

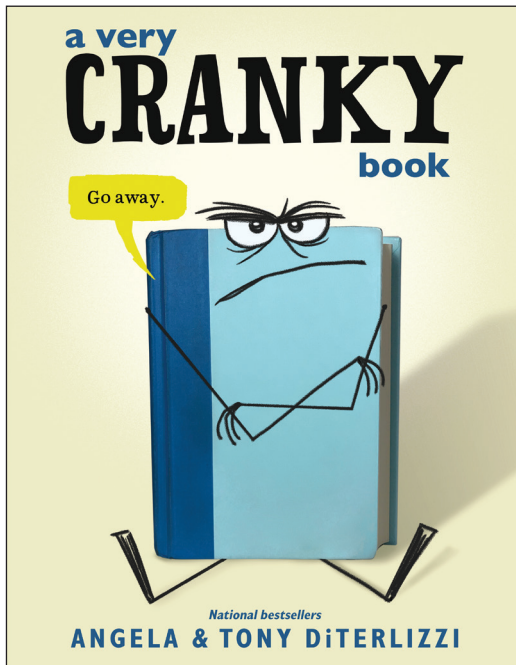
a very
CRANKY
book

DISCUSSION GUIDE

I'm not in the mood to discuss anything.



Art © 2023 by Tony DiTerlizzi



ABOUT THE BOOK

An ornery storybook announces that there will be no story time today! He's feeling very cranky, and he doesn't want to be picked up, read, or even be anywhere near a reader. That is, until some of the other books begin reading, and then suddenly, the cranky book decides he might not feel quite so cranky after all . . .

ABOUT THE CREATORS

Angela and Tony DiTerlizzi have been best friends and creative partners for thirty years and married for over twenty. They live in Amherst, MA, with their daughter, Sophia, and their rescue dogs, Mimi and Pippin.

ANGELA is a beloved author of award-winning, charming, and inspiring

picture books, including the *USA Today* bestselling *The Magical Yet*, *Some Bugs*, *Just Add Glitter*, and many others. Her books have been featured in *Entertainment Weekly* and BuzzFeed, on the *Today* show, and in Cheerios boxes.

TONY is a #1 *New York Times* bestselling author and illustrator who has been creating books for over twenty years. From fanciful picture books, such as the Caldecott Honor-winning *The Spider and the Fly* and *The Broken Ornament*, to fantastic middle grade novels like *Kenny & the Dragon*, the WondLa trilogy, and the Spiderwick Chronicles (with Holly Black), Tony imbues each story with his rich imagination.

And Cranky is just . . . well . . . cranky.



INTERACTING WITH THE BOOK

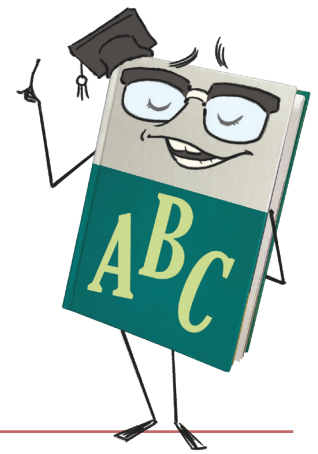
- Ask the children if they know what it means to feel cranky. What makes you cranky? How do you act when you are cranky? Hold a Cranky Contest! Have the children pretend to be cranky, encouraging them to make a cranky face, use cranky body language, and speak in a cranky tone of voice. Ask the children to decide who were the crankiest students in the class. Why are they the Cranky Contest winners?
- Ask the children about their favorite times to read or listen to stories. Is story time best in the morning? After lunch? At bedtime? All of the above? Why?
- Show the children the title page. What do you see in the picture? What do you know about the family who lives here? Do you have some of these things in your home?
- When you read this book aloud for the first time, ask the children to whom they think the cranky book is speaking. Discuss why it is unusual for the character to speak directly to the reader.



Guide prepared by Sue Ornstein, an educational consultant with thirty-five years of elementary teaching experience.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How is the blue book feeling? How do you know?
- What does the cranky book want the reader to do instead of reading?
- What do you think about the drawing of the cranky book? Does it look like him?
- What adventure awaits the reader outside?
- How do the other books react when the cranky book announces there will be no story time?
- What kinds of books are the others? How do you know?
- What does the cranky book do when the others begin reading?
- How do his feelings change? Why?
- What happens when the cranky book is finally ready to read or be read?
- How does the story end?



Hey, this is **MY** story!
Write your own story!



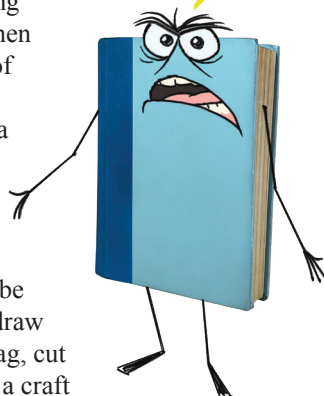
START A STORY

Discuss how this story differs from many other picture books because the story is told only through dialogue in speech bubbles. Ask the children if this reminds them of other genres (e.g., comic books or graphic novels) and ask why they think the author chose to use this format. Then have the children create their own story using this technique. Have them choose 2–3 characters and use speech bubbles and illustrations to tell a story. Have the children share these stories with their classmates.

SHOWTIME!

Reread this story, emphasizing how expressive reading brings a story to life. Have the children practice reading this story aloud expressively. Then ask the children to choose one of their favorite books (one might choose this book!) and prepare a reader's theater (a show based on a book) to share with the class. Have the children create puppets of the characters in their book. Simple puppets can be created by having the children draw each character on paper or oaktag, cut out the drawings, and then glue a craft stick to the back of each one. When the puppets are completed, have the children draw the setting of the story on a piece of paper. The children can use this drawing as a background by taping it to a wall or the front of a desk, and then move their puppets in front of it as they retell the story from their book. Encourage the children to follow the book's plot and to use

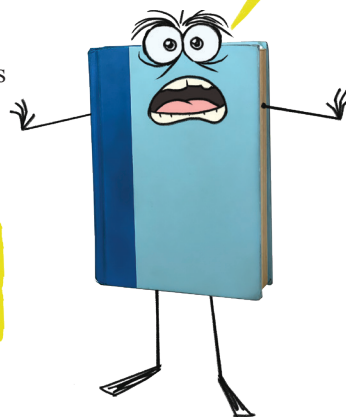
The show might be opening . . . but **THIS** book is closing!



ACTIVITIES

expression when their characters (puppets) are speaking. Have the children practice their reader's theater several times, and when they are prepared, perform it for the class.

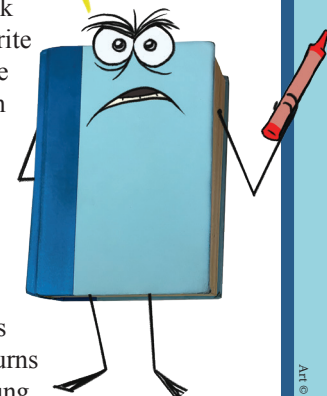
No one ever asks how **I'M** feeling!



ALL THE FEELS

Ask the children to describe how it feels to be cranky. Then brainstorm a list of other feelings with the class. Discuss each emotion and record it on a chart. Have the children choose a feeling to write about and illustrate. Then have the children take turns acting out that feeling for the class, while the others guess which emotion they are demonstrating.

Don't **EVEN BOTHER** sending me an invitation. I'm busy washing my hair.



BOOK A PARTY!

Plan a Story Time Party for the class. Ask the children to bring in one of their favorite books from home or choose one from the classroom or school library. The children should create a poster to accompany their book. It should include a sentence describing the main idea of the book and another sentence explaining why this book is their favorite. Younger children can make a drawing about their book. Divide the class into pairs or small groups for story time. The children should take turns reading their books to one another, or young students can tell the story in their own words while showing the illustrations. Celebrate with book-themed refreshments!