

Parachute **Teacher Notes**

Written by Danny Parker
Illustrated by Matt Ottley

Synopsis

Toby has a parachute that he always wears. He doesn't feel safe without it. He wears it everywhere he goes because he feels that it will protect him from all the things he is scared of.

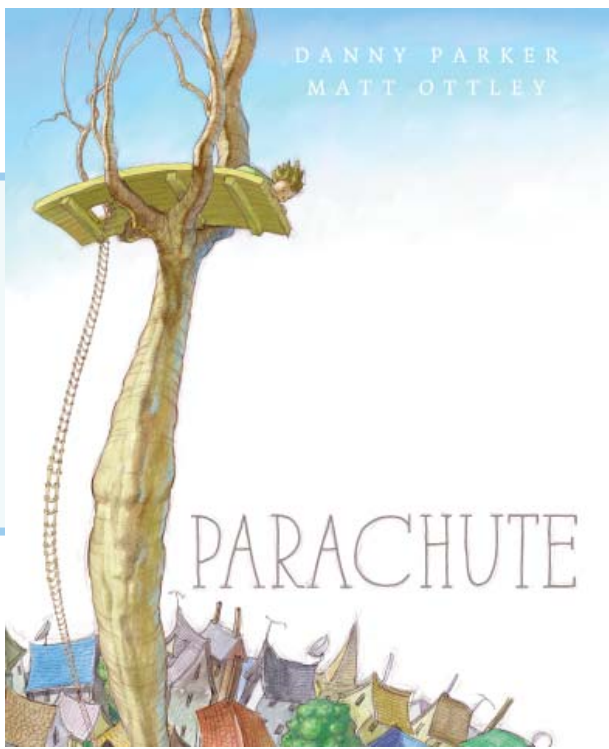
One day Toby's cat Henry gets stuck up a tree. Toby is scared of heights but he knows he has to help Henry. Toby climbs up the tree to Henry and tells him not to be afraid. He realises that the only way he can get Henry down safely is if he gives him his parachute. Without hesitation he takes it off and puts it on Henry so he can float safely to the ground.

Then Toby realises that he is all alone, high up in the tree without his parachute. However, instead of being scared Toby starts to tell himself to be calm and to not be afraid, just like he told Henry when Henry was worried. Slowly Toby does start to feel less scared and eventually he is able to climb back down to the ground.

After this experience Toby finds that he needs his parachute less and less and eventually he feels brave enough to leave it behind and face the day without it.

Themes

- Fear
- Bravery
- Security
- Imagination



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Comprehension

Why does Toby always wear his parachute?

What kinds of things does he use it for?

Why do you think he is so scared without his parachute?

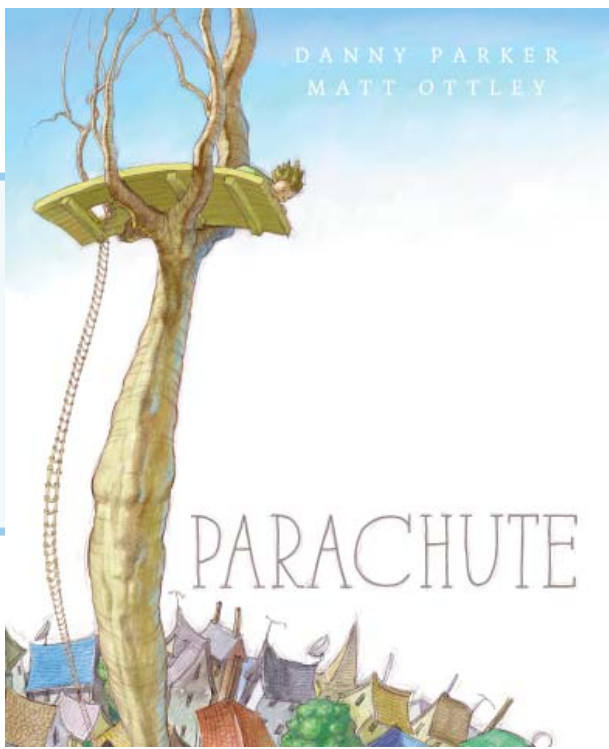
In what ways does his parachute make him feel safe?

Why does Toby take his parachute off when he is so high up in the tree?

How does he overcome his fears and climb down the tree?

How does this experience help him to feel less afraid?

Why does stop wearing his parachute all together?



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Activities

As a class talk about why Toby is so afraid and how he managed to overcome his fears.

After this discussion get the class to write a journal entry about a time when they had to face their own fears.

Ask the students to write about why they were afraid and how they overcame their fears.

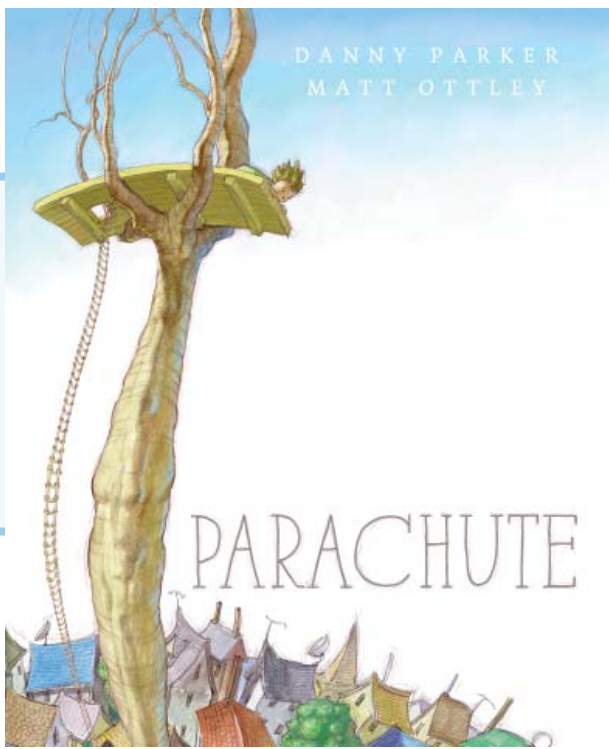
Encourage the children to reflect upon how they can use that experience to help them in the future the next time they feel afraid of something.

It's not only the words in the story that tell us what Toby is thinking, the illustrations also play an important role in conveying Toby's emotions.

As a class turn to random pages of the book and without looking at the text talk about what you think Toby is feeling and why.

Direct each student to divide an A4 sheet into four different sections and label each with an emotion such as happy, angry, excited and surprised. Student could look through magazines and newspapers and cut out images of people they think represent each emotion and paste them in the relevant section. Put the students into groups and let them present their work to each other and discuss why they think the images they chose represent a certain emotion.

Does everyone agree? If not, why?



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Discuss the significance of Toby having to help Henry and how his experience of looking after Henry helped him to look after himself.

Encourage students to write their own stories about two friends who help each other overcome their fears. Get them to think about what kind of personality traits each of the friends have and why they are able to help each other. Then get the students to turn their stories into picture books with illustrations that help to convey the emotions of the characters.

Toby has a big imagination.

Go through the book and find all of the situations where Toby's imagination has exaggerated something. Then get students to use their own imaginations and draw a picture of what they think it might be like to fly through the sky. What kinds of things might they see?