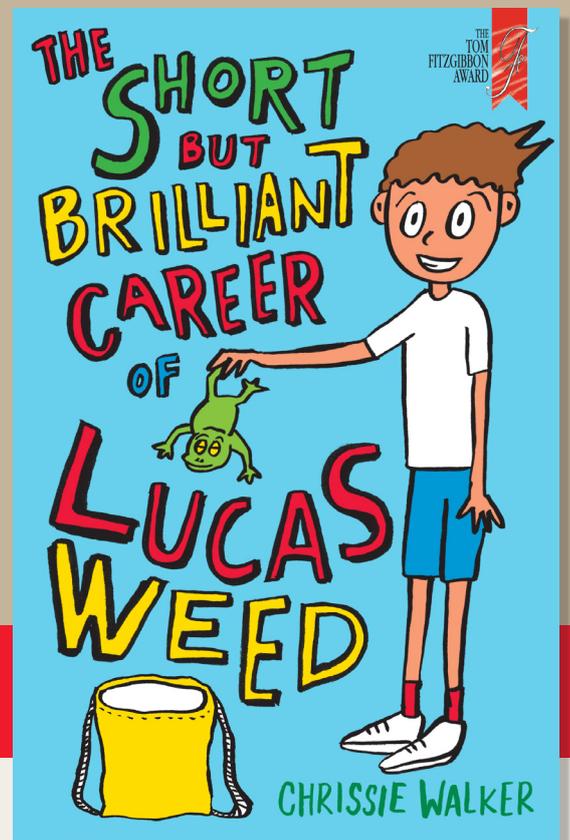


The Short but Brilliant Career of Lucas Weed

By Chrissie Walker



Synopsis

Lucas Weed hasn't really made any friends at his new school, so when the 'cool kids' suggest he carry out a prank in class, Lucas thinks it might be his path to being accepted. He hides a frog in a drawstring bag and the teacher freaks out when she opens the bag and puts her hand inside.

The pranks keep getting more and more outrageous, and with videos uploaded to YouTube, Lucas Weed's popularity soars! Next, he superglues his pants to a chair. After that, he 'encourages' his shorts to rip at the Athletics Day and then runs in a dress from the lost property box. Then he and his mates wrap the entire contents of their classroom in tin foil!

Lucas decides they need to finish on a high note. But the last stunt doesn't go quite according to plan. Instead of pressing a fart button and making embarrassing noises, his pent-up nerves trigger him to vomit – all over the Prime Minister. Lucas decides it's time to call it a day; the stress is not worth the fame. But the pranks have helped him gain friends and go from zero to hero.

About the Book's Creator

Chrissie Walker lives in Christchurch with her husband and three adorable Shih Tzus. She is a Community Librarian at a public library where she selects the children's and young adult books. Chrissie has always been an avid reader and a firm believer in the power of story. Her passions are reading, travelling and crafting, and she loves researching holidays, eating dessert, unusual clothes, board games and doing unconventional things to her house and garden. Chrissie has always enjoyed writing, but only recently decided to try her hand at it. Her manuscript *The Short but Brilliant Career of Lucas Weed* was the recipient of the 2017 Tom Fitzgibbon Award for a previously unpublished author.

Themes

- Being yourself
- Friendship
- Practice makes perfect
- Managing bullies
- Giving things a go

Shared Learning and Discussion Points

- Look at the cover. What can you tell about the story from the picture? What sort of tone has it set for the story?
- How would you describe Lucas Weed from his description of himself? (pp.8-9)
- What do you think was Lucas Weed's eureka moment? Can you find out where the term 'eureka moment' originated? (p.20)
- What made Lucas Weed's prank successful? (pp.26-27)
- How did Lucas feel after his meeting with the boys? (pp.30-31)
- What is 'Chinese whispers' and what did he mean by 'the story had got out of hand'? (p.32)
- What was Lucas Weed's second plan – and why was he nervous about it? (p.39)
- Why did he think the bubbles in the pool looked like a 'beautiful thing to watch'? (p.47)
- What is the little voice Lucas is talking about on pages 49-50?
- What is Lucas Weed's fiendish plan and how did he have the skills to carry it out? (p.53)
- Why would sticking your butt to a chair be a problem? (p.69)
- How did Lucas maximise the trick for his audience? (pp.71-74)
- What was the reverse psychology move that the principal and teacher used on Lucas? (p.89)
- What was Part Three of the Superglue Prank? And what reaction did they get from it? (p.94)
- How did Lucas stand up to Thomas? (p.99)
- How did Lucas's pants rip and what did he do to make sure everyone would notice? (p.111)
- What was Lucas's grand finale and how did the crowd spur him on? (pp.134-138)
- Why were the teachers getting suspicious of Lucas? Brainstorm some ideas he could use to throw them off the scent. (p.146)
- How did Lucas solve the problem of not being able to come up with any ideas for the next prank? (p.150)
- What did the boys and Melinda do to their classroom? Why was Lucas less nervous with this prank, at first? (p.164)
- Why did they create a diversion before the prank was revealed? (p.167)
- When did Lucas start to question what he was doing, and begin to feel bad about it? (p.175)
- How did Lucas manage Thomas in their meeting? (pp.177-178)
- What did Lucas say he had on his bucket list? (p.187)
- How did Lucas feel when he won the writing competition? What helped him win it? (p.193)
- Why did Lucas want to give up the prank business? (pp.195-196)
- How did Lucas's prank go wrong? (p.204)
- How did Thomas ensure that everyone would think the vomit incident was the real prank? (p.213)
- How did the event land up on TV? How did the Prime Minister handle it when asked for a comment? (p.216)
- What advice did Lucas give the reader at the end of the story? (pp.219-221)

Activities

ACTIVITY 1: BUCKET LIST

Get the students to write their own bucket list. Tell them they need to brainstorm ideas and then pick the top 5–10 and make a note of when they would like to have achieved them by?

ACTIVITY 2: ELEMENT OF SURPRISE

Discuss with your students how the author made the story funny and what encouraged them to keep reading until the end. How did the author keep them in suspense? Encourage the students to re-read one of the pranks and note down the techniques that the author used. Next, students can brainstorm some pranks of their own, choose one, and write about it, drawing out the suspense using the techniques the author used. Afterwards, they can read their stories aloud to the class.

Teaching notes by Maria Gill



teacher toolkit

 SCHOLASTIC