

Bidhi Galing (Big Rain)

AUTHOR

ANITA HEISS

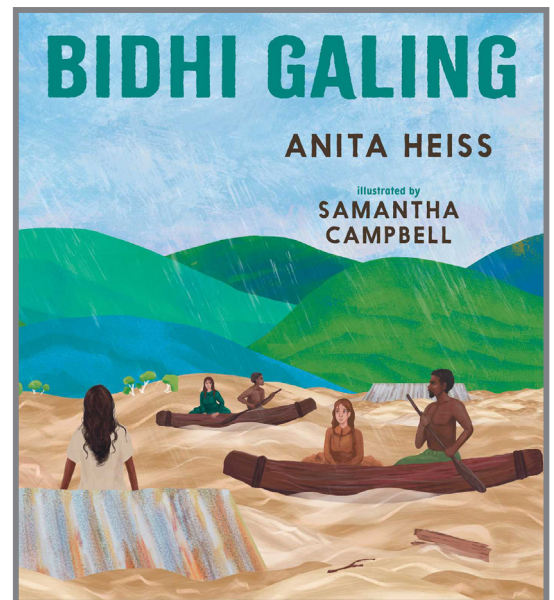
ILLUSTRATOR

SAMANTHA CAMPBELL

SCIS: 5448678

ISBN: 9781761105258

RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower to Mid Primary



SYNOPSIS

Wagadhaany grew up near the Marrambidya Bila. She loved dancing in the rain and listening to her father, Yarri, tell her stories about life on Wiradyuri ngurambang.

When white people started building on the floodplains, Yarri was worried. He knew the power of the bila and tried to warn the strangers, but they would not listen.

Years later, the big rains came . . .

This is the story of the Great Flood of Gundagai in 1852 and the Wiradyuri heroes, Yarri and Jacky Jacky, who paddled bark canoes through raging floodwaters, risking their lives to save countless others.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Anita Heiss is an award-winning author of nonfiction, historical fiction, commercial women's fiction, children's novels and blogs. She is a proud member of the Wiradyuri Nation of central New South Wales, an Ambassador for the Indigenous Literacy Foundation, the GO Foundation and Worawa Aboriginal College. Anita is a board member of the National Justice Project, Aboriginal Art Co and Circa Contemporary Circus, and is a Professor of Communications at the University of Queensland. As an artist in residence at La Boite Theatre, Anita adapted her novel *Tiddas* for the stage and it was premiered in partnership with QPAC and the Brisbane Festival in 2022. Her novel *Barbed Wire and Cherry Blossoms* set in Cowra during World War II, was the 2020 University of Canberra Book of the Year. Anita enjoys eating chocolate, running and being a 'creative disruptor'.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Samantha Campbell grew up in the Northern Territory and lives in Darwin. She is descended from the Dagoman people from Katherine and as a child lived in remote communities across the Top End. Her first book, *Alfred's War*, written by Rachel Bin Salleh, was short-listed for the Premier's Literary Awards and the Speech Pathology Awards. She is currently illustrating her fifth children's book.

THEMES

- Country/Place
- Wiradyuri Culture
- Truth Telling
- History
- Wiradyuri Language
- Respect
- Unity
- Caring for Each Other
- Community

STUDY NOTES**BEFORE READING**

- Read the title *Bidhi Galing (Big Rain)* to your students and ask them what they think the story is about.
- Ask your students if they know what language *Bidhi Galing* is in.
- Now show your class the front cover and ask them to predict what they think the book *Bidhi Galing (Big Rain)* is about.
- Before you read *Bidhi Galing (Big Rain)* to your students, cover up all of the words with paper so they can just focus on the illustrations. Once you have done that, ask your students the following questions as you make your way through the book:
 - PP 2–3: What time period do you think this story is set in?
 - PP 8–9: What do you think is happening in this picture?
 - PP 10–11: Can you describe the emotions you see in this picture?
 - PP 16–17: What has happened?
 - PP 20–21: How does the girl feel? Why do you think she is sad?
 - PP 24–25: What is happening?
 - PP 26–27: How does the girl feel now?

Discuss what feelings and emotions the students had while looking at the illustrations, and how they feel the characters felt, throughout the book. Ask the students if their predictions have changed as to what they thought the story was about after looking at the illustrations.

WHILE READING

- There are several ways to read the story. You may choose to listen to Anita Heiss read the story using the QR code found at the front of the book, in the foreword. This QR code will help you and your students learn how to say the Wiradyuri words correctly. Or you can learn the correct pronunciation of the Wiradyuri words using the Wiradyuri Language app and search the pronunciation of words in this book prior to reading to your students, or both!

PP 2–3

- In one word how would you describe Wagadhaany's life?
- How do the men and women winhangagigilanha (care for each other)?
- Why do you think Wagadhaany is watching the yinaa-galang (women)?
- How is your miyagan (family) life similar or different to Wagadhaany's miyagan life?

PP 4–5

- Why is it important to pay yindyamarra to ngurambang?
- How does Wagadhaany's mother, Yaramiilan, teach her dances?
- Does your family have traditional dances that your miyagan have taught you? How were they passed down to you and what do they mean to you?
- Why did Wagadhaany and her miyagan race to higher ground when the rain came?
- What does Wagadhaany's name mean?

PP 6–7

- Do you know what an elder is?
- Why is it important to listen to your elders?
- Why does Wagadhaany's babiin share his knowledge with her?

PP 8–9

- What was Yarri trying to tell the strangers, white people?
- Why was Yarri telling them to not build their ganya-galang on the floodplains?
- Do you know what Traditional Owners are? Do you know the Traditional Owners of the ngurambang your school is on?
- Why is it important to listen to Traditional Owners of the ngurambang you live on?

PP 10–11

- Why do you think the strangers, white people, are not listening?
- Would you have listened to Yarri?
- How do you think Yarri felt?
- What should the strangers, white people have done?

PP 12–13

- Did the white people ever listen to Yarri?
- Have you heard of the town Gundagai? Have you been there?
- How do you think Wagadhaany felt being called Wilma?
- How important is your name to you? How would you feel if someone refused to ever call you by your proper name?
- How would you feel if you were still a young person and could only visit your family on a Sunday?

PP 14–15

- What does Wagadhaany miss so much about her miyagan's daily life?
- Why does she miss her culture and miyagan so much?
- The bila is rising and everyone is scared. How would you have felt?

PP 16–17

- Why do you think the family didn't move to higher ground when the bila began to rise?
- What do you think you would have done?
- How do you think they felt in this moment?

PP 18–19

- How could this devastation have been prevented?

PP 20–21

- How did Wagadhaany know her miyagan would be safe?
- What are some of the Wiradyuri values you see, when Wagadhaany thinks of her miyagan during the Bidhi Galing and calls on Biyaami to keep them safe?

PP 22–23

- Why were Yarri's miyagan so worried?
- Why do you think Yarri and Uncle Jacky Jacky go out on their bark canoes to save their community and winhangaggilanha?

PP 24–25

- Why was Wagadhaany so afraid to jump into her babiin's canoe?
- What kind of men are Yarri and Uncle Jacky Jacky for saving the people who refused to listen to them, when they warned them of the floods before they built their homes?
- How brave do you think Yarri and Uncle Jacky Jacky were?

PP 26–27

- How do you think Yarri and Wagadhaany felt when they hugged?
- What emotions would the saved townsfolk of Gundagai have felt, when they came together in the town hall?
- How do you think Yarri and Wagadhaany's miyagan felt when they saw them return safely to them?

PP 28–29

- Do you think Yarri and Uncle Jacky Jacky deserved to be honoured?
- Why do you think it took many, many years to honour them rather than immediately?
- Do you think Wagadhaany's thoughts about how the townsfolk should have listened and that everyone would have been safe and alive were fair?
- What are some of the lessons and Wiradyuri values we have learnt from *Bidhi Galing (Big Rain)* that we can use in our own lives today?

AFTER READING

- After reading *Bidhi Galing* to your class, ask your students to get into small groups of 4, to have a respectful and safe discussion to share their thoughts, feelings and ideas about the story. Ask them to think critically and come to their own conclusions about this historical moment in time. Encourage them to share the story they have just heard and their thoughts when they get home with their family.
- How does the story *Bidhi Galing (Big Rain)* make you feel?
- What did you learn or remember from what we read and discussed?
- How do you feel about the story *Bidhi Galing (Big Rain)*?
- What would you like to do and/or learn more about?
- Why is it important to stay true to your values as a person?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Connection to ngurambang is important for your students to understand and feel within themselves, so they can care for and listen to ngurambang. Take your class outside to connect with ngurambang. They can choose to sit, lie or stand, have shoes on or bare feet. Encourage them to close their eyes or bow their heads then ask them in a calm voice what they see, hear, smell and feel. Get them to share one word about how they are feeling being connected to ngurambang.
 - Create an artwork together, showcasing these words, so others can share in your class's connection to ngurambang.
 - Ask your students why they think it is important to watch, listen and learn from what ngurambang is telling and showing us.
- Wiradyuri language is complex and there are many words for 'big' and 'rain'. The author, Anita Heiss, chose to use 'Bidhi' in the title and in the text of the story 'miilgi'. It's important to draw attention to this with your class and unpack the language together. Here are some other examples:
 - 'Big' can be said many ways including: bidhi, babir, yurrubang, munun and mununbidhi.
 - 'Rain' can be said many ways: galing, guwaang, miilgi, dhalba, yubanirra, banganha, dangaay, yurung, walung, yubaa.
 - 'Galing' is also used for water.

All of these words can be found on the Wiradyuri language app so the students and teachers can also listen to the pronunciations as well.

- As a class it's important to understand where Gundagai and the Marrambidya Bila are in Australia. On an Indigenous Map find the traditional lands of the Wiradyuri (it will be spelled Wiradjuri) people and the town of Gundagai.
 - As your students learn more, encourage them to add facts, photos and information cards around your map, so others who enter your classroom, can learn at a glance about this historical moment and important story too.
- Learning historical events is important and can change the way we move forward in our everyday life. *Bidhi Galing* has so many lessons and values for us to learn, such as:
 - listening to ngurambang
 - yindyamarra (respect)
 - murrumbang (love)
 - ngumbadal (unity)
 - listening to people who have lived experiences

- 'ngumambinya' (trust for help)
- winhangagigilanha (caring for each other).

Your students' perspectives will bring you different lessons and values of the Wiradyuri they have learnt from this powerful story. Encourage your students to discuss their learnings as pairs, then together as a class brainstorming a list together.

- Using the values they have learnt from *Bidhi Galing*, ask them to create a stop motion video in small groups. This process will allow them time to reflect, absorb and teach others these valuable lessons, helping to create conversations and change within their own community. These stop motion videos may include the story of *Bidhi Galing* or may be inspired by the story itself.
- Share the video of the 170-year celebrations of the Wiradyuri heroes Yarri and Uncle Jacky Jacky of the 1852 Gundagai Floods with your class. Ask them why they think it is important to revisit history and what does it teach us. What were the main learnings they learnt from the celebrations? The video can be found here <<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-06-27/gundagai-flood-wiradjuri-heroes-yarri-and-jacky-jacky-celebrated/101184050>> If your students are too young for the video, tell them about the celebration and show them photos from Wiradjuri heroes Yarri and Jacky Jacky celebrated 170 years after 1852 Gundagai flood—ABC News, then ask them the same questions.
- Poetry is a beautiful way to express emotions and thoughts about *Bidhi Galing (Big Rain)*. Brainstorm as a class, words they may choose to use in their poem, feel free to create a poster of the glossary for your classroom, so your students include the Wiradyuri words they are learning in their poems and in their every day. Collate them and make a book for your class and school library, make sure you add some to your school website or newsletter so others can enjoy them to.
- Yarri and Uncle Jacky Jacky were very brave and received a brass chest plate to reward their bravery, for saving so many people from the Gundagai community. What would you have written on their brass plate? Or how would have you rewarded them for their bravery?
 - Have each student make a brass plate with their chosen words on them and display them for others to see and learn more about the bravery of Yarri and Uncle Jacky Jacky during the Bidhi Galing.

AUTHOR OF NOTES
SHELLEY WARE