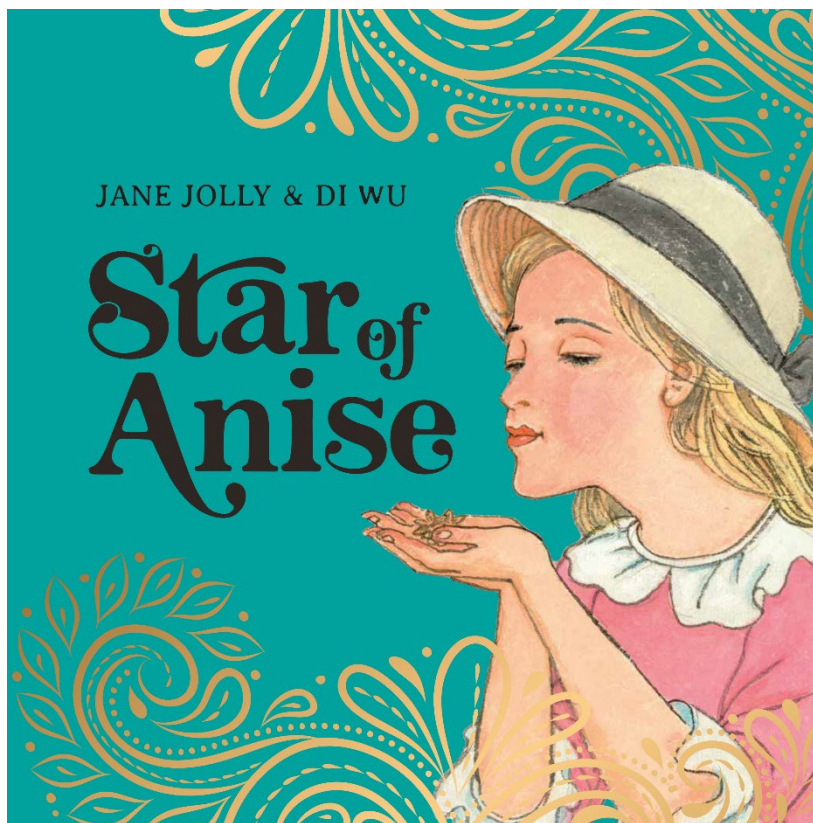


TEACHERS' NOTES

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**STAR OF ANISE**

by Jane Jolly  
illustrated by Di Wu



Published by the National Library of Australia, February 2021, ISBN 9780642279538

**About the Book**

*The hawker's wagon jingled and jangled as it came down the track ...*

Annie and Arthur have been eagerly awaiting Bhagwan Singh's next visit. What wondrous things will he have in his cart this time, among the silk and soap, spices and shirts?

As the hawker makes his camp for the night, the children savour spun sugar and food from the Punjab, discovering the secret star anise.

A gentle story about embracing different traditions, based on the stories of Sikh hawkers in Australia in the late 1800s.

*Star of Anise* is set in the Australian outback in the 1850s.

**Author: Jane Jolly** [janejolly.com](http://janejolly.com)

Jane Jolly is a primary school teacher in Adelaide who writes in her spare hours.

She has produced many award-winning picture books, including *Tea and Sugar Christmas* and *Radio Rescue* for NLA Publishing, *One Step at a Time* and *Papa Sky*. One of Jane Jolly's previous books, *Glass Tears*, was also created with Di Wu. Her books have been previous winners of the ABIA Small Publisher Children's Book of the Year award, shortlisted for the CBCA Eve Pownall Award for Information Books (*Tea and Sugar Christmas*) and she has had Notable books in the CBCA Picture Book and Younger Readers categories.

**Illustrator: Di Wu**

Born in China, Di Wu was an editor and illustrator in one of the biggest Chinese fine arts publishing companies before coming to Australia. He won awards for the books he published in China, and his first Australian picture book, *Rebel* (with Allan Baillie), was short-listed for the Children's Book Council Picture Book of the Year. He has since released *Ali Baba*, *Old Magic* (with Allan Baillie) and *Grandpa's Mask*, with text by Jing Jing Guo. More recently, Di collaborated with NLA Publishing author Christopher Cheng to produce the book *New Year Surprise!*

Di and Jane previously collaborated on *Glass Tears* (Limelight Press), in 2005.

## English

**Year 4 content description:** Incorporate new vocabulary from a range of sources into students' own texts including vocabulary encountered in research ([ACELA1498](#))

**Year 4 content description:** Explore the effect of choices when framing an image, placement of elements in the image, and salience on composition of still and moving images in a range of types of texts ([ACELA1496](#))

**Year 5 content description:** Identify aspects of literary texts that convey details or information about particular social, cultural and historical contexts ([ACELT1608](#))

**Year 5 content description:** Understand the use of vocabulary to express greater precision of meaning, and know that words can have different meanings in different contexts ([ACELA1512](#))

**Year 6 content description:** Understand how authors often innovate on text structures and play with language features to achieve particular aesthetic, humorous and persuasive purposes and effects ([ACELA1518](#))

### Discussion topics and activities

- How does the author set the scene at the beginning of the story?

- The author has used similes in the story: ‘eyes twinkling like stars’ and ‘like a kaleidoscope of butterflies’. Can you see other places in the story where a simile could have been used? Try to write some.
- What do you think ‘*sat sri akal*’ and ‘*dhaanvaard*’ mean? Look them up to find out whether you were right.
- Bhagwan’s turban is described as ‘peacock blue’. Get the class to find other words for the colour blue. Discuss whether these words also have different meanings in different contexts (e.g. peacock vs peacock blue).
- Which of the five senses has the author used to describe the setting and Annie and Bhagwan Singh?
  - What other sensory words could be used to describe the settings in the story?
- Tastebuds can taste many different flavours. In the story, Annie’s taste buds ‘tingled’ and ‘sizzled’. Can you think what your tastebuds might do when they taste different flavours? Make a list. See if someone in the class can match a food with each taste.
- Set up a blind tasting of different spices. See if the class can guess each spice (nothing too hot!).
- Historical fiction is fiction based on facts from history. Which parts of the story are fact and which parts are fiction?

## HASS

**Year 5 content description:** Develop appropriate questions to guide an inquiry about people, events, developments, places, systems and challenges ([ACHASSI094](#))

**Year 5 content description:** The nature of convict or colonial presence, including the factors that influenced patterns of development, aspects of the daily life of the inhabitants ([ACHASSK107](#))

**Year 5 content description:** The role that a significant individual or group played in shaping a colony ([ACHASSK110](#))

**Year 5 content description:** The impact of a significant development or event on an Australian colony ([ACHASSK108](#))

**Year 5 content description:** Locate and collect relevant information and data from primary sources and secondary sources ([ACHASSI095](#))

**Year 5 content description:** The reasons people migrated to Australia and the experiences and contributions of a particular migrant group within a colony ([ACHASSK109](#))

**Year 5 content description:** Examine different viewpoints on actions, events, issues and phenomena in the past and present ([ACHASSI099](#))

### Discussion topics and activities

- Sikh hawkers came from the Punjab. Locate this area on a map of India.
- Have the class research (individually or in small groups) the similarities and differences in lifestyles in the Punjab and Australia. Come back together and, as a class, make lists of the differences and similarities. Is one list much longer than the other? What does this mean?

- Why was Australia chosen as a better place to live? List the advantages of living in Australia. List the disadvantages.
- What does the class know about Sikhism?
  - Research Sikhism and compare it to other Eastern religions.
  - Research the five Ks of Sikhism. What does each K represent?
- A gurdwara is a Sikh temple. View the five-minute film [Inside a Gurdwara](#).
  - As a class, discuss what happens in a gurdwara. What practices are similar to those you're aware of in other religions? What are different?
- What were the major religions in Australia in the 1850s?
- Do you know where most of the goods in your home are produced?
  - Get the class to track down the origins of a number of items in the classrooms or in their homes.
  - Discuss how many are made in Australia. What items are not made in Australia? Why not?
- Not all of hawkers in Australia were Sikh. There were many Afghan hawkers who used camels for their transport. Research Afghan hawkers to make a list of differences and similarities between the two groups.
- Many of these Afghan hawkers were Muslim. There are still remnants of old mosques in the outback. View old photos of mosques and hawkers around Broken Hill through [Migration Heritage New South Wales](#).
- Split the class into small groups and have each group research different religious or cultural days on the Christian, Islam and Sikh calendars. Note the similarities and differences.
- How have other cultural groups who have migrated to Australia changed the face of Australia? (Think about food, sports, clothing, religion and so on.) For example, when a wave of Italians migrated to Australia after the war, they introduced pasta and soccer.

## Concluding Activities

### Illustrations

- The illustrator's style has been influenced by his Chinese heritage. He uses a variety of media including watercolour, pencil and pastel. For Star of Anise he began with a storyboard.
  - What is a storyboard? Why are they useful?
  - Have students design their own storyboard for a story they have written, or one that you have read together as a class.
  - Think about close-ups, distance illustrations and middle distance. Match the text with the illustration.

- Try some pencil sketching, starting with simple subjects, for example, a vase or a piece of fruit. Try using different coloured pencils but keeping the sketch monochromatic. Try different coloured paper, for example, use a white pencil on black paper, or a yellow pencil on red paper, and so on.
- The illustrator's style is realism. This is where the artist attempts to represent the subject matter truthfully.
  - What other artists and illustrators do you know who are realists?
  - Would the book have worked as well if the illustrator had used a different style? What other styles may have worked?

## Research

A lot of research was involved to get the illustrations correct. Because the subject is real, it was important to the author and illustrator to make the illustrations appear as close to reality as possible. The illustrator worked from photographs of hawkers and their wagons, and the environment at the time. The characters' clothing is true to the period.

- Make a list of what Di may have researched to make the illustrations true.
- Get the class to use the [National Library of Australia catalogue](#) and the Library's [Trove information aggregator](#) to find their own photographs of this time period.
  - Compare some of the photographs you find in the Library catalogue and Trove with the illustrations in the book. How are they similar or different?
- Again using National Library resources, can the class find newspaper articles from the 1850s? What was the headline news? How does the 1850s newspaper compare with newspapers of the twenty-first century?