



Teacher Notes

Kenneth and Queenie: Super Sweet

by Raymond McGrath

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Publication details

Publisher: Affirm Press
ISBN: 9781923022997
Size/format: 210 x 150mm, 56 pages, PB
RRP: \$15.99
Pub Date: 25 February 2025
Reader ages: 4-8 years

Themes

- Friendship
- Pollination
- Name-calling
- Making honey
- Communication
- The future
- Environment

About the Book

Kenneth is on a mission. Queenie is almost the queen of her hive. Together with their pollinating pals, they're going to save the world, one flower at a time ... and have fun along the way!

Story 1: Bee Nice!

Kenneth and Queenie have just met, and they're already fighting! Can they find a way to be friends?

Story 2: Secret Recipe!

Kenneth is shocked when Queenie shares her top secret honey-making recipe. Is that really how honey is made?

Story 3: Super Colony!

Kenneth and Zippo have a buzz-off contest, but Queenie shows them how it's really done!

About the Author/Illustrator

Raymond McGrath is an award-winning veteran of the film, television, advertising and children's publishing industries for more than 30 years. His books have been published internationally (a *New York Times* bestselling illustrator) and he is the writer/director and creator of TVNZ children's series *Puzzle Inc*, as well as a storyboard/animatic artist on the international award winning television series *Kiri and Lou*, and senior animator on BBC series *Tiny Wonders*. Ray lives in NZ with his wife, four children, a cat and a small but perfectly formed cluckery of chickens.

Before Reading

- Explain what a graphic novel is and discuss some of the differences between a comic book and a picture book or a chapter book. Invite students to share some of the comics or graphic novels they've read.
- Ask students to make a list of the different types of flying insects they see. Explore the cover of the book. Which insects might appear in the story?
- Read the blurb and consider this alongside the cover. What information is included? Which elements make students want to read the book (or not)?

Comprehension questions

- Why doesn't Kenneth want to be called a Bumblebee? What does he want to be called instead?
- Queenie and Kenneth agree that name-calling isn't nice. Have you ever been called a name you didn't like? How did it make you feel? How did you handle it?
- Who is Kenneth's best friend?
- According to Queenie, what are some of the things that Queens do and don't do?
- Why is pollinating so important? What would happen if the bees didn't pollinate plants?
- How does Kenneth feel about Queenie's pollinating dance? Why do you think he feels this way?
- How is Queenie different to some of the other bees in her hive?
- What does Queenie love about Barbara?
- What is a buzz off? Who wins the buzz off in the book?
- What is Kenneth's super colony? Why doesn't he want anyone to tell Queenie about it?
- How is part 4 of 'The Delicate Art of Pollination' different to earlier parts? What was your response as a reader?

Literacy

- **Dialogue** is one of the tools that writers use to tell a story. You're probably familiar with dialogue in film and television, but can you find any examples from the books you've read? Dialogue makes readers feel like they're in the middle of the story, listening to the characters speak. In comics, different speech bubbles can indicate different things – some might be dialogue, others might show thought or shouting or sound. Which ones can you see in the book? Which have you seen in other comics you've read? Experiment with using dialogue to tell a story of your own.

Literacy cont.

- **Themes:** the book is divided into three stories and each story explores a different theme. A theme is the thing a story is about, while the plot is what happens. What are the key themes in each of the stories in the book? Can you think of any other stories or films that explore these themes?

Final reflections

- What are some of the problems that Kenneth and Queenie have encountered so far? What do you think will come next for them?
- Come up with a possible title for a new Kenneth and Queenie story.
- What was your favourite Kenneth and Queenie story? Why?

Creative Activities

- Create your own six panel comic strip. Think about which parts of your story you'll tell using words or dialogue, and which you'll tell using images.
- Queenie tells Kenneth that all bees speak in dance. What are some of the moves in Queenie's honey-making dance? Come up with a new dance that you could perform to show someone else how to do something you love.
- Do some research to see how pollinating helps trees to produce fruit. What role do bees play? Draw a picture to show the different steps in the process. Choose a plant/fruit or vegetable. What role does pollination play in its life-cycle? What would a future look like without pollination? Are bees the only pollinators? What else facilitates pollination?