

# Munkle Arvur and the Bod

## Author/Illustrator: Nikki Slade Robinson

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### Synopsis

Munkle Arvur lives in a beautiful canyon that is pristine and clean. The canyon is a well-known tourist attraction and Munkle looks after it. He keeps the famous canyon sparkling clean until one day the terrible Bod comes to visit. The Bod arrives in a rubbish truck and announces that he needs a new place to dump his rubbish. Munkle is kind and has trouble saying no to anyone, so he agrees to let the Bod dump his rubbish in the canyon. After a few months the canyon is no longer pristine and clean; it is a smelly, dirty rubbish pile. Years later, Munkle realises that the plants in the canyon are dying and that the tourists no longer visit, so he decides that it's time for action.

Munkle marches off to see the Bod and insists that he find a better way to dispose of his rubbish, but the Bod refuses. Munkle is determined to come up with a solution to his terrible problem so he thinks up a plan he calls "waste not". Using the Bod's rubbish Munkle invents a machine that sorts, munches mulch and recycles rubbish. He sets up a stall in town and sells his creations. When the Bod learns what Munkle is doing he is furious. After all, it's his rubbish so why does Munkle get the money? Will Munkle be able to reuse the rubbish and save the canyon or will the Bod have his evil way?

### Text Type

*Munkle Arvur* is written and illustrated by New Zealand author Nikki Slade Robinson. While the story will appeal to younger children, the messages in the story about the importance of recycling and caring for the environment are quite sophisticated. This story could be used as a springboard for a novel study or a research assignment for older students.

Written in a delightful rhyming style, the story works best when read aloud. The story is set in a canyon and young readers will recognise some of the well-known New Zealand creatures who live there, including pukeko and hu-hu grubs. The illustrations in the story are fantastic and really bring the story alive. Slade Robinson uses colour effectively to help emphasise the damage that can be done to the environment when it is not looked after.

The story encourages people to think outside the square when it comes to thinking up solutions for dealing with environmental problems. It emphasises the importance of recycling and rehabilitating land that has been damaged by human activity.

### Sharing the Story

The story lends itself nicely to being read aloud to students and can easily be read in one sitting.

## Introducing the Story

Have students study the front cover of the novel and read the blurb.

- Who is the main character in the story?
- Who is the Bod?
- What clue to the content of the story do the illustrations give you?
- What are some environmental issues that you are aware of? What are some of the things that people can do to help the environment?

*Teacher reads the story aloud to the class.*

## Comprehension and Discussion

- Where is the story set? Describe what the canyon looks like. What well-known New Zealand creatures live in the canyon? Why is the canyon so famous? Who looks after the canyon?
- What natural wonders can you think of that have become famous tourist attractions in New Zealand and around the world? Why do people find nature so fascinating? Why is it important that we look after these attractions?
- How is the Bod described by the author? How does the illustration of the Bod help emphasise his personality? What kind of vehicle does the Bod drive? Why does he visit the canyon? Why does he think that the canyon is ideal for his purpose? What new job does he assign Munkle?
- The canyon is a remote location. Is the Bod right when he says that no one will notice if he turns it into a rubbish dump? Why/why not?
- What does Munkle say to the Bod? What does his reply suggest about his character?
- How does Munkle feel as he watches the canyon fill up with filthy rubbish?
- In what ways does the canyon change when the rubbish begins to get dumped?
- How do we know that the rubbish has polluted the sky and the ground? How do we know that Munkle has finally had enough of the rubbish?
- What happens when Munkle confronts the Bod?
- What does Munkle spend six nights and six days working on in his hut? What happens on day number seven? What does Munkle's composting contraption do? What does his recycler do?
- What does Munkle take into town with him?
- Why doesn't the Bod like what Munkle is doing? What does he discover when he returns to the "Rubbish Off" heap? How do we know that Munkle's recycled items are popular?

- How does Munkle feel when he wakes up and realises that all the rubbish has gone? What does he decide to do with the money that he made at Re-New?
- What does bamboozled mean? What does the Bod do when he realises that he has “lost the waste race”?
- How does Munkle go about rehabilitating the canyon? Why does he leave the canyon at the end of the story?
- What do you think the experience has taught Munkle?
- What do you think the message of the story is?

## Activities

**Writing** – What materials can be recycled or reused? What are some things that you and your family could do to help the environment by reusing or recycling?

**Writing** – Write a letter to a friend explaining why you enjoyed this story and why you think it is important for everyone to read it.

**Research** – Conduct a research assignment about an important environmental issue. Present your findings to your class on a poster or as an oral presentation.

**Static Image** – Imagine that you are an interior decorator. Draw a picture of how you would decorate either the Bod’s bedroom or Munkle’s bedroom. Explain the choices that you have made.

**Plot** – Make a timeline of the important events that occur in the story.

**Static Image** – Design a poster advertising Chuckleton Creek suitable for display in an information centre.

**Design** – Invent a new device or make an artistic creation using recycled or revamped items.

**Epilogue** – Write an epilogue for the story explaining what happened to Munkle Arvur and the Bod after the story ended. Try and use the same rhyming style as the author.

**Drama** – Rewrite the story as a play script. Include a list of characters and stage directions. Practise your play and present it to the class.

**Writing** – Write a newspaper article about Chuckleton Creek and its history. Include information about how the creek changed when the Bod started dumping rubbish and how Munkle dealt with the problem. Highlight the damage that humans can do to the environment and the importance of rehabilitating land that has been decimated. Include quotes from people involved.

*Notes written by Vicki Ladd*

### Activity Ideas from the Author:

**Get Involved** – Find ‘re-use’ opportunities in your local community. It could be waste from homes or local industries that you or your school could re-use, OR it could be waste that you/your family or school creates that could be re-used by someone else. Some examples from my own local ‘network’ are:

- The local garage door installer gives his bubble wrap to my parents’ pottery shop for packing pottery.
- Our milk bottles are re-used by the local chainsaw shop.
- All glass jars are reused by a number of people for bottling (that includes me!).
- Egg cartons go to a local free range egg supplier.
- Shredded paper from a local industry is used by people with home-chooks, or on no-weed gardens, or again by my parents’ pottery for packaging.

**Writing** – If there’s a local rubbish issue in your area, write a letter to your local paper highlighting the issue and what could be done about it.