

When Crime Doesn't Pay

South Sydney High School





Write a Book in a Day



PARAMETERS FORM 2019

TEAM DETAILS

STATE: NSW

DIVISION: Middle School

SCHOOL/GROUP: South Sydney High School (MAROUBRA)

TEAM NAME: South Sydney HS

TEAM ID: 713

PARAMETERS AND RANDOM WORDS

Parameters

Primary character 1: Queen

Primary character 2: Thief

Non-human character: Dog collar

Setting: Tennis courts

Issue: A flood

Random words

Community

Skipped

Magic

Canvas

Sings

INSTRUCTIONS

- Start at 8am
- Write an original story:
 - based on all **five parameters** (above)
 - including all **five random words** (above), and in bold type
 - with some identifiable **Australian content** (in theme or setting or characters, etc)
 - keeping within the allowed word count (remember every word on every page counts!)
 - include this parameters form in your book **immediately after the front cover** in both the hard and soft copy.
- Remember: **Every** word on **every page** counts. This includes your front cover, back cover, blurb, acknowledgements and copyright form.
- **Be sure to give yourself enough time to submit your book and complete the following checklist before 8pm.**

Log on to the Team Coordinator Portal to:

- ☐ Check the spelling of your team name and team members' names (how these are spelt on submission will be how they are displayed on certificates)
- ☐ Complete the Declaration
- ☐ Submit your finished book in **both** PDF and plain text format
- ☐ Mail a hard copy of your book on the next business day to:

Write a Book in a Day, The Kids' Cancer Project, PO Box 6400, Alexandria NSW 2015

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Chapter
1

‘Commence the opal-ration!’ a command sounded through the communication system. On silent feet we moved, blending into the shadows, becoming one with it. We moved as one, taking extra care to avoid the building’s strict security measures. We followed the flawless plan devised by our beloved Queen, perfectly coordinated, like a well-oiled machine.

A loud *creak* sounded throughout the large, empty house.

A buzz through the communication system. ‘A team has disabled the security measures. You are free to raid.’ then static.

All of us leapt out of the shadows and as quick as lightning and snatched up whatever treasure we would find within the Yarralumla mansion. We busted locks and various safes. Each of us gathered enough treasure equivalent to the value of a modern house. But the most priceless of all...was the opal. It was supposedly the biggest opal to ever be found, which was to be retrieved by our queen, Liz.

But oh no, no darling. Little does the queen know. That innocent, pure soul of her’s, it is so naive and gullible. The opal shall ultimately be mine. Oh! The thought of having it

all to myself. That precious, smooth stone, glinting as bright as the sun reflected off its vividly coloured surface. Oh what an exquisitely beautiful thing. I, the great Fabio, would gladly give up anything just to have it in my possession.

Laughing to myself, I dumped my share of treasure into the hands of a fellow, bewildered thief. Mumbling some excuse, I hurried off to where the opal was supposedly located. I have 4 minutes to exact my plan before she comes strutting in, in all her sly, regal, arrogant self. With a deadly calm, I focused on the treasure that now stood before me. It is just as I had imagined, the exquisitely glittering stone. Ah.... my life will be fulfilled. How beauti-

Snapping myself out of my own thoughts, I focused on the task at hand. How was I to indulge myself in the riches the stone will bring if I am caught before I have laid my hands on the exquisite object?

I took a laser cutter out of my pocket and proceeded to cut the glass box containing the precious gem. I slip my hand into the small hole in the glass and grasped the perfectly polished object and carefully placed the opal into the strap around my abdomen. Making sure it is secured, I took off on silent feet. Keeping to the shadows, I transformed into

my cat form using my magic. In this form, I am swift and almost undetectable in the shadows, just one of the many advantages. I felt the heavy weight of the opal on my back and double checked the straps. Making sure that the precious stone was secure. Swiftly leaping from shadow to shadow, I hurried down the winding corridors, determined to escape before I got caught. I, Fabio, the greatest thief in all the lands, can not and will not get caught. Turning a sharp right, relief flooded me when I saw the intense orange hue of the last of the sunlight streaming through those big, great oak doors, thrown wide open.

I stepped through those doors and into what looked like a tennis court.

Then the noise started. Oh that wretched, horrible noise, blaring through the hollow, empty mansion. That terribly deafening sound, amplified 10 times over by my sensitive ears. I curled up into a ball, a pathetic attempt to block out the sound of the alarms. Look at me, the soon to be great and famed Fabio, curled up into a small bundle of claws and black fur, how pathetic.

I am swift. I am powerful. I am undefeatable, not by anyone of this thief guild, not by the best assassins, not by anyone of this world. But look at me here, a delicate little ball, immobilised by the mere sound of extremely loud

alarms. Oh, if anyone saw me in this state, my reputation would be doomed, forever irreparable!

Disgusted with myself, I spat at the ground, ejecting a furball in the process. I strained against the deafening alarms and stood on all four paws, determined to get away from both the thieves that was surely hot on his tail and the ear-grating, thunderous noise. I sprinted across the seemingly vast tennis courts as fast as my four paws could carry. But the weight of the opal proved to be a hindrance to my speed and I found myself being chased by a team of 4 thieves, our queen...no. *Their* queen right behind, glaring right at me and the massive gemstone on my back.

I had betrayed them all. Cackling in triumphant victory, I took off on a mad dash towards the line of trees just beyond the tennis courts. There was no way they could catch me. The sun dipped lower on the horizon and, in just a few minutes, the world would be plunged into pitch black, perfectly concealing me within its blanket of sheer darkness and cool night air.

On my four paws, I **skipped** in glee down to the roads. I ran as fast as these swift legs could carry, dodging fallen trees and spiky bushes.

Snap!

I whirled around and saw Elizabeth, that insufferable woman, standing just 50 metres from where I was, holding something resembling a dog collar.

I had devised the plan, it should've worked perfectly. But it didn't. Because of that traitorous *fiend*. How dare he?! That scamming mongrel! It was supposed to be mine!

I was livid when I walked into the room containing that precious gem, only to find it broken into and stolen. Then the alarms sounded. That horrid, deafening sound. It pounded against my head and hindered my ability to think. I could only focus on finding whoever dared snatch the opal from right under my nose. If only I had arrived a little bit earlier... I ran, rounding sharp corners in the twisty, winding corridors of Yarralumla mansion until I reached one of its back doors. The massive oak doors were thrown wide open, I could feel the cool air of the settling night on my skin. The thunderous alarms had stopped, which I believed to be the doings of my subordinates.

I looked around. I spotted a large black cat, sprinting madly across the tennis courts. And there, on the back of the onyx cat, the opal lay, far too large in comparison, its refractions of light in the dark sky a beacon beckoning me to retrieve it... But Fabio, that *rotten bean* was already too far away, concealed almost perfectly in the night sky. The only thing that gave him away was the massive opal and this golden eyes. I would never be able to catch up to him at this rate.

Use your head Liz!

I scanned the area and the faces of my subordinates. Despite the impressive amount of treasure each of them had managed to loot during the heist, each of their faces expressed disappointment and a hint expectation directed at their queen. At me. I realized I needed to act, and quickly.

Whipping out my phone, I quickly typed 'Transformation magic' into the search bar of our special guild browser, which stores the information of every spell we know, including ones that are forbidden. You see, each person has their own animal form they can transform into at their will. According to the hierarchy, to detect a person in cat

form, a dog is needed for the chase. But we do not have a dog present in our guild. This is where this spell comes in.

I quickly skimmed the article detailing the forbidden spell in hurried desperation. I repeated the words of the spell and rehearsed it in my head. Scanning the crowd of my subordinates which had gathered to see the commotion and their queen, I beckoned to one of my closest companions, Oscar. I chanted the spell as soon as he stopped before me.

*Transform thy form. Change thy mind and composition.
Thy form shall morph into my will.*

I cleared my mind, focusing on the image of a bloodhound within the parameters of what is realistic in this world. I willed it to work and waited a few seconds before cracking open an eye.

I stared in horror as there was no bloodhound in sight, but only a plain, brown dog collar. With trembling hands, I picked up the collar, hoping that Oscar had survived the spell.

'I'm all good my queen. And I can smell him perfectly, like a dog'

Surprised but relieved, I held Oscar close and barked out an order.

‘Lead the way Oscar. Both of us shall retrieve the opal. The rest of you go back to the guild hall and stash our loot.’

Looking at the satisfied faces of my subordinates one last time, I clutched Oscar and started the chase after Fabio.

With Oscar’s guidance, I had found the fiend making a run through the forest. I made my presence known, stepping on a twig to produce a loud *crack*. He turned that insufferable head of his, eyes wide in surprise and stopped in his tracks.

Then he tucked his tail and ran, like the coward traitor that he is. I saw him ran down hill, towards the road and with an approaching tourist bus. Colourful curses flew out of my mouth, swept away in the cool night air. I sprinted down towards the road, just in time to see the bus’ doors close.

I sped up and arrived just in time to leap onto the back of the bus. I clung on for dear life, not daring to look down. Let him think that he has gotten away. He will pay dearly

for what he has done. That very arrogant attitude will be his downfall.



The wind whipped at my face as I clutched onto the bus's rails so tightly that my knuckles went white. My hair was swept around my head relentlessly and I could feel Oscar sitting lightly in my pocket. The forest on either side of the road raced past in a blur and I pictured what would happen to me if I let go. Even thinking of that potential disaster made me feel sick. That wasn't going to happen. I decided to keep my eyes closed instead. Through the back window of the bus I spied the traitor Fabio cowering under a dirty moquette seat like the coward he had shown himself to be. Around him the tourists with their snow gear were all chattering excitedly and I couldn't help but wonder where the bus was going. I still couldn't believe he had betrayed me like that. I had thought that we were made for each other. Obviously not.

Fabio's eyes met mine through the window and even in his cat form I could see him startle. His beady yellow eyes widened as he recognised me and he raced out of view between the tourist's feet, but there was nowhere for him to go. I watched his lithe black form go and knew now that he would be trying his utmost to evade me. I had hoped this was going to be easier. The ride dragged on for what seemed like an eternity and my arms got weaker and

weaker. I could feel the muscles in my arms start shaking and I worried about how much longer I could hold on. If I fell not only me but Oscar would be done for as well. Just as my hands were starting to loosen I felt the bus slow down and slide to a stop and fell to the ground, exhausted. I waited impatiently for my arms to obey me again and got to my feet to walk around to the front of the bus, planning my lightning fast grab of Fabio. As I got to the door, I crouched down in preparation for his escape. Slowly the doors creaked open, but he didn't appear. Wondering what he was doing I looked in the bus to see where he was. As soon as Fabio saw my face appear in the doorway, he shot past me, and I only felt my hands brush through his sleek fur before he disappeared down the nearest forest trail. As he receded from view, I finally managed to force my legs to give chase.

The brown dirt path meandered through a shady eucalypt forest and down a slight hill, and in front of me, just rounding a steep corner was Fabio. At least I hadn't lost him yet. He ran and ran with seemingly endless energy whilst I fell further and further behind. In just minutes I had lost sight of him and had to stop when I reached the next

fork in the path, unsure of which direction he went. I had no idea if he had taken the right path that continued downwards or the left which travelled up the hill. Trying to catch my breath I pulled Oscar out of my pocket

“You need to help me find him He’s too fast for me and I have no idea where he went”. Oscar could hear the desperation in my voice.

“It’s alright I can smell him as if he was up my nose”.

“Thankyou. I knew you could help”

I held him out in front of me as he told me to go down the right hand path. The sign said Jindabyne Dam. At least I knew where he was headed. As Oscar lead me continually downward I could only picture Fabio with the opal disappearing into the forest. I tried to console myself with the thought that he was only staying on the path so far, and he was stuck as a cat for the next couple of hours. My arms were covered in goose-bumps in the cool air trapped under the canopy and I began to shiver. Ahead of me I could see the trees begin to thin and a massive grey shape appeared out of the horizon. For a moment I forgot what I was doing as I was completely overwhelmed by the sheer size of what was in front of me. The dam was stretched across the landscape like the world’s largest grey **canvas**. It was inconceivably high and endlessly wide, a uniform light grey, unblemished but for a single black dot. In a rush I remembered who I was chasing as I

identified the black dot as Fabio. He was climbing the face of the dam to get away from me! My heart sunk. There was no way I could follow him now.

Despondently I sank to the floor with my head in my hands. The whole bus ride, the chase through the forest, it all meant nothing when I saw that sneaky little cat flying up the face of the dam.

“Surely there’s something we can do to get the opal back, Liz” Oscar said quietly.

“There’s nothing. There’s no way we can get up there before he does. Look at him he’s already halfway up. Unless we suddenly grow wings or shoot him there’s nothing we can do”

“Wait! What did you say?” Oscar asked. He sounded excited. I looked up questioningly.

“Grow wings? You’ve gone crazy Oscar.”

“No! After that” He was definitely excited now. “Shoot him. There’s got to be a spell that can shoot him!”

“Of course! You’re not crazy. It worked last time. Well... sort of.” I said.

Quickly I pulled out my phone and went to google. I typed up 'spell to shoot cat far away' and clicked on the first website; 'www.wizardkids.com.'

"It says right here! It's perfect!" I exclaimed. "There is a spell here. It says whoever sings the spell will send a bolt of pure magic right where you are looking. It really is perfect!"

I read the words twice to get them perfect, and then began to sing. The words coming out of my mouth didn't sound human. They seemed to force their way into Oscar's ears and into his brain, until they were all he could focus on. Then I stopped. I waited. And waited.

"What happened? What went wrong? Why..."

Suddenly I felt a huge surge of energy rise from the pit of my stomach and instinctively I opened my mouth as wide as possible. The pure energy raced up my throat and out of my mouth in a blinding burst of light and heat. A massive stream of white fire raced across the space and zoomed towards Fabio. He would never see it coming. I sat down, exhausted from the sheer effort of that one spell, and waited for the moment of impact. Within seconds it had reached the dam and an enormous plume of grey concrete dust rose from the wall, dissipating into the sky. I watched in awe at the power I had created and felt a surge of victory, not unlike the energy I had just created. I searched for Fabio through the cloud of dust,

hoping I had found my target, and as the dust drifted away I could see the unmistakable shape of a black cat clinging to the wall with an opal strapped to his back. My eyes widened in disbelief when I realised I had missed.

Somehow he was still there. Somehow he was still alive. I could not believe it. And then my heart managed to drop even more. A rivulet of water streamed out of the wall, nothing more than a trickle, but even as I watched more chunks of concrete blasted off into the air, creating a gushing stream of water that shot out of the dam. The hole got bigger and bigger, and massive cracks began to appear. The sound of the concrete cracking echoed across the space with ear-splitting volume, and I watched as a small black cat fell into the torrent of water and was washed away in the flow.



I stood there in disbelief, firmly clutching Oscar in my hands. I looked up at the daunting, concrete wall that lay in front of me. The strength of the magic had not done what I had hoped it would. The cracking of the wall echoed through the vast expanse of the valley. In an instant, the wall had broken. The sheer force of the water bursting through the thick wall had sent a gust of wind our way. The powerful wind had knocked us back. I stumbled for a little bit, before regaining my footing. I stared up at the enormous tsunami that gushed towards Oscar and I. I knew I had to run, but my feet were glued to the ground. I remembered the whole heist in a flash. All of the hard work and effort of getting into the heavily guarded house, and chasing Fabio for hours and hours on end, all of it was for nothing. This wave would be the end of everything we did to get to this point. I knew I could not let that happen.

With a deep breath, I mustered up all the courage that I possibly could, turned around, and bolted like lightning. I was holding onto Oscar so tightly my knuckles were stone white. I couldn't help but feel a little sympathetic for my companion, he didn't even want to come on this heist. I could hear the roar of the unforgiving torrent behind me, chasing me like a cheetah hunting a gazelle. My chest burned like a campfire on a snowy winter morning. I knew I was never going to make it. This could not be the end of

my story. I held Oscar close to my chest, took a deep breath, and turned around. I didn't even have time to think before we were hit with the sharp, stinging, cold water. We were swept up into the relentless tidal wave.

Darkness. There was only darkness.

The immediate force of the wave on my body hurt like *hell*. I was spun around, trying to slow myself down so I could regain my bearings. I couldn't tell which way was up, and my breath was running out quickly. Frantically searching around, I kicked my legs to the spot that had the most light, hoping that I was going the right way. The light got brighter and closer, and I knew that I was swimming to the peaceful, early morning sunlight. Finally, we'd be out of this. It wasn't over yet though. I needed to keep kicking and kicking to get that breath of air that my lungs were longing for. With one last powerful kick, I reached the surface. I gulped in as much air as I could, and scanned the surface of the frantic waves, looking for a particular someone who had a particular something of mine. My eyes eventually landed on a familiar, black mess of stringy hair. *Fabio*. I tried yelling to him, but we were all deafened by the wave. Still making sure I had a firm grip on Oscar in my hands, I swam over to the traitor. He saw me, and grinned smugly, with that smile that had said, 'I win, you lose.'

I swam closer towards him, and he shook his head. Suddenly, I felt a great impact on my stomach. I impulsively clutched at the spot of impact. I looked around for the object that caused my pain, and I saw a smug looking Fabio. We made eye contact, and he raised his eyebrows, feigning innocence. *Oh, okay, two can play that game.* I swam towards him, ready for a fight, when a noise loud crashing noise came from our right. We simultaneously looked over, searching for what had just happened. I laid my eyes on a long, black ladder, dipping into the water. I looked back over at Fabio, and we locked eyes. He had this maniacal look in his eyes, and he swam away. I knew that couldn't be good. Determined, I followed. The current of the water moved me towards the ladder quicker than Fabio. Proud of myself for getting to the ladder first, I started climbing. I felt an abrupt, strong tug at my foot, and I lost grip of the one thing that could get me out of this mess. Falling back into the freezing cold water, I looked up, and saw Fabio climbing higher and higher. With sheer strength, I blindly reached my hand out to the ladder. I somehow managed to grab onto the very last step, and I hoisted myself up onto the ladder, still clutching my poor companion in one hand. I felt the helicopter start to move, and we were pulled away from what, just two seconds ago, seemed like certain death. Using the absolute last of my energy, I held

onto the ladder. We soared over the broken dam, and into a clearing in the forest. My whole body flooded with relief, and I let go of the ladder. Fabio and I landed on the ground, where we were surrounded by a large group of police officers. They grabbed us and hoisted us up, all with stern, sharp faces. An officer came over to us, he was older than the others, and was more confident in the way he was walking over to us.

“What the *hell* were you two up to in there? Do you even know what kind of damage you have caused? You have destroyed the whole **community**! That dam was blocked up for a reason! I hope it was worth it, because you two are going away for a long time.”

Fabio and I stared at each other, and I got an idea.

“Oh my! Thank word you officers are here! This... this monster has stolen something very valuable! The precious opal, the world’s biggest opal, is gone! I’m just a simple maid! He came to Yarralumla House as I was doing my usual cleaning and he triggered the alarm!” I allowed a few tears to roll down my face, “He said if I didn’t do what he said then he would hurt me! I tried to stop him, but I was so scared!” *Nailed it.*

The police officers were taking notes, asking for more details.

“I- I’m sorry, can I have some time please? I’m just a little shaken up.”

The officers let me go, and I walked over to the ambulance, getting a drink of water. Police officers surround Fabio, one was interrogating him, while another was patting him down. They unstrapped the opal from his back, and moved it over into evidence. Keeping on my act, I moved over to the car where all of Fabio's belongings were, and looked at them all. I spotted the opal, carelessly placed in amongst everything. I turned around, making sure no one was watching, and scooped up the precious stone. I carefully pushed it into my pockets, being aware of my surroundings, and how easy it would be to get caught. An officer came up to me, and I turned on the waterworks again. I couldn't even form a sentence. The police officer looked a little taken aback, and called someone over. "I'm really sorry, sorry! Can you call a taxi for me? I need to go home."

The officers looked at each other, then at me. One of them gently smiled at me and got his phone out. I told the officer where I wanted to go, and he told the taxi cab service. I thanked him profusely, and walked away.

When I knew I was far enough out of sight, I got the gem out and inspected it, making sure it was free of scratches. Fabio took good care of it. I chuckled it up in the air, and caught it. I looked over my shoulder and saw Fabio staring at me. I raised my eyebrows, feigning innocence, and gave him a smug look that said, 'I win, you lose.'

It looks to the Queen of Thieves, her personal assistant Oscar, and her boyfriend, Fabio that their heist of Yarralumla House has been a huge success. They've even managed to find & remove the world's largest opal despite supposedly impenetrable security ensuring its safety. Just as they are beginning to celebrate their perfect crime, a cat that looks strangely familiar races across the tennis courts of Yarralumla; setting off not only an alarm but a lot of consequences they weren't quite expecting. They say crime should pay but maybe it doesn't always quite work out that way...

