



***Feathers for Phoebe***  
**by Rod Clement**

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**Book Description**

Phoebe is small, grey, and ordinary — very ordinary. ‘I want to get noticed!’ she declares.

Zelda is glamorous, talented and famous — and she runs the most popular beauty salon in the forest. And she’s only too happy to help Phoebe become the bird she’s always wanted to be. First a little feather headdress, then wing extensions — until Phoebe is transformed into a Diva.

Phoebe looks gorgeous — but when she tries to take off, surprises are in store.

Ages 3-8

### **Rod Clement**

Humour prevails in Rod's books, and his nature-lover's eye helps him portray the animal world with a precision and flair that makes images leap off the page.

When he went to school, Rod's main ambition was to draw and to make people laugh. Living in Papua New Guinea for several years as a child gave Rod an intense awareness of nature and his initial work was quite realistic. Rod soon decided that this was too restrictive and that he wanted to draw more from his imagination.

His acclaimed picture books include the bestselling *Edward the Emu* and *Edwina the Emu*, both written by Sheena Knowles and *Counting on Frank, Just Another Ordinary Day* and *Grandad's Teeth* - all shortlisted for the Children's Book Council Awards.

Rod lives in NSW with his wife and three daughters.

### **Themes**

This book encourages children to look beyond the surface and see the person within. It highlights our fascination with appearance and encourages children to value qualities such as character and personality. The topics listed under the subheading 'Themes' can be discussed and explored in various ways through the questions, activities, worksheets and references listed at the end of the notes.

There are several key ideas or themes throughout the story, including:

- Self esteem
- Identity
- Appearances aren't everything
- Self-acceptance

### **Before reading**

Talk about:

- the cover illustration
- the title and what it might mean
- the author and other books the children know by the author/illustrator, Rod Clement
- what the story might be about
- the characteristics of the bird on the cover – how she looks, the expression on her face, what she might be feeling or thinking

**Read the story through once without taking questions from the children. Then use some of the following suggestions to initiate discussion.**

### Questions for discussion

1. Why do you imagine Phoebe was unhappy with her appearance?
2. Why might Phoebe wish to look like Zelda?
3. What apparently made Zelda so special?
4. Why do you think Phoebe rejected many of the crests before making her final choice?
5. What were the characteristics of the tail Phoebe chose? What might you have chosen and why?
6. How successful was Phoebe's new tail and what were some of its problems?
7. What disadvantages did Phoebe's new crest, tail and wings have?
8. Which new item finally replaced the old Phoebe with the new one?
9. How did Phoebe try to get noticed and how successful was it?
10. What happened when Phoebe began parading her new look?
11. Which advice did Zelda give Phoebe when her new look failed to draw the attention she craved and how did Phoebe respond?
12. Describe Phoebe's attempts to invent her own song and moves?
13. What occurred when Phoebe was finally ready to show herself to the world?
14. How did the bird that caught Phoebe feel about her, despite her apparent dull appearance?
15. In the blurb, Phoebe is described as a 'diva' following her transformation. What is a diva and why might she be described in this way?
16. How did becoming a 'diva' and dramatically changing her appearance impact on Phoebe's personality or change her outlook? Discuss.

### Curriculum topics

#### **English**

1. Write an acrostic poem using one of the following words or one of your own chosen from the story: Feathers, Phoebe, Fabulous, Marvellous...
2. Zelda had her own song and moves. The song began '*Ging gang gooly gooly...*' Learn the words to the song *Ging Gang Goolie* (Refer to end of the notes) and sing it together. Then work in groups to write a new nonsense song using the same tune.
3. Refer to the CLOZE worksheet at the end of these notes to explore the language of the story.
4. Create a mini-project on the author/illustrator Rod Clement.
5. Descriptive words are a vital ingredient in this story. As key words and phrases, they help paint a clear picture and tell a story. Discuss the descriptive language Zelda used in the story. List the adjectives she used such as *marvellous, fabulous, darling, elegant...* and discuss why they are used and in what context.
6. Make up your own sentences using each of the following adjectives: marvellous, elegant, fabulous, marvellous, stunning, wonderful and beautiful.
7. Write a story about Phoebe and her new friend beginning with their first meeting. Include details of what happened afterwards and some of their adventures together.

## Drama

1. Set up a corner of the classroom as a beauty salon but instead of hair or wigs, make special decorative hats to model for the class.
2. Make up a song and dance routine that is unique to you; alternatively share one of your favourite songs with the class, giving reasons for your choice.
3. Learn a dance together as a class.
4. Dressing up can be a fun way to 'try on' a new personality or 'be someone else' for a while. Discuss the sorts of costumes you like and give reasons for your answer. What makes dressing up so much fun? Does putting on a costume change who you are underneath in a temporary or lasting way? Hold a dress-up day and have a parade to show off your costumes. You might have a theme or free choice.
5. Play the 'Whispers' memory game with the children in small groups using the following format: e.g. *Phoebe went to the beauty salon and she chose... (e.g.) ...a pair of orange spotted wings ... a blue and red striped crest etc. ...*

## Visual Literacy

Look carefully at the illustrations in the story and ask the children to discuss the style, the colours, and the characterisation they invoke.

1. What do the pictures tell us that the words don't?
2. Why do you think Phoebe's colourful new look towards the end of the story eventually fell away, revealing her to be the same small grey bird she had been at the start?

Then have the children answer the following questions from memory before looking back to check answers.

1. What colour were the small plumes of Phoebe's crest?
2. What shape and colour were the wings Phoebe chose for herself?
3. From memory, draw a picture of Zelda.
4. Which previously sleeping animal ripped off Phoebe's tail after she slipped off the branch and went crashing to the ground?
5. When Phoebe finally landed, what cushioned her fall?

## Visual Art

1. Make a bird mask using a range of different coloured feathers.
2. Draw or paint Phoebe wearing a flamboyant plume of feathers. Make a wall display of all the children's different illustrations.
3. Make a feathered headdress using coloured feathers glued to a band of cardboard and hold a parade to model the children's creations.
4. Make a papier maché bird and decorate with brightly coloured feathers or paint.
5. Cut out a range of crest, tail and wing shapes for the children or ask them to draw them; then have them create a unique pattern and colour on their chosen shapes.

These could be displayed individually or made into a large bird mural to form one or many birds.

6. Make a little flipbook or even a big book with pages cut into four segments. Children can draw four segments of a coloured bird beginning with the plume and ending with the tail, with head and then body in the two centre pieces. These can be stapled together to form a flip book providing a colourful array of bird types to view and share. (Refer to the template at the end of these notes.)
7. Do a class mural of a beauty salon including Zelda, Phoebe and all the feathered options on display.
8. Further bird craft ideas can be found in the Teacher Reference links below.

### **Studies of Society and Environment**

Some of the following questions may be used to explore the themes and concepts in the book further.

1. Make a list of things that make you unique and special.
2. Talk generally about personal characteristics and qualities in people. Discuss this in view of the difference between appearance and personality and how this related both to Phoebe and people we know.
3. Discuss self-esteem and how is it developed or eroded and what may make someone have a low or poor self-esteem? Why is self-esteem important?
4. What is the role of friendship and family in making you feel good about yourself?
5. Discuss the reasons people go to hair or beauty salons and ask why it is important to feel good about the way we look.
6. Discuss the following phrases and their meanings: *Appearances can be deceiving.* *Don't judge a book by its cover.* *Beauty lies within.*
7. What can lead us to feel as though we aren't good enough as we are and why we might wish to look different or more like someone else? Discuss.
8. What would life be like if we were all the same?
9. How does it feel to dress up in costume or fancy dress and why do you think we do this? Why do we have fancy dress parties?
10. In the story, why do you think Zelda encouraged Phoebe to change her appearance and to develop a style through her look, song and moves?
11. Phoebe had many choices to make regarding her new feathers. Do you think having a lot of choice is a good or a bad thing? Discuss.
12. In the end, how did changing her look affect Phoebe and what others thought of her?
13. Why do you think people worry about what they look like?

### **Information and Communication Technology**

1. Explore website links listed below for related topics and explorations on the themes covered in the book.
2. Find creative ways for the children to present their work using different programs such as PowerPoint, Word or illustration or design applications.

## Mathematics

1. How many additions did Phoebe make to her appearance? List them in order.
2. What kind of shapes were the feathers? Cut out some simple shapes such as circles, rectangles, and arrows, and curl some cardboard and make a range of different feathered plumes. Make simple displays around the classroom, placing them in groups according to their shape.
3. Add up the number of crests, tails, wings, chest and back feather choices Phoebe was presented with and then add up the final total. Present your findings in a bar graph.
4. Do a short field trip around the school grounds and try and spot as many different types of birds as you can. Then graph the results on a pictograph after recording the number of each type that was observed.

## Teacher References

### Other books by the author

- *Louisa May Pickett's Best Show and Tell Ever*
- *Grandad's Teeth*
- *Olga the Brolga*
- *Just Another Ordinary Day*
- *Counting on Frank*
- *Frank in Time*
- *Edward the Emu (illustrator)*
- *Edwina the Emu (illustrator)*

### Picture books exploring self-esteem

- *No-one Quite Like Me*, M. Diestel-Feddersen
- *Wombat Divine*, M. Fox
- *Why Do You Love Me?* M. Baynton
- *Willy the Wimp* A. Browne.
- *Arthur's Nose*, A. Graham & D. Gynell
- *Leo the Late Bloomer*, Kraus
- Books by Leo Lionni such as *Fish is Fish*, *A Colour of his Own* etc.

### Activity suggestions for other books by the author/illustrator

#### Louisa May Pickett

[http://www.harpercollins.com/harperimages/ommoverride/teacher\\_guide\\_most\\_boring.pdf](http://www.harpercollins.com/harperimages/ommoverride/teacher_guide_most_boring.pdf)

#### Counting on Frank

<http://illuminations.nctm.org/LessonDetail.aspx?ID=L203>

#### Edward the Emu

[http://www.det.nt.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0016/2635/EdwardTheEmu.pdf](http://www.det.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/2635/EdwardTheEmu.pdf)

**Edwina the Emu**

[http://www.speechtx.com/language/edwina\\_the\\_emu.htm](http://www.speechtx.com/language/edwina_the_emu.htm)

**Feathers for Phoebe - Book reviews**

[http://www.boomerangbooks.com.au/Feathers-For-Phoebe/Rod-Clement/book\\_reviews\\_9780732289195.htm](http://www.boomerangbooks.com.au/Feathers-For-Phoebe/Rod-Clement/book_reviews_9780732289195.htm)

**Rod Clement**

[http://www.harpercollins.com.au/authors/50000413/Rod\\_Clement/index.aspx](http://www.harpercollins.com.au/authors/50000413/Rod_Clement/index.aspx)

<http://www.daa.org.au/main/read/1688>

[http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/340969.Rod\\_Clement](http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/340969.Rod_Clement)

**Self-esteem in childhood**

[http://www.healthinsite.gov.au/topics/Self\\_Esteem\\_in\\_Childhood](http://www.healthinsite.gov.au/topics/Self_Esteem_in_Childhood)

**Information on visual literacy**

<http://www.teachers.ash.org.au/bookzone/vislit.html>

**Bird craft ideas**

<http://www.dltk-kids.com/animals/birds.html>

[http://www.create-kids-crafts.com/bird\\_crafts\\_for\\_kids.html](http://www.create-kids-crafts.com/bird_crafts_for_kids.html)

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/birds/>

<http://www.artistshelpingchildren.org/birdsartscraftsideaskids.html>

## Feathers for Phoebe

### Cloze Activity

Use the following words to complete the sentences.

grey	crest	elegant	stunning
landed	rainbow	perfect	arrived

1. Phoebe was small and \_\_\_\_\_ and she didn't like it. Not one little bit.
2. Phoebe needed a brand new \_\_\_\_\_. Something bright, something big and something marvellous.
3. Zelda told Phoebe that her tail should be long and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Zelda thought that Phoebe's new wings looked \_\_\_\_\_.
5. When Phoebe had the last feather added to her chest, according to Zelda, the new Phoebe had finally \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Phoebe's crest, tail, and feathers were every colour of the \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Phoebe practised making the \_\_\_\_\_ moves and grooves.
8. Phoebe \_\_\_\_\_ smack bang on top of another bird.

## **Feathers for Phoebe**

### **Ging Gang Goolie song**

*Ging gang goolie goolie goolie goolie watcha,  
Ging gang goo, ging gang goo.  
Ging gang goolie goolie goolie goolie watcha,  
Ging gang goo, ging gang goo.  
Hayla, oh hayla shayla, hayla shayla, shayla, oh-ho,  
Hayla, oh hayla shayla, hayla shayla, shayla, oh.  
Shally wally, shally wally, shally wally, shally wally,  
Oompah, oompah, oompah, oompah.*

This song was written by founder of the scouting movement Lord Robert Baden-Powell as a rousing anthem for the youth of all nations. The supposedly nonsense lyrics have long been a source of intrigue and amusement.

**Feathers for Phoebe**

**Word Search**

SJRBABPGSUJSIWM  
AUIJRVNWUSDGXWB  
TROIIIDGOZHNVKA  
DSGLCCBYLBRIJYE  
DHENLLABUTNWFLG  
TAARWEOGBEXIEVN  
KRRZCBVYAPUGAEI  
PADLEZVRFKAHTRC  
COLLIDEDANICHFN  
MOVESNACTMETELA  
SEVOORGSAFNARUD  
PHOEBEEBRUHIPFO  
AOPHVHOEAWGLFFF  
KPFSCCLPTBCLHRYG  
YERGOGMMCLKZTCD

BACK  
BIRD  
BRIGHT  
CAUGHT  
CHEST  
COLLIDED  
CREST  
DANCING

DARLING  
ELEGANT  
FABULOUS  
FEATHER  
FLUFFY  
GREY  
GROOVES  
MARVELLOUS

MOVES  
PERFECT  
PHOEBE  
PRANCING  
RAINBOW  
TAIL  
WINGS  
ZELDA

## Feathers for Phoebe

### Word Search — Solution

S++B+B+GS++S+++  
+UI+R+NWU++G+++  
TROI+I++O++N+++  
DSGLC+++LB+I++E  
DHENL+++U+NWFLG  
TAAR+E++B++IE+N  
+RR+C+V+A++GA+I  
PADLEZ+RF+A+TRC  
COLLIDEDAN+CHFN  
MOVESN+CTMETELA  
SEVOORGSAF+ARUD  
PHOEBEEBRU+I+F+  
++++H+E A+G L+F+  
++++C+P++C+H+Y+  
YERG++++++K+T++

(Over,Down,Direction)

BACK(8,12,SE)  
BIRD(4,1,SW)  
BRIGHT(6,1,SW)  
CAUGHT(8,10,SE)  
CHEST(5,14,NE)  
COLLIDED(1,9,E)  
CREST(5,7,NW)  
DANCING(15,11,N)  
DARLING(1,5,SE)  
ELEGANT(15,4,SW)  
FABULOUS(9,8,N)  
FEATHER(13,5,S)  
FLUFFY(14,9,S)  
GREY(4,15,W)  
GROOVES(7,11,W)  
MARVELLOUS(10,10,NW)  
MOVES(1,10,E)  
PERFECT(7,14,NE)  
PHOEBE(1,12,E)  
PRANCING(1,8,NE)  
RAINBOW(14,8,NW)  
TAIL(12,10,S)  
WINGS(12,5,N)  
ZELDA(6,8,W)

## **Feathers for Phoebe**

### **Flip Book Template**

Have each child draw different parts of a bird on each page so when they flip the segments they can make a large combination of different birds.

	Crest
	Head
	Body
	Tail