



Elastic Island Adventures: Alphabet Resort

By Karen McMillan

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About the Book

Elastic Island Adventures: Alphabet Resort is the fourth in an exciting series, a fantasy action-adventure set in the South Pacific. Kiri, Jed, and twins Emma and Ethan discover an 'elastic' island that sends them pinging across the ocean to a variety of destinations.

The children are excited to be going to the wedding of King Shiny and Princess Topaz. Love is in the air, especially when they encounter Wombo the Wombat, a bachelor looking for love, who they decide to help. But then Princess Topaz is kidnapped, and everyone begins a frantic hunt to find her.

Will they find her in time for the wedding, and will Wombo the Wombat succeed in finding love?



In each book of *Elastic Island Adventures*, four children travel via the Elastic Island service to different tropical destinations. In each book, they face different problems, and they must work together with the help of local creatures to make it home safely.

Every time the children ride Elastic Island, they must do a challenge to pay for their passage. In *Alphabet Resort*, the children must dance the waltz.

In each book, there is always a different parrot helping Mr Jollybowler, who runs the Elastic Island service. In this book, it is Miss Kara Kea.

Each book also features one unusual real-life creature, in *Alphabet Resort*, it is wombats.

About the Author

Karen McMillan lives in New Zealand and is the author of 17 books, published in nine countries, a mixture of fiction, non-fiction and children's books.

Her non-fiction titles include *Everyday Strength* with co-author chef Sam Mannering, *Unbreakable Spirit*, *Love Bytes* and *Feast or Famine*. Karen has ghost-written *From the Blitz to the Burmese Jungle and Beyond*. Her fiction titles include the bestselling novels *The Paris of the East*, *The Paris of the West* and *Brushstrokes of Memory*. Karen is also the author of the popular *Elastic Island Adventure* series for children, which is in early development to be made into a series of animated movies. Karen wrote *Elastic Island Adventures* purely as a fun family project, and some of the characters are inspired by stories she wrote as a child that were serialized in the children's pages of a nationwide New Zealand Sunday newspaper. She is also working on two spin-off series, one featuring Blong the Cat, the other the very naughty frivals.

Karen is the resident book reviewer on The Cafe TV3 and appears regularly in the media. She has been a speaker at many festivals and events, including the Going West Festival, the Devonport Arts Festival, the Tauranga Arts Festival, and Brisbane Book Week in Australia (thanks to Creative NZ Funding).



Writing Style

Alphabet Resort is an action-adventure story full of nail-biting drama, but also with lots of humour. Themes include building resilience and confidence, problem-solving, looking out for others, making friends, being yourself and developing your talents, the importance of literacy, kindness and caring for others. The *Elastic Island Adventures* series encourages creativity, where children can enjoy the theatre of their minds!

Four engaging and relatable children feature in each story. Feisty, outspoken Kiri, who often acts before she thinks. Emma, her best friend, shy, bookish and dreamy. Ethan, Emma's twin brother, who loves gadgets and inventing things and who is ever-so-annoying. Jed, the new boy in town, a born leader and athlete.

The text is in third person past tense. *Alphabet Resort* is written for the 8–12-year-old age group, but younger or older audiences will also enjoy this action-packed story.

Shared Learning and Discussion Points

ASK YOUR STUDENTS:

- Look at the cover. What do you think the tone of the story might be?
- How has the author set the scene in the first few pages?
- In the first chapter, all the passengers need to dance the waltz to pay for passage on Elastic Island. What other types of dances can you list?
- In the first chapter, we meet a new parrot, Miss Kara Kea. Find out what you can about the real-life kea. How is Miss Kara Kea like the real bird, and how is she different?



- On pages 15 to 17, Mrs Quokka says three quokka logics. Can you make up another three quokka logics, taking famous sayings and changing them?
- On pages 31 – 32, we discover that all the buildings at Alphabet Resort are named after a famous children's writer. Which of these writer's books have you already read? Can you name some other authors you would add to this list?
- In Chapter 3, the children learn what will happen when King Shiny and Princess Topaz marry. Some cultures have different wedding ceremonies, so research and write about two different types of weddings.

In Chapter 4, the children go to the Alphabet Resort Theme Park. List all the different rides you would like to go on – be as creative as you like!

- In Chapter 5, we meet Wombo the Wombat. Wombats are real-life creatures. How is Wombo like a real-life wombat, and how is he different?
- In Chapter 7, the resort has a ceremony to rename the 'M' building. Pick a letter from the alphabet, team up with another person and each champion an author with their surname starting with that letter.



- What do you learn about author Karen McMillan in Chapter 7? This chapter is deliberately silly, but the information is based on her real life!
- On page 119, the children witness the dramatic kidnapping of Princess Topaz. Imagine the scene and describe how you would feel if you were there. What would you do next?
- On page 122 is the strangest ransom note ever, full of riddles. What exactly is a riddle? Create three riddles of your own!
- On page 134, there is a discussion about red herrings that Blong confuses with a real fish. Can you say what a red herring really means and give an example?
- In Chapter 11, there is a team of characters that must work together to solve the riddles. Pretend you are there also and write down what you would say about yourself if you had to introduce yourself to the others.
- In Chapter 12, we discover that the quokkas and the frivals don't work well together. Do you have any suggestions on how to rewrite this chapter and fix the problems between them?

- In Chapter 15, it is going to be very tricky to find and save Princess Topaz when she is invisible – but there are at least two things that work in their favour. Name two important events from this chapter.
- On page 168, glitter rains from the sky, an illusion created by Kiri's bracelet, Bracelet von Weila, but the children react very differently to the glitter. If you were there, imagine what you would think and feel, and write down a sentence of what you would say about the glitter.
- In Chapter 16, we learn more about Chief Montegrow's character. What is your opinion of him now? And what do you think of King Shiny's ruling? Do you think Chief Montegrow will create more trouble in the future?
- In Chapter 18, the mystery of the square-shaped poo is finally uncovered. This is a real thing, but why is this poo square?
- There are many characters in *Alphabet Resort* you will have met in previous books. Can you name all the characters who reappear in this book?
- There is information about many authors in *Alphabet Resort*. Go back and choose one of these authors and do more research on them and the books they have written.
- The buildings on *Alphabet Resort* are very distinctive. Can you draw one of the buildings?
- At the end of the book, we discover that Blong may be the missing king from the Kingdom of Blong. What are the pros and cons of visiting this island in the future to check if he is their king?



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