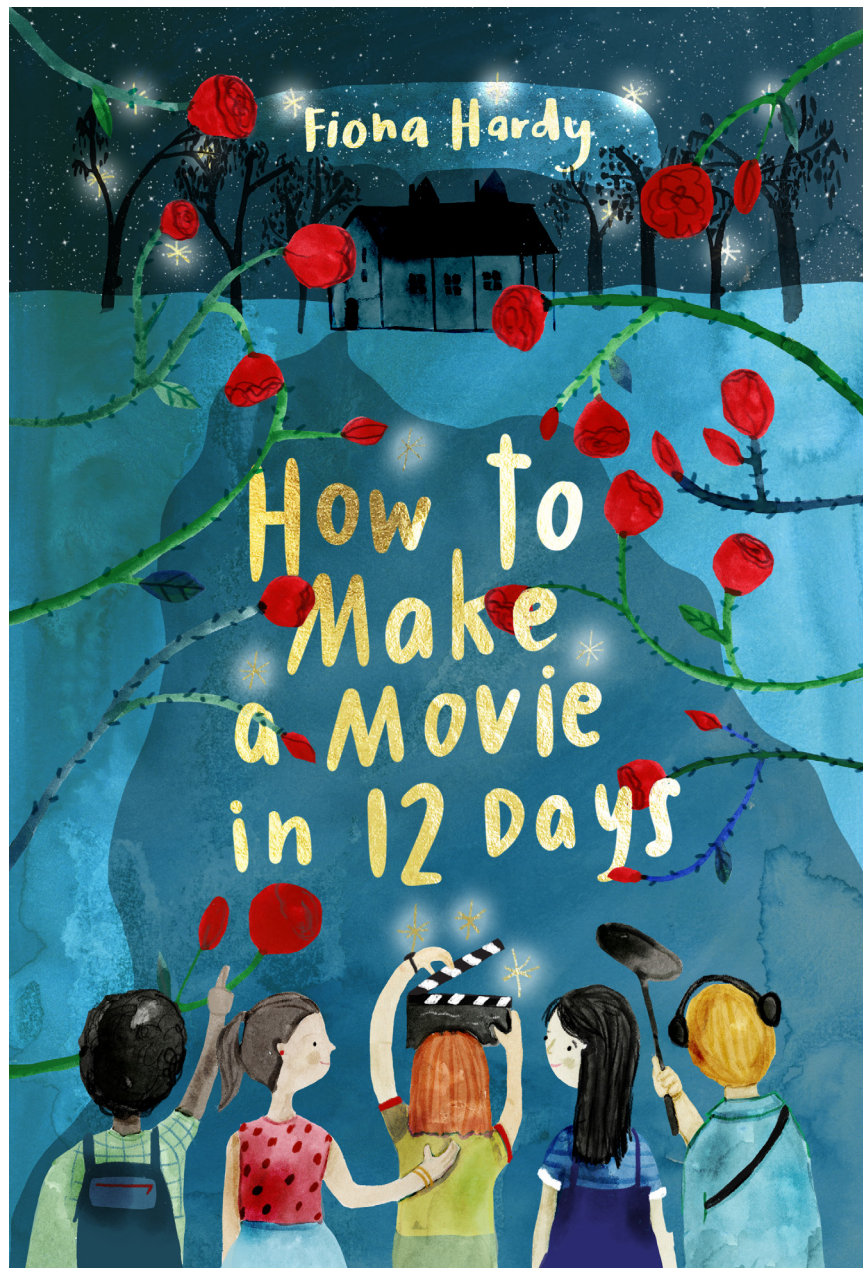


Teachers Notes



How to Make a Movie in Twelve Days

Themes

- Loss & Legacy
- Creativity & Collaboration
- Storytelling & Filmmaking
- Family
- Friendship

Suitable For

Ages 9-13 (Grade 3 to Year 7)

Description

Twelve days.

Five kids.

Many special effects.

One giant mystery.

Hayley Whelan has spent her whole life dreaming of making a horror movie – and not just the type of movie that kids make on their dodgy second-hand iPhones. When her grandma passes away, she inherits the money for a proper, grown-up camera. But before Hayley even calls 'Action!', strange things start happening . . .

Someone is sabotaging Hayley's movie – but who? Why? And can Hayley finish her movie in time for the premiere?

From Australia's brightest new middle-grade talent comes this love song to movies, friendship and the magic of the summer holidays.

About the Author

Fiona Hardy is a kids-book writer, crime-book reviewer, and all-books bookseller. From the wide-eyed work experience days at her local bookshop, she has stayed in the industry for nearly twenty years, and now works as one of the managers at Readings. Since a much-praised four-sentence retelling of *Alice in Wonderland* in grade one lit her writing flame, she has written for publications such as *The Big Issue*, *Books+Publishing*, *Verity La*, and *Gargouille*. She joined the Australian Crime Writers Association, the team behind the Ned Kelly Awards, in 2013, and in 2016 she was shortlisted for the Text Prize. Fiona lives in Melbourne with her partner and daughter.

Note from the Author

As a kid, I had a single-minded focus on becoming an author. I read obsessively and wrote stories about anything within my line of sight, but I was particularly interested in writing elaborate stories about all my friends' pets having adventures. My friends knew that I liked to write, and my family supported me, and while writing isn't really a team effort like filmmaking is, I still had friends who happily accepted my strange short stories. Kids are determined, and enthusiastic, and can do such amazing things with that enthusiasm – they'll set up elaborate games that span weeks, organise themselves into team sports, or learn everything there is to know about outer space. With this book, I wanted to elaborate on this process of kids working fearlessly hard to make something.

The idea of support was something I wanted to discuss, too – not all kids have the family network that Hayley has, but I wanted kids to hear that their goals are important, and real.

Hayley's family connections, despite their occasional fractious moments, are strong, and it's a solid foundation that she works from, along with the one she has with her friends. Hayley's inability to communicate when she's having problems works against her – as it does for her friends – and she discovers the challenging truth that communication is something so necessary for all relationships. Overall, I want readers to see Hayley's journey as something achievable, and make them want to invest in themselves with open hearts and ears.



Themes

Loss & Legacy

Hayley desperately misses her grandma, who died six months before the novel starts. The loss of her grandmother permeates almost every facet of the summer holidays. The Whelan family lives in her grandma's house, but nobody can bear to sleep in her old bedroom. Hayley's movie is filled with her grandma's ideas, and certain scenes are a painful, poignant reminder of what they had planned to create together.

By planning a celebration of her grandma's life and screening *Rosebud* for her grandma's friends, Hayley is able to honour her grandma without losing herself to grief. It also gives her grandma's friends a chance to say their final goodbyes in a warm, supportive atmosphere. When Hayley looks through the guest book from the *Rosebud* premiere and reads messages from her grandma's friends, she realises the importance of having a proper opportunity to farewell the people we love, and the importance of honouring their legacies. Hayley learns that while she'll always miss her grandma, it's possible to look back and smile.

Hayley:

I put my script back and laid my hand on the camera. I wanted to much to be able to use it, to make the movie I'd been desperate to make for so long. To finish what Grandma and I had started.

Creativity & Collaboration

Rosebud is Hayley's directorial debut. She has compiled a script, procured a budget, assembled a cast and scouted a location. Her production schedule is meticulously planned and updated as required. On the creative front, *Rosebud* is an homage to her favourite eighties horror films, and Hayley has paid careful attention to storytelling and camera shots. On paper, *Rosebud* is a logistical and creative triumph. However, Hayley learns that real life filmmaking isn't so clear-cut. Her friends can't stick to her schedule, her footage goes missing and her perfect shots are interrupted by bullies, library patrons and little sisters.

Hayley learns valuable lessons about teamwork and collaboration, and discovers the importance of not jumping to conclusions. At first, her filmmaking style verges on dictatorial. Her cast and crew think she's bossy, and she is so convinced that somebody is sabotaging her movie that she doesn't consider any other options. While *Rosebud* was Hayley's idea, she learns that working *with* others is more important than just being in charge. Whether it's Samson's amazing special effects, Lucas's inspired graphic design or Jennifer's creepy nursery rhymes, the people around Hayley can all make positive contributions and make *Rosebud* a better film.

Hayley:
(looking into camera)

We did it, guys. We tried so hard to make this movie, and we're almost done. You guys ... you helped me make something really great. And even though I was mad at you yesterday - like really mad, like super mad - when you watch it you'll see like I did that it wouldn't have been as fun, as good. Well, it wouldn't have been made at all. But with you, it was amazing.

Storytelling & Filmmaking

Hayley is very aware of common storytelling tropes, and consciously subverts them in her own work. In doing so, she's showing readers the basic building blocks of so many modern narratives, and pointing out how easily they can be turned on their heads to create unexpected situations. However, readers will be delighted to discover that the same tropes still turn up in Hayley's everyday life. Whether it's the convenient coincidence of Theo actually being Nannabel's brother, Hayley rushing away before Henry can reveal important information or the Hollywood ending to Hayley's *Rosebud* premiere, *How to Make a Movie in Twelve Days* deals with storytelling and narrative tropes with love and humour.

Henry:
(voiceover on answering machine)

You know in movies when someone runs off before hearing the whole story? This is one of those times! I fou—



Family

The Whelan household shows just how much families shape us, challenge us, support us and sustain us. Hayley's mum works full time, her dad is a stay-at-home parent, her brother is a moody teenager and her sister is a little . . . unusual. Over the course of the summer holidays, Hayley learns that her siblings have their own interests and struggles. She finally finds common ground with Lucas, who helps her investigate possible sabotage, and discovers that he's also still struggling with their grandma's death. After enduring Jennifer's eccentricities, an unexpected hospital trip reminds Hayley of just how much she loves her crazy little sister. Our families also shape the people we become: Hayley owes her love of movies to her dad, who introduces her to classic films.

We may not always get along with people in our family, but we love them anyway. Hayley's mum recalls her difficult relationship with Hayley's grandma, but also talks about the deep love they shared. Families might argue, but the Whelans are united by the way they love and support each other.

Hayley's mum:
(talking about Hayley's grandma)

She wasn't always easy to deal with...but she was always fun to be around. She was vibrant, and loud, and determined, and fiercely loyal and loving...she was wonderful, and I miss her.

Friendship

Just as Hayley learns to appreciate her friends for their contributions to *Rosebud*, Rissa learns what bad friends look like and the damage they can do to your self-esteem. Rissa only agrees to star in Hayley's movie if her friends don't find out, but deliberately leaves the schedule out to see if they would be supportive. At first, Rissa struggles to stand up to Taylor, Homer, Ng and the Olivias, but Rissa gradually realises that she deserves a group of friends who appreciate her and don't make fun of others. By spending time with Hayley, Henry, Pilar and Sansom, Rissa realises that true friends support each other, no matter what.

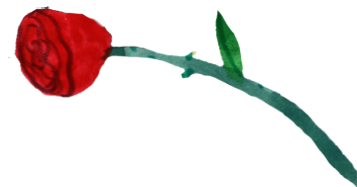


Discussion Points

- Before you read this book, think about the title. Is it really possible to make a movie in twelve days? What kinds of steps would be involved? What would happen if anything went wrong?
- Hayley is convinced that somebody is trying to sabotage her movie. Who did you think the saboteur was? What made you think that?
- It turns out that nobody was trying to sabotage Hayley's movie. The missing key, the SD card, the playground tape, the deleted footage and the library interruptions were all because of different people for different reasons. Do you understand why Hayley might have thought someone was trying to sabotage her movie? Do you think she should have been so angry with her friends when she found out?
- Hayley's love of movies comes from her dad, who likes to show the three Whelan kids his favourite films. Can you think of something that you and your parents share? It might be a particular musician, sport or food.
- Why does Hayley want to have a celebration for her grandma at the bowls club? What made this celebration different from her grandma's funeral?
- Hayley and Nannabel used to spend a lot of time together when Hayley's grandma was alive, but they have trouble talking to each other now. Why do you think they struggle to talk to each other? Do you think Nannabel wants to reach out to Hayley, but just doesn't know how?
- Rissa's friends can be very mean to other people, but Rissa hangs out with them anyway. She is too scared to tell her friends that she's making a movie, because they might make fun of her. Later, when Samson asks why Rissa is friends with Taylor, Rissa says, "because I see how she makes people feel, and I don't want to feel like that". What do you think Rissa means by this?
- What would have happened if the movie hadn't been made in time?
- Hayley, Pilar, Rissa, Henry and Samson all have different families. What are some of the ways that their families vary? You might like to think about the languages they speak, the foods they eat or the people who live in their household.
- Take a look at Chapter 11, where Hayley films Jennifer's death scene at the Rose House. Jennifer is too young and nervous to follow the script, and at first Hayley gets frustrated. How does Hayley turn the situation around while still getting enough footage for her movie?
 - At the *Rosebud* premiere, Hayley discovers that Theo is actually Nannabel's brother, and that he used to be a very famous actor in the 1970s. Do you think Theo/Winston should have told the kids who he really was? Why did he keep it a secret?
 - Look at the list of movies in Hayley & Kirk Whelan's Holiday Program Study Guide. How many have you seen? Do you agree with what Hayley and Kirk say about these movies?



Writing Task



Lights, Camera, Action!

How to Make a Movie in Twelve Days shows us lots of the things you need to do to make your very own movie. Get your clapboards ready, because you're about to become a director!

Turn to a fresh page in your workbook, then write the **title** of your movie at the top of the page. Try to keep the title short and snappy. Then write a paragraph explaining the **plot** of your movie – what is it about? What goes wrong? How do the main characters save the day – or maybe they *don't* save the day? It's all up to you!

Once you have worked out what will happen in your movie, write a list of the **main characters** with a short description for each one. You don't need to list too many characters – just three or four. For example, if you were turning this book into a movie, your character list might look like this:

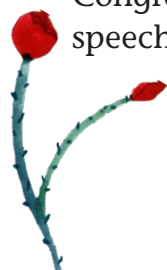
- Hayley Whelan: Hayley is eleven years old and obsessed with movies. She is ambitious, creative and committed to making a great film, but she can also be quick to judge and a little bossy.
- Pilar: Pilar is eleven years old. She is Hayley's best friend. She is very organised and good with money (she saves all her pocket money!) and she is good at sticking to a schedule, but she has trouble speaking up when she's nervous.

Next, write the **script for the first scene in your movie**. Think about how your favourite movies start – is it a normal day in your main character's life? Does it start with a mystery? With a bang? Try to write a scene that will make people want to keep watching your movie.

At the start of the script, write a description of the **setting**. After that, your script won't have much description, but it will have some directions for the actors. Your script might look a little bit like this:

<p style="text-align: center;">Scene One INT. HAYLEY's bedroom. Day.</p> <p>HAYLEY is lying in bed while JENNIFER is sitting on her chest. JENNIFER is holding a note.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Jennifer:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">There's a letter. One of the words I thought I could read, but then it said Grandma and I thought maybe I was wrong.</p> <p>HAYLEY sits up and looks at the note.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Hayley:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">It does say Grandma.</p>
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Congratulations – you've started to make your very own movie! Who will you thank in your speech at the Oscars?



Activities

Your Holiday Program Study Guide

Study in the holidays? It sounds gross, but don't worry – this is a fun kind of study!

At the back of *How to Make a Movie in Twelve Days*, Hayley and her dad have listed some movies that they think everybody should watch, and they've explained why these movies are really great. Choose 5 movies that you really love to be on your own Holiday Program Study Guide, then write a paragraph explaining why you think it is important to watch each movie. You can pick new movies or old movies from any genre.

Once you've made your list, give it to one of your friends and see what they think. Make sure your friend gives you their list as well, so you can get some ideas for your next movie night!

Movie Magic

When Hayley is filming *Rosebud*, she is very careful to make sure that she gets the right camera shots. There are lots of different kinds of camera shots. For example, you can have close ups, which is when the camera is right next to a character or an object, and you can have long shots, which is when the camera is far away so that viewers can see more of the setting.

A movie's soundtrack is also very important, because it can make viewers feel scared, happy or angry. If a scene has the right music, it's much more exciting.

Jump onto YouTube and find a short scene from your favourite movie. While you're watching it, pay close attention to the music and the camera shots. After you've watched the scene a couple of times, make a list of things that you noticed in the scene. Where there a lot of close up shots or long shots? Why do you think the director did that? What did the music add to the scene?

Make Your Own Storyboard

Directors use storyboards to work out what their movie will look like before they actually film it. Storyboards are a series of pictures showing what happens in a scene – what the characters are wearing, where they are standing and where the props are.

Using the scene you've already written, draw five pictures for your storyboard to show how the scene will play out when you film it. The pictures should show where the characters are standing at different points in the scene. Do your characters move around a lot? Is there a lot of action? Some of your pictures might be close ups. You might not even have your characters in one of the pictures – you might like the camera to focus on an object, or even on a small part of a character's body.

Once you've got your storyboard, you're ready to start filming! Your summer holiday plans are now officially sorted – good luck!

