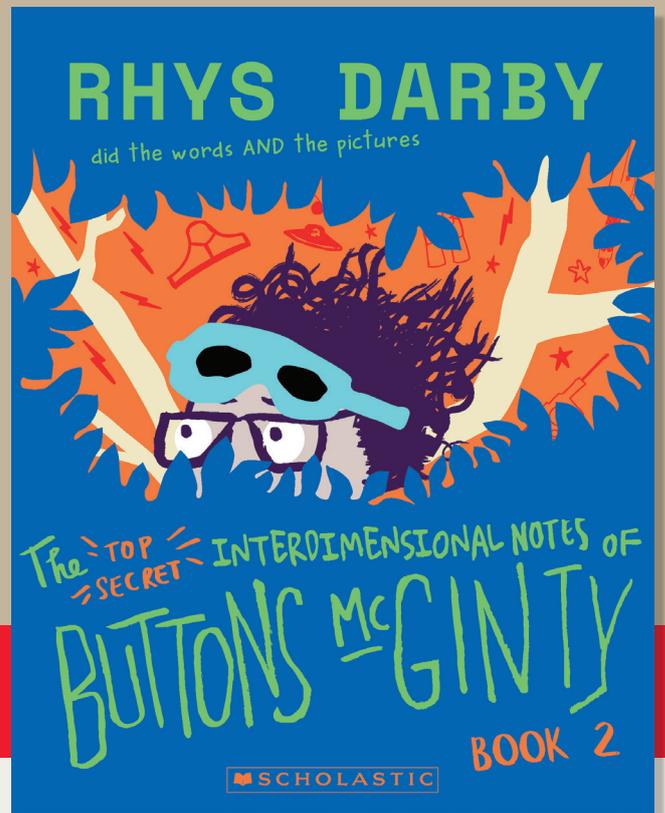


The Top Secret Interdimensional Notes of Buttons McGinty Book 2

Text and illustrations
by Rhys Darby

- Art • Reading • Writing •
- Thinking Skills • Oral Language •



Synopsis

Before they disappeared, Buttons McGinty's parents had given Buttons a notebook to record his adventures. In Book 1, Buttons is sent to RIEFGLUM boarding school: a large fortress on an isolated island. While there, Buttons and his roommates discover that the teachers are up to something evil. Buttons is captured and his friends try to rescue him but they're triple-crossed! Buttons disappears through a portal – which is where Book 2 picks up.

Buttons finds himself in another dimension ... a world with two suns. While taking a dip in the sea he spots a suspicious-looking submarine that is sending him a Morse Code message. While he's deciphering it, four elderly ladies steal all his things, including the magical Blade of Runsun. When he tries to get his stuff back one of them knocks him out with her handbag.

Not long after, a girl named Hunu rides up on a donkey to deliver mail from Earth. Hunu helps him track down the Notorious Nana Gang. However, while he's stealing back his things, one of the nanas wakes up and chases him. He falls down a pit where he discovers a cavern with two coffins in it. An elderly gentleman called De Classified releases him from the cavern. He appears friendly, and plies him with rhubarb tea and food and gives him a bed. But when Buttons wakes up and discovers he has been asleep for a couple of days, he also finds his Blade of Runsun is missing.

Hunu finds Buttons and helps him search De Classified's temple. He sees the man give the Blade to a giant bat. Hunu shoots the bat with her bow and arrow and the Blade drops onto a swing bridge. Buttons manages to retrieve it before the Nana gang gets to it.

From the letter Hunu delivered, Buttons discovers that four of his friends are coming through the portal to join him. He and Hunu ride to a town, hoping to meet up with them. On the way they see a poster that says Buttons is wanted by The Helm. In the town Bigfoot-like soldiers (called Yowies) are everywhere. Hunu distracts the beasts while Buttons meets his friends.

The group of friends catch a train where they run into their evil principal Sir Bob Knobkepling and his teacher cohort, who are out to catch him. Buttons jumps onto the roof of the train to avoid capture but so does the PE teacher. Buttons leaps onto a moving tree (tied on the back of a ute) and from there onto a building. Looking through a skylight, he sees his father in front of a class full of Yowies. His father reveals he's been forced to teach the Yowies, while the Queen of The Helm is holding Buttons' mother captive.

Buttons heads to the castle to rescue his mother but the Yowies capture him – and take him to the castle themselves. (Convenient, thinks Buttons.) After the Queen tells him of her dastardly plan to take over Earth, she takes Buttons' mother with her towards the portal along with her army of Yowies and giant bats. To beat them to the portal, Buttons borrows a spaceship from an alien band. He foils the Queen's plans and, with his friends on board, takes off into space ...

About the Author and Illustrator

Born in Auckland but now living in Los Angeles with his family, **Rhys Darby** is a well-known actor and comedian. He rose to fame as the lovable but inept Murray Hewitt on *Flight of the Conchords*. He has starred in films such as *The Boat that Rocked*, *Yes Man*, *What We Do in the Shadows* and *Hunt for the Wilderpeople*. He regularly features as a voice on a number of animations including *Barefoot Bandits*, *Voltron: Legendary Defender* and *Star and the Forces of Evil*. He has also appeared on American TV shows. When not acting, he ‘treads the boards’ with stand-up comedy shows on stages around the world. He has written and starred in his own 8-part mockumentary comedy series for TVNZ and Netflix called *Short Poppies* and is currently writing his next one. *The Top Secret Interdimensional Notes of Buttons McGinty* is his second children’s book. The first Buttons adventure was a bestseller in New Zealand and sold internationally.

Writing Style

Written in diary format this is a hilarious adventure story illustrated with Rhys Darby’s own sketches. Jokes and puns are scattered throughout the text, along with an action-packed story that will have readers 8-11 years old wanting to read until the gripping end. The story is broken up with graphics, dialogue boxes, maps, and diagrams, making it attractive to the reluctant reader.

The diary is written in first person point-of-view in a mix of present and past tense, as if the action is either happening right then, or took place just minutes before the diary entries. Buttons, as narrator, often addresses the reader directly. Darby uses narration, description, action and inner thoughts to tell the story. Words and thoughts are often in speech marks or brackets. Text appears in paragraphs, text boxes, as bullet points and as captions. To draw the readers’ attention, the author often underlines, writes in capitals and/or bold font, or enlarged text with exclamation marks. Characters sometimes speak in speech bubbles. Sentences are often long, in a stream-of-consciousness type of format, with the occasional very short sentence to emphasise a point.

The author has made the story interactive using Morse Code, which the reader must decipher (there’s a key at the back of the book). Themes of independence, bravery, teamwork, and perseverance underlie the story. Along the journey the main character learns to trust his instincts and take risks to try and save the world. No doubt Book 3 will rescue his mother. The book will appeal to girls and boys who enjoy a good joke, science fiction and adventure, as well as a mystery.

Shared Learning and Discussion Points

ASK YOUR STUDENTS:

- Look at the cover. What do you think is the tone for this story?
- How has the author set the scene on the first page?
- Buttons uses the first 10 pages to recap what happened in Book 1. See if you can summarise this in 3-4 sentences. (pp.1-11)
- Why do you think the author has used Morse Code in the book? (p.11)
- Where does the author start the journal? (p.3)
- Who guides Buttons when he first gets out of the portal? Do you think he will be friend or foe? Explain your choice. (pp.17-21)
- Where has the portal taken Buttons? What is it called and how would you describe it? (pp.22-26)
- What did the poster reveal? Who or what does Buttons need to look out for? (pp.27-28)
- How do you think Buttons will use these supplies? Why do you think The Blade of Runsun is important? (pp.30-34)
- What do you think Buttons will use the mask for? (pp.40-44)
- What did Buttons find in the cave and how significant do you think this is? (p.50)
- What happens when Buttons takes a dip in the ocean? (pp.54-57)
- Who do you think might be on board the submarine and why? (p.60)
- What is Hunu’s role in the story (as well as being a mail person)? (p.63)
- Why do you think the author has reintroduced Lilly into the story? (p.65)
- Name some of Buttons’ favourite sayings/words in the book.
- Where do they find the Notorious Nana gang and what happens after Buttons steals back his stuff? (p.71)
- What does Buttons find in the pit and tomb? What is a ‘sarcophagus’? What word might you use for it? (p.72)



- Who helps Buttons get out of the tunnel and do you think he can be trusted? (pp.82-90)
- Who is De Classified giving the dagger to and how does Buttons get it back? (pp.99-105)
- What is a 'sidekick'? Who are Buttons' sidekicks? How does the sidekick from Book 1 get into the Book 2 story? What device has the author used to show this is happening? (p.108)
- What does Buttons find on a tree? Predict what repercussions it will have for Buttocks ... I mean, Buttons. (p.111)
- Where has Buttons seen these soldiers before? What are they called? (pp.114-115)
- How does Buttons get into the ice cream parlour undetected by the soldiers? (p.117)
- Buttons likes to write lists and plans – what do you think that says about his character?
- Who comes into the ice cream parlour – the good and the bad? How does Buttons feel about each of these persons? (pp.128-134)
- What does Buttons use to get rid of the Yowie? Do you think it really works, or is it his imagination? Give your reasons why. (p.137)
- Why does Buttons go on a train and what happens there? How does he get away? (pp.152-165)
- Who does Buttons find in the building and how does it make him feel? (p.174)
- What do you think the note 'His name is his destiny' might mean? Who do you think wrote it? (p.186)
- Why does Buttons decide to go to the Queen's castle? (pp.186-187)
- What happens on the journey? What do you think will happen to him at the castle? (p.205)
- What is the Queen's evil plan? (pp.214-216)
- Who is on the submarine and how do you think the submarine might help stop the Queen? (p.219)
- Who do you think Nigel Fairweather's mother might be? Why do you think that? (p.223)
- Who lends Buttons a vehicle? What else could they have used? (p.227)
- What gives Buttons confidence that he can drive the spaceship? (p.229)
- What devices does the author use to keep up the tension until the very last page in the book?
- How do they close the portal? (p.232)
- Who does Buttons give his journal to and why does he want it published/read? (p.235)
- Do you think this is the final story or could there be a Book 3? State your reasons.

Activities

ACTIVITY 1: WANTED!

There are a couple of 'Wanted' posters in the book, including one for Buttocks – I mean Buttons – the main character. Brainstorm a list of the baddies in the story. Then pick one and draw a Wanted poster for that character. Decorate the classroom with the posters afterwards.

Fun extra: Draw a poster of yourself and invent some dastardly deeds you could have got up to in the story.

ACTIVITY 2: LIST IT!

Buttons likes to write lists – lots of them. Write a list of all the goodies and baddies in the book. Rate them with a score of 1–5 to show how good or bad they are. 1 = really bad, 5 = really good.

GOODIES	1-5	BADDIES	1-5
<i>Buttons</i>	5	<i>Sir Bob Knobkeppling</i>	1



teacher toolkit

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ACTIVITY 3: GROOVY WHEELS!

Buttons travels from place to place in different modes of transport. Brainstorm all those types (don't forget the donkey). The last form of transport is a spaceship. Why do you think the author chose a spaceship? Draw a detailed plan of how you imagine the spaceship to be laid out: the exterior and interior with labels for its parts and their uses.

ACTIVITY 4: SECRET MESSAGES

Littered throughout the book are numerous secret messages written in Morse Code. Use the key at the back of the book to write your own warning to Buttons somewhere in the story. Give it to a friend to decode, then respond in kind.

ACTIVITY 5: INTERROGATE DE CLASSIFIED!

Write down five questions you'd ask De Classified as if you were a hard-hitting journalist or a detective. For example, find out if he is a good or bad guy. Where do his loyalties lie? What was his motive for giving the Giant Bat the dagger? When finished, ask someone in the room to pretend to be De Classified and put your questions to them. Practise it and then record your interview for the rest of the class to listen to.

ACTIVITY 6: FORTUNE TELLING STORYBOARD

Predict what will happen in the next story. Will Buttons find his mother? Will he find more monsters? Where will he take the spaceship? Will he ever get back home? What evil plan do you think the Queen (or some other evil person) might have for planet Earth this time? Write a storyboard for what could happen in the next book.

Beginning	1 st Incident	2 nd incident	3 rd incident	Climax	Conclusion

Written by Maria Gill



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