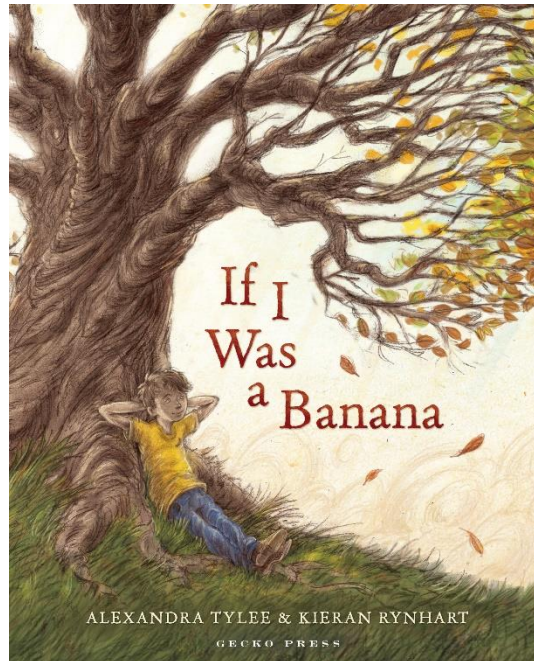


**Teaching Notes**

*If I Was a Banana*

Written by Alexandra Tylee and illustrated by Kieran Rynhart



**Synopsis:**

This boy's-eye-view of the everyday brings alive all the wonder and oddity of the world inside our own heads. It beautifully captures the magic that a child can find in common objects and day-to-day encounters—bananas, clouds, toys, breakfast, stars. Each of these simple things sparks a new train of thought, and the result is a gorgeous mix of the poetic and the prosaic which will touch the child—and the heart—in all of us.

**The Author:**

*Alexandra Tylee* is the owner and chef at Pipi restaurant in Hawke's Bay, New Zealand, author of two cookbooks, and the mother of four sons. This is her first book for children.

**The Illustrator:**

*Kieran Rynhart* is an illustrator and animator based in Wellington, New Zealand. He illustrated *The New Zealand Art Activity Book* for Te Papa Press in 2013, and has animated and illustrated an eclectic mix of music videos and commissions. He was selected as one of Luerzer's Archive's best 200 illustrators for 2010/2011.

**Themes:**

This adventurous and beautiful picture book, has several themes.

One theme is the power of observation. This is evident when the boy takes time to really look at, contemplate and consider the world around him.

The themes of wonder and imagination are also illustrated as the boy, using his imagination, imbues the objects and animals he ponders with a sense of mystery, awe and wonder.

A further theme is that of the innocent and seemingly magical time that childhood can be. This is evident through the boy narrator whose character beautifully encapsulates the world and voice of a child.

**Activities:**

1. Before reading the book, look at the cover image and title. Discuss what you think this story might be about?
2. In pairs, or with an adult to help, take turns to read the story aloud to one another. Discuss which is your favourite page and why. Do you agree with your partner's choice? Why/why not?
3. Choose your favourite description from the book. Discuss with a partner why it is your favourite, for example, list the adjectives that the author used.
4. List all the animals featured in the book and then choose one of the animals to investigate, for example, where do ladybugs live, what is a ladybug's natural habitat, call, food, predators, etc? Present your findings to your class. Create a diorama of your chosen animal and its habitat.
5. Choose your favourite character from the book, either an animal, person or object. Use it as the main character and inspiration for a short story. Write, illustrate, bind and publish your own children's picture book of your story.
6. The book is full of evocative illustrations that are both technically skilled and emotionally resonant. Choose one of the illustrations from the book to either describe to one another orally in pairs or to write a descriptive paragraph or poem about.

7. Choose one of the characters in the book, either an animal, person or object to create an advertisement for in order to persuade a reader that is what they would most want to be. Your advertisement could be a pamphlet, radio jingle, poster, television commercial, etc. Remember to use persuasive and descriptive language. You could use phrases taken from the book.
  
8. Examine the illustrations in the book. What attracts your attention to a particular picture? What colours are used? What kinds of lines and textures are used? Which is your favourite illustration and why? Do you like the style? Choose your favourite illustration from the book and create your own artistic interpretation of it, for example, a painting, drawing, photograph, model, poem, etc. Or, design your own illustrations for the cover and/or one page of text.
  
9. Find another book illustrated by Kieran Rynhart to compare and contrast the illustrations with those in *If I Was a Banana*. List any similarities or differences.
  
10. Review the book for your favourite magazine or website. What do you like about the book? Why? What did you dislike about the book? Why? Give it a rating, such as stars or a number out of ten.

**Activity:**

Complete the following activity using the box and instructions below.

<b>1. Person</b>	<b>2. Possession</b>
<b>3. Place</b>	<b>4. Passion</b>
<b>5. Pets</b>	<b>6. Profession</b>



**G E C K O P R E S S**

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1. Choose a letter from the alphabet and think of a word beginning with this letter for each of the categories in the boxes above.
2. Roll a dice and depending on which number you land on, create a rich description using the book as inspiration, based on either a person, possession, place, passion, pet or profession. Remember to include a clear beginning using the phrase 'If I was a...I would be...', as well as a middle and an end.
3. Illustrate your description. Display your illustrated description on 'If I Was A....' wall in your classroom.