

The Adventures of Squidape

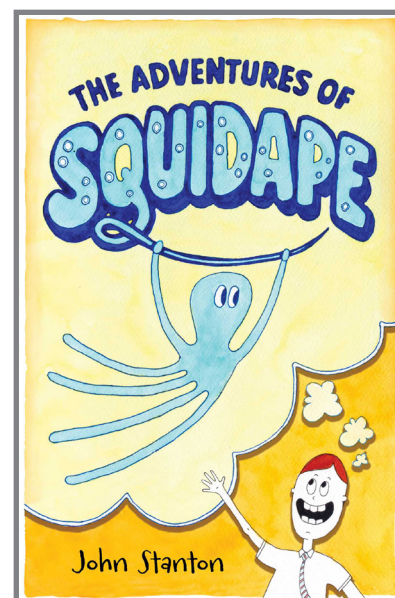
CREATOR

JOHN STANTON

SCIS: 5569559

ISBN: 9781923676046

RECOMMENDED FOR: Mid Primary



SYNOPSIS

Roland Bickering-Jones is certain about three things: lists are there to be followed, Squidape is the greatest comic-book hero of all time - even if no-one else has heard of him - and sometimes life doesn't go to plan.

When he spots something in a seaside antiques shop that shouldn't be there, he swings into action. Soon he's following clues, asking awkward questions and uncovering things that don't add up. Together with a quirky crew of elderly collectors, Roland and his dad set out to discover what's really going on in the village of Yumpy. Catching villains is much harder than it looks in a comic book, but Roland has a talent for noticing things other people miss. And that might be the greatest superpower of all ...

ABOUT THE CREATOR

John Stanton is a school librarian who spends his days surrounded by stories and the children who love them. He has a fondness for mystery stories and solving puzzles. This book emerged from a nightly ritual, inspired by one of his young daughters who insisted on a brand-new tale: Every. Single. Night.

When he's not reading or writing, John can often be found exploring antique stores in search of hidden treasures, much like the curious boy in this story. He lives in rural Australia with his wife and is a proud father of two.

THEMES

- Collecting
- Neurodiversity
- Grief and loss
- Resilience and coping with change
- Magical thinking and imagination
- Identity
- Courage
- Mystery, investigation and crime
- Intergenerational relationships

WRITING STYLE

- Written from Roland's first-person perspective, the story balances humour with deep topics such as grief, loss,

and family. The author employs various language techniques such as extended metaphor, motifs, tone, irony, and evocative language.

- Ask students to look for examples of:
 - humour
 - repetition
 - motifs
 - irony
- Prompt: Choose one example of a language feature or repeated image. What effect does it have on the reader? Does it reveal character, create humour, build tension or deepen emotion?

CROSS-CURRICULUM LINKS

Learning Area	Classroom Activity
HASS - Economics and Business	Explore second-hand shops, antiques, collecting and value. Discuss: What makes an object valuable — age, rarity, condition, history, memory or demand?
HASS - History	Research objects, collections or historical events connected to the story, such as coronation memorabilia, stage magic, old magazines, antique shops or family keepsakes.
HASS - Geography	Use Mrs Lester-Crabbe's snowdomes as a starting point for mapping places around the world. Students could design an annotated world map showing objects or souvenirs from different locations.
Science	Investigate materials mentioned in the novel, such as uranium glass and ultraviolet light. Students could research why some objects glow under UV light.
Visual Arts	Design a collectible object, an antique shop interior, a superhero character, a comic strip featuring Squidape or a new hybrid hero.
Drama/Performing Arts	Role-play key scenes, such as interviewing a suspect, visiting an antiques shop, or holding a meeting of collectors. Focus on voice, motivation and body language.
PDHPE / Health and Wellbeing	Discuss grief, resilience, sensory sensitivity, self-regulation and support. Students could identify strategies characters use to cope with strong emotions or change.
Media Literacy	Compare different text types in the novel, such as comic-book sections, magazine-style writing, dialogue and narration. Discuss how audience, purpose and tone shape language choices.

STUDY NOTES

A note on neurodiversity and sensitivity

Roland exhibits characteristics consistent with neurodivergent thinking, including a strong need for routine, literal interpretation of language, and detailed observational thinking. These are presented with warmth and humour throughout the novel. Teachers are encouraged to use Roland's character as a springboard for classroom conversations about the value of different ways of thinking and learning, framed positively and inclusively.

Be mindful that some students may identify with Roland's experiences. Create a safe space for discussion by modelling respectful language and focusing on Roland's strengths and capabilities.

BEFORE READING

Cover and genre

- What do you notice first about the cover?
- What kind of story do you expect this to be?
- What clues suggest humour, mystery or adventure?
- What do you think "Squidape" might be?

Heroism and courage

- What makes someone a hero?
- Does a hero need powers, strength or fame?
- Can a quiet or unusual person be heroic?
- Can noticing small details be a kind of courage?

Routines and different ways of thinking

- Do you have routines that help you feel organised or calm?
- How might someone feel if their routine suddenly changed?
- Why is it important to understand that people's brains work in different ways?

Collecting

- Do you collect anything? Why?
- Why do people become attached to particular objects?
- Can objects hold memories or tell stories?

Mystery and investigation

- What makes a good mystery?
- What kinds of clues do detectives look for?
- Why might a person who notices small details be good at solving mysteries?

DURING READING**Roland's way of seeing**

- What does Roland notice that other people might miss?
- How does his attention to detail help him?
- How does Roland's literal or logical thinking create humour?

Grief and magical thinking

- What does it mean that Roland feels "stuck"?
- Why might Roland imagine that his mum is on a secret mission?
- How does the author show grief without making every scene sad?

Objects and memory

- Which objects seem important in the story?
- How do antiques, collections and keepsakes connect to memory?
- Why might a stolen object matter more than its financial value?

Comic-book heroism

- What does Roland admire about Squidape?
- How do the comic-book sections connect to the real-world mystery?
- Is Roland becoming more like the hero he admires? How?

Mystery structure

- What clues are appearing?
- Which characters seem suspicious, and why?
- Are any clues misleading?
- What questions remain unanswered?

AFTER READING: REFLECTION QUESTIONS**Character growth**

- How does Roland change from the beginning to the end of the novel?
- What does he learn about himself?
- At what points does he show courage?

Grief and healing

- Does Roland “get over” his grief, or does he learn to carry it differently?
- How does the trip to Yumpy affect Roland and Digby?
- How does the story balance sadness with humour and adventure?

Identity and neurodiversity

- How does Roland’s way of thinking shape the story?
- What are Roland’s strengths?
- How does the novel encourage readers to value different ways of seeing the world?

Mystery and justice

- How does Roland solve the mystery?
- Which clues were most important?
- Were there moments when adults underestimated Roland?
- What does the ending suggest about observation, evidence and confidence?

Intergenerational relationships

- What role do The Collectors play in Roland’s life?
- How do the older characters support Roland and Digby?
- What does the novel suggest about friendship across generations?

CLASS DISCUSSION

The Adventures of Squidape suggests that heroism is not always loud or obvious. How does Roland show that careful observation, persistence and kindness can be heroic?

STUDENT ACTIVITIES**Character arc map**

- Create a map of Roland’s journey. Include:
 - Roland at the beginning
 - key moments of challenge
 - key moments of courage
 - what he understands by the end.

Mystery evidence board

- Create a detective-style evidence board showing:
 - suspects
 - clues
 - red herrings
 - stolen objects
 - final conclusion.

Object with a story

- Choose an object that could belong in an antiques shop or personal collection, then write a short piece explaining:
 - who owned it
 - why it mattered
 - what secret or memory it carries.

Book review

- Write a review of the book that includes:
 - a brief summary/ synopsis
 - explanation of a favourite character
 - most important theme
 - one example of humour or mystery
 - overall message of the book
 - recommendation for other readers.