



# EK BOOKS

## TEACHER NOTES & RESOURCES

**Title:** Once, I Was Loved

**Subtitle:**

**Author:** Belinda Landsberry

**Illustrator:** Belinda Landsberry

**Publisher:** EK Books

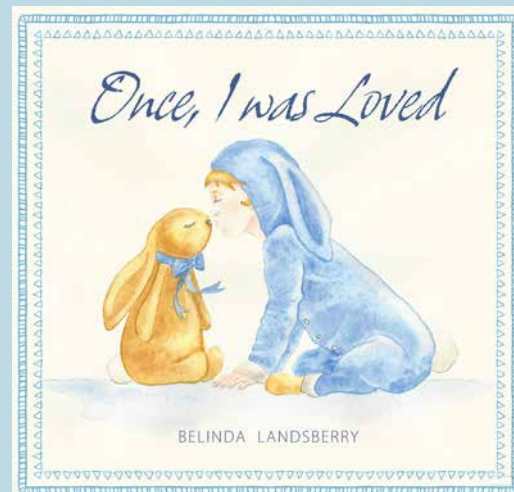
**Price:** \$24.99

**ISBN:** 9781925820027

**Publication date:** 1 October 2019

**Audience age:** 5-7 years

**Key Curriculum Areas:** English, History, Social Studies, The Arts



### SYNOPSIS:

*Once, I was Loved* is the heart-warming story of an old toy rabbit who finds himself in a donations box headed for the charity bin. 'But it wasn't always this way,' Tock sadly reflects. 'Once, I was loved.' Told through Tock's eyes, the story opens in the 1930s when, as a new toy, he is gifted to a young girl called Sam for her fifth birthday. Inseparable, Sam and Tock share many poignant moments together, including the day Sam's father marches away to fight in the Second World War. An act of love prompts Sam to give Tock to a polio victim in hospital who, in turn, loves Tock unconditionally until fate, once again, steps in. And so, we follow Tock and the children who love him through the decades until he is finally reunited, almost 80 years later, with his beloved Sam. Set against a backdrop of iconic events of the 20th century, this is a story about finding and losing ... and finding again. It's about holding on and letting go. It's about courage, patience and endurance. It's about the 'butterfly effect' of kindness. And it's about the timeless nature of love.

### SELLING POINTS:

- *Once, I Was Loved* has vast appeal with a target audience of 3–99 years.
- The book can be used as a valuable teaching resource in both the home and classroom, spanning multiple subjects and points for discussion for pre-schoolers, primary and high-school students.
- May be used as a valuable therapy tool for school counsellors.
- Crosses time and geographical boundaries and has strong international appeal.
- Covers the timeless subjects/themes of childhood toys, love, loss, patience, kindness, finding, giving and receiving, belonging, moving on and letting go ... just to name a few.



### SELLING POINTS: (cont.)

- The book also seamlessly integrates these important themes with a history of iconic moments of the 20th Century, bringing a touching and personalised approach to past events.
- The book is an excellent springboard for discussion between the generations.
- Belinda Landsberry is trained in Fine Arts, Graphic Design and Primary School Teaching K–6. She is the mother of four children and the grandmother of five.
- Belinda is an exciting talent as both author and illustrator. She is passionate about children’s books and is keen to promote them both nationally and internationally.
- Belinda is the award-winning author–illustrator of the best-selling picture book *Anzac Ted*.

### WRITING STYLE:

*Once, I was Loved* is written in first person prose from the perspective of the toy rabbit. The name Tock was chosen because it’s easy to pronounce, easy to remember and is linked to the running theme concerning the passage of Time. The word count of 760 words is attractive for both reading aloud and for pre- and emerging readers and has been used in combination with repetition and rhyme. The repetitive use of the phrasing: ‘*And because I loved her, I let her go ... and so ...*’ not only reinforces the themes of love, kindness, giving, receiving, trust and sacrifice, but alludes to the life-long ties forged between Tock and the children who are inextricably woven into the fabric of his life. It touches on the courage and selflessness required — on both sides — to ‘lose’ a loved one and move on. It also acts as a ‘hook’ to encourage the reader/ listener to predict the story and turn the page.

*Once, I was Loved* was thoroughly researched with regard to the decades of the 20th Century and the various iconic moments that defined them. The book is an excellent starting point for class discussion around the many themes it touches upon. It is also an excellent springboard for researching the respective decades of the 20th century.

### ILLUSTRATION STYLE:

The illustrations were achieved with Faber-Castell Watercolour pencils on 300gsm watercolour paper with the intent to harness a palette reflective of days past. Colours were specifically researched and linked to the respective decades of the 20th century in an effort to replicate historical authenticity. For example, the book opens with the 1930s which was architecturally characterised by the Arts and Crafts Movement. Typical colours reminiscent of this era were green and yellow, hence green and yellow was used for the 1930s kitchen. Similarly, the 1970s saw a vibrancy of colour unleashed on the fashion and domestic scenes, while the 1990s saw colour begin to recede as a more sombre palette emerged. The ‘linking’ colour throughout the book is a beautiful blue, called Light Ultramarine, which faithfully re-appears time and again to signify love, innocence, tranquillity and connection. This is the colour initially used for Tock’s ribbon which he wears as a new toy when he is first loved by Sam. Eventually, the ribbon is replaced by items of clothing or objects pertinent to each child’s ‘time’ and specific interests. Importantly, however, the blue ribbon ultimately returns, to remind the reader/listener of the timeless love Tock shares with his children and how through this love — and his eternal patience — he is finally reunited with his beloved Sam.

## AUTHOR MOTIVATION:

*Once, I was Loved* was inspired by Belinda's old toy koala — made from kangaroo fur — which she was given by her parents when she was three years old. She called her koala 'Bill' after his namesake featured on a 1960s black and white Australian television show called *Playroom*. Possibly the precursor to *Play School*, *Playroom* featured dolls and stuffed toys accompanied by live actors, songs and voiceovers. As Australia was quite new to television at the time — it was introduced in 1956 — this mode of children's entertainment was quite popular. The segment of the show which resonated with Belinda dwelt on a toy koala, sitting in a gumtree, who was typically asleep; hence, the accompanying title song 'Bill's Asleep'. Bill and Belinda were inseparable for many years, even after Belinda gave her unsuspecting koala a haircut with a monstrous pair of scissors! Being a three year old, Belinda naturally assumed Bill's fur would grow back so when it failed to do so, she couldn't say who felt more disappointed: herself, her mother or Bill! Unlike Tock, Bill stayed with his original owner throughout the decades. Belinda still has Bill, and while he's missing both eyes, all four claws and pretty much every strand of fur he ever possessed, he remains the loyal and loving koala who saw Belinda through her childhood and well into adult life.

After writing *Anzac Ted*, Belinda began to consider the timeless impact of both old toys — and old people — in our lives. This, in turn, led Belinda to consider the fate of old toys — and old people — and how many end up in the 'Charity Bin'. Further to this, was the implication that, unlike Belinda's koala, Bill, donated toys may touch many lives. They have a story to tell ... if only we'd listen. This became a vehicle for two important considerations our children should have the opportunity to explore: the Ageing Process and the 20th Century.

## THEMES:

The multi-layered themes in *Once, I was Loved* cover a number of subjects in the classroom including — but certainly not limited to — Public Speaking, Creative Writing, Social Sciences, History, Ethics, Drama, P.E., Maths, Science, Economics, Music, Geography, Current Affairs, Visual Arts, and Information and Technology.

**Themes include:** Love, Patience, Loyalty, Kindness, Giving and Receiving, Holding on and Letting go, Trust, \*Ageing, Courage, the Passage of Time, the Getting of Wisdom, Karma (or Cause and Effect), the 20th Century, the 1930s, the Depression, 'making Do', Big Band and Swing music, World War II, the War Effort, Sacrifice, the 1940s, the Polio Epidemic, the 1950s, the Invention of Television, Popular Childhood Toys and Games of the 20th C, role play such as Cowboys and Indians, Rock 'n' Roll, the 1960s, the Space Race, the Moon Landing, the 1970s, the Hippie Movement, the 1980s, Sport and Fitness, The America's Cup, the 1990s, the Information and Technology Race, the World Wide Web, the Internet, the impact of mobile phones, connecting and disconnecting, imagination, as well as what we can learn from history.

**\*Ageing:** Running parallel to the ageing of Tock, is the ageing of his original owner, Sam. It is important for the two 'inseparable' friends to eventually separate via a selfless act of kindness. Sam willingly gives Tock away to someone who needs him more. The reward for such selflessness — on both Tock's and Sam's part — is their eventual reunion. More mature readers will make the connection between discarded toys and discarded people (the homeless, the lonely, the institutionalised), as a result of the ageing process.



### AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR BACKGROUND:

Belinda Landsberry is an award-winning author–illustrator who created children’s picture books for many years before her best-selling debut picture book, *Anzac Ted*, was published with EK Books in 2014. Belinda’s obsession with writing and drawing was obvious when she was just seven years old and produced her first book: *How to Become a Nurse*. While never published, this hilarious illustrated fiction paved the way for Belinda to find her true north: children’s picture books. Happily, Belinda took her own advice and became a student nurse. She then became a primary school teacher, a graphic designer and a professional artist. But her love for children’s picture books continued to bring her back to where she feels she truly belongs.

In 2013, Belinda won the prestigious *Australian Kids’ Book Review Unpublished Picture Book Manuscript Award* and in 2016, *Anzac Ted* was short-listed for the *Western Australian Young Reader’s Book Awards*. It was also featured in the *Anzac Stories: Behind the Pages Exhibition 2017–2018* hosted by schools and libraries across Australia and New Zealand.

Belinda holds a Diploma of Teaching (K–6) with a Major in Fine Arts as well as a Diploma of Graphic Design. She spends the best part of her day writing and illustrating in her studio with her dog Faramir, and her cats Scout and Boo Radley (both of whom take great delight in rolling all over her notes and walking freely upon her keyboard!). Belinda also writes YA fantasy, adult narrative non-fiction and chapter books. She lives on Sydney’s beautiful northern beaches with her noisy, creative and ever-expanding family.



## TEACHER ACTIVITIES/NOTES:

### Initial Reading - Whole Class

#### Before Reading

- Suggest the children bring in their most treasured toy.
- Mount a classroom display of the toys with each child's — and toy's — name attached.
- Ask: Why did you bring in that particular toy? Are you the original owner? Discuss.
- Make a colourful wall chart depicting the toys displayed and have each child make their own personal 'badge' for their toy to be placed on the chart. Collate the results. Discuss.
- Write about why your toy is so special to you.

#### After Reading

- Ask the children how they feel about their respective toy now. Have their feelings changed? Discuss.
- What do you think the book is about? Discuss.
- What colours best describe the book? Paint or draw and discuss.
- Draw you and your special toy.
- Draw Tock.
- Make a cardboard Tock with moving ears and paws.
- Make a cardboard basket with Tock on the front. Fill with heart-shaped cut-outs each depicting a word which describes how you feel — or felt — about your favourite toy, person, book etc. Discuss.
- Why is the toy rabbit called Tock? Discuss.
- What music best describes the book? Play some classical and pop songs and ask the children to vote on the music which best suits the book. Discuss.
- Select a different decade from the book each week starting with the 1930s. The decade can be made into a sign and displayed in the classroom.
- Do you know anyone born in this decade? Can you interview them about what life was like back then? How have things changed? Was life better or worse back then? Would they be happy to visit the classroom and talk about their childhood?
- Ask the children to come dressed as a child from the decade being highlighted, for a day.



### The Decades of the 20th and 21st Centuries

Many of the following suggestions may be used for all decades ... with obvious adjustments.

**The 1930s:** What important events happened in the '30s? Discuss.

- The Depression: This is a very broad topic which may include subjects such as: jobs, work, housing, families, 'making do', clothing, food, toys, games, etc. Research and discuss.
- World War II: Another broad topic which may include subjects such as: Allies, enemies, family life, conscription, defence force personnel, working mothers, school, rationing, toys, games. Research and discuss.
- Books: Read excerpts from books set in the '30s such as: *Swallows and Amazons*, *The Hobbit* and *Anne of Green Gables*. For more mature classes: *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Water for Elephants* and *Rebecca*. Discuss.
- Food: Research popular food in the '30s. Remember, due to the Depression, this was the era of 'going without' and 'making do', so offal was often used. Make a simple morning tea from the '30s, such as pikelets with jam and cream.
- Toys and Games: Make a simple toy popular in the '30s such as a Knitting Nancy, Jacks (or Knucklebones) or paper dolls. Make the doll out of cardboard and decorate then make the clothes, with tabs attached, from paper and decorate. Dress your doll.
- Games: Research popular games children enjoyed in the '30s such as Jacks, Pick up Sticks, Marbles and Hopscotch. Play these games as a class or in small groups.
- Technology: Entertainment in the '30s. How did families entertain themselves? Radio (or the Wireless), sing-a-longs around the piano, dancing, card games, charades, board games, knitting, crochet, sewing/needlepoint. Research and discuss.
- Hobbies and Interests in the '30s: Research stamp collecting, coin collecting, shells, baseball cards, matchbox collecting, comics, etc. Can you think of any others? Do you have a special collection? Choose your favourite and start your own.
- Science: How have the plant, animal and insect worlds changed in your area since the '30s? Research and discuss 'collectable critters' prevalent in the '30s such as caterpillars, cicadas, butterflies, frogs, silkworms, yabbies, tadpoles, etc. How have these creatures increased, decreased or changed since then?
- Inventions of the '30s: Scotch tape, the jet engine, drive-in movie theatres, Monopoly, radar etc. Find some others. Research and discuss.
- Generation: The Pioneers (or The Silent Generation.) Research and discuss.
- Show a popular film from the '30s such as: *The Wizard of Oz*, *Gone with the Wind*, *The Marx Brothers'* movies, *Top Hat* or *42nd Street*. Discuss.
- Music/Dance: Popular music from the '30s was Big Band and Swing. Play some of this to the class. Learn some simple dance steps to Swing. Dress up and hold a '30s party.

- Choose a popular name from the '30s and wear a corresponding name badge for a week. Girls' names may include: Mary, Betty, Barbara, Shirley, Dorothy, Patricia, Joan, Maureen and Margaret. Boys' names may include: Robert, James, John, William, Richard, Charles, David, George and Thomas. Record a class name chart.
- Ask the children to select their favourite decade from the 20th or 21st Centuries. Research books, music, films, science and art from their chosen decade. Discuss.
- 'Then and Now': Make a wall chart of cut-out images depicting differences between a decade of their choosing and now. The chart may include: clothes, hats, shoes, cars, movie posters, telephones, school books, school bags, school uniforms ... the list is endless.

## The 1940s: What important events happened in the '40s? Discuss.

- World War II ends in 1945. This is a broad topic and may include: When did the war end in Europe? When did the war end in the Pacific? What does V-Day stand for? What does VP Day stand for? How did people celebrate? How did the end of the war affect returned soldiers, nurses, families? Do you know anyone who lived through WW2 as a soldier or nurse? As a civilian? Can you interview them? Research and discuss.
- Creative Writing: Imagine you are a child celebrating the end of the war in Australia, England or Germany.
- Jazz, Pop and Country and Western (Honky Tonk): Research and discuss these iconic music movements. Listen to and watch videos featuring Jazz artists such as Ella Fitzgerald and Billie Holiday and Pop artists (crooners) such as Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra and Nat King Cole. Country and Western artists included Roy Rogers, Gene Autry and Hank Williams.
- Music: Learn a short Jazz piece playing percussion, piano, brass, wind instruments.
- Fashion: How did the end of the war affect fashion? Music? Film? Books? Make a 1940s hat out of felt. Decorate and wear.
- Film: Watch an old 1940s movie such as: *Disney's Fantasia*, *Miracle on 34th St* and *Meet Me in St. Louis*. Discuss.
- Science and Technology: Research and discuss 1940s inventions such as B&W Television (USA) the helicopter, radar and contact lenses.
- Books: Read excerpts from books popular in the '40s such as: *Pippi Longstocking*, *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* and *Stuart Little*. Discuss.
- Toys and Games: Silly Putty, Scrabble, Marbles, Stamp Collecting, Conkers, Cigarette cards and Matchbox Lids, Meccano, Kewpi Dolls, Model Plane kits. Make your own. Research and discuss.
- Science and Medicine: What was The Polio Epidemic? Research and discuss.

## The 1950s: Some topics for research and discussion

- Rock 'n' Roll: Elvis Presley, Chuck Berry, Bill Haley, Fats Domino, Jerry Lee Lewis
- The arrival of television (Australia)
- Cowboys and Indians (and other role play games)
- The Cold War
- The Korean War
- Post-war immigration
- Inventions: TV remote control, Video tape recorder, automatic washing machine
- Polio vaccine introduced
- Generation: Baby Boomers
- Toys: Play-Doh, Frisbee, Hula Hoops, Mr Potato Head, Barbie.
- Movies: *Treasure Island*, *Old Yeller*, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, *The Court Jester*, *The Lone Ranger*
- Books: *Charlotte's Web*, *Tom's Midnight Garden*, *The Borrowers*, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Old Yeller*

## The 1960s: Some topics for research and discussion

- The Space Race and the first Moon Landing
- The Vietnam War
- Inventions: The first video computer game, the touch-tone telephone, CDs, Smoke detectors, Microwave ovens, Heart transplants, ATM machines.
- Music: Pop, Psychedelic, Rhythm and Blues, Soul, The Beatles, Chubby Checker, the Rolling Stones, The Doors.
- Dance: The Mashed Potato, The Frug, The Twist, The Swim. Go-Go dancing.
- Fashion: 'Mod' fashion, 'rebellion' inspired, bold colours, pastels, mini-skirts, patent leather boots, long hair styles for both sexes
- Education: Learning by rote was still widely used in schools. Research and discuss.
- Toys/Games: Mousetrap, Tip-it, Twister, Operation, Kerplunk!, Panic!, Mad Libs G.I. Joe, Tearie Dearie, Chatty Cathy.
- Art: Pop Art and Photorealism
- Generation: Gen X



- Movies: *Pollyanna*, *Kidnapped*, *Greyfriars Bobby*, *My Side of the Mountain*, *The Incredible Journey*, *Jason and the Argonauts*
- Books: *A Wrinkle in Time*, *James and the Giant Peach*, *Where the Wild Things Are*, *The Stone Cage*, *The Cay*, *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, *To Kill A Mockingbird*

## The 1970s: Some topics for research and discussion

- The Hippie Movement and 'Flower' people
- Woodstock music festival
- Disco music, Hard Rock, Punk Rock, Hip Hop, The Bee Gees, ABBA, Elton John
- Inventions: Email, VCR, LCD TV, Floppy Disc, Post-it notes, MRI scanner, mobile phones, PCs, Laser disc.
- Science/Medicine: Voyager Space Program, CAT scans introduced, Cigarette advertising banned, first Test Tube baby born, Smallpox eradicated
- Fashion: 'Individuality'. Freedom. No rules. Cheap synthetics. Floral patterns. Flares, Tie-dyed fabrics. Cheesecloth. Platform shoes. Loose/flowing. Hippie influence.
- Art: Feminist, Funk, Lowbrow art
- Toys/Games: *Connect 4*, *Mastermind*, *Operation*, *Nerf ball*, *Magna Doodle*, *Skateboards*, *Pet Rocks*, *Rubic's Cube*, *Trouble!*, *Speak and Spell*
- Movies: *Star Wars*, *The Phantom Tollbooth*, *The Railway Children*, *The Point*, *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*, *The Amazing Mr Blunden*, *Charlotte's Web*, *Benji*
- Books: *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*, *Bridge to Terabithia*, *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*, *Alexander and the Horrible, Terrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*, *In the Night Kitchen*

## The 1980s:

- What was a 'yuppie'?
- Consumerism
- The Berlin Wall falls
- The Computer Age — Apple, Microsoft, IBM, Intel arrive
- Big is good: Big hair, big clothes, big cars, big houses
- Sport: Aerobics, The America's Cup,
- Music: Michael Jackson, Duran Duran, Culture Club, Madonna, Band Aid, MTV



## TEACHER NOTES: Once, I Was Loved

- Toys/Games: Pac Man, Space Invaders, Walkman, My Little Pony,
- Fashion: Active wear, 'branded clothing', padded shoulders, leg warmers
- Medicine/Science: AIDS virus detected, Chernobyl, Challenger disaster,
- Generation: The Millennials or Gen Y
- Movies: *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *E.T. Phar Lap*, *Never Ending Story*, *An American Tail*, *The Secret Garden*, *Honey*, *I Shrank the Kids*, *The Little Mermaid*
- Books: *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*, *Playing Beatie Bow*, *The Twits*, *The Jolly Postman*, *Who Sank the Boat?*, *Animalia*, *Hairy Maclary*, *Possum Magic*, *Hating Alison Ashley*

### The 1990s:

- Science: Hubble Telescope, Dolly the Sheep clone, International Space Station, Mobile phones
- Multiculturalism
- The Gulf War
- The World Wide Web
- Diana, Princess of Wales dies
- Amazon, Ebay and Yahoo
- Climate Change, Global Warming and Deforestation
- Grunge, Rave, Hip Hop movements
- Designer Babies
- Fashion: Oversized, solid colours, flannel, denim, army surplus clothing
- Toys/Games: Tamagotchi, Furby, Moonshoes, Game Boy, Super Soaker, In Line Skates
- Generation: Gen Z
- Movies: *Home Alone*, *Hook*, *White Fang*, *Fern Gully*, *The Mighty Ducks*, *Free Willy*, *The Page Master*, *Escape to Witch Mountain*, *Toy Story*, *Tom's Midnight Garden*
- Books: *The Paper Bag Princess*, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, *I Spy*, *Goosebumps*, *Captain Underpants*, *The Magic School Bus*, *Matilda*, *Tom's Midnight Garden*

### The early 2000s aka The Noughties:

- 9/11 and The War on Terror
- The Rise of Social Media

- Globalisation
- Mars landing
- First artificial heart implant
- Pluto demoted to dwarf planet
- Hybrid cars introduced
- GPS for cars
- Text messaging
- Cyberbullying
- Smartphones
- Broadband and Wireless internet
- The Rise of Robots
- IMAX and 3D film
- Toys/Games: Playstation, Xbox, Pokemon, American Girl, Pillow Pets, Polly Pocket, Max Steel, Razor scooter
- Generation: Gen Alpha
- Music: Eminem, Beyoncé, Robbie Williams, Alternative Rock, Garage Rock, Emo Rock, Grime
- Fashion: 'Mash up of past clothing trends, vintage, Boho, Hip Hop, Indie, recycled, faux fur, crop tops, layers, accessories, more sombre colours
- Movies: *17 Again, Monsters Inc, Ice Age, Snow Dogs, The Chronicles of Narnia, Nanny McPhee, High School Musical, Bridge to Terabithia, Meet the Robinsons.*
- Books: *Harry Potter, The Rainbow Fish, Where the Wild Things Are, Eragon, Percy Jackson, Diary of a Wimpy Kid*