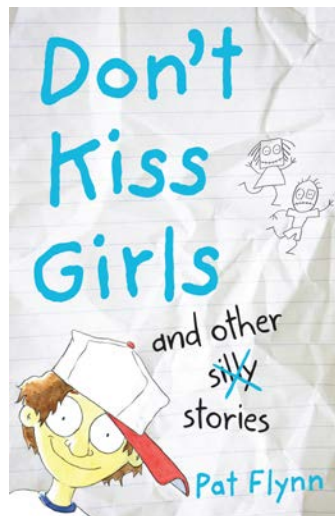


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# DON'T KISS GIRLS AND OTHER SILLY STORIES

## Pat Flynn



### Teachers' Notes

Written by a practising teacher librarian  
in context with the Australian curriculum  
(English)

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**SYNOPSIS**

Tony Ross has a problem: he's dead. But luckily, he's been able to leave some of his awesome stories behind as a legacy – a legacy of bad jokes, awkward moments and top tips on how to survive Year 8.

*Don't Kiss Girls and other silly stories* is a selection of humorous tales about Tony's endeavours to win the hearts of girls, get the better of his siblings and beat his best friend Kane in anything he can, which isn't very much! This is truly a laugh-out-loud walk around in the shoes of 13-year-old Rossy.

**THEMES**

Relationships:

- Tony is figuring out the way to a girl's heart thanks to his best mate, Kane, and his on-again-off-again romance with Ashleigh.
- Kane and Tony enjoy a competitive friendship; Tony doesn't always realise that Kane is getting the better of him.
- Tony's girlfriend Ashleigh might be a good kisser, but she is also pretty high-maintenance.
- Other girls also attract Tony's interest.

School Life:

- Life as a Year 8 student is well depicted in *Don't Kiss Girls and other silly stories*.

Humour:

- The stories in the text are humorous and filled with puns, anecdotes and idioms.

**WRITING STYLE**

*Don't Kiss Girls and other silly stories* is a collection of Tony Ross's first-hand accounts of life as a Year 8 student. The stories are written in first person, present tense – they are funny, fast-paced and impossible to put down. This text, while having broad application, will appeal to reluctant readers, particularly boys. The stories flow seamlessly from one to the next, are engaging and real page-turners.

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**STUDY NOTES**

- Discuss the introduction of *Don't Kiss Girls and other silly stories*, particularly the narrator's declaration that he is dead. Why is this such an innovative and attention-grabbing introduction? How does this appeal to the audience?
- Discuss Tony's reflection on his life that, 'it wasn't always pretty but it was pretty fun, and that's all you can ask of life, really' (p3).
- With a partner, share the 'Funniest Things That Teachers Have Yelled at Me' list on pp4–5, taking note of the teachers' names and their comments. Come up with some of your own to add to this list.
- What is a pun? Find examples of puns in Pat Flynn's work, discussing this style of humour. How do these contribute to the mood of *Don't Kiss Girls and other silly stories*?
- Take note of the figurative language used by the author, discussing its effectiveness in the text. Examples include:
  - He would've heard me get a bigger snick than on my first shave (p13)
  - He's got about as much swing as a 90-year-old golfer (p17)
  - I'm as nervous as a kitten walking past a dog kennel (p83)
  - A little kid runs into me like a leprechaun playing rugby (p90)
  - Touching her seems about as impossible as crossing a croc-infested river (p92)
  - It looks like a frog that's been through a blender (p98)
  - Her lips are softer than Kleenex and redder than Mr Relf's face when he's skitzing (p100)
  - It's like kissing a fish that smokes (p101)
  - His grip is weak, like a dead fish (p109)
  - Her teeth clench together like a werewolf's (p123)
  - Tossing her Senior Burger like a frisbee at my head (p123)
  - Her zit explodes like a volcano (p124)
  - Ready to kiss like a movie star (p127)
  - I point at a hole the size of the Grand Canyon (p130)
  - He spends so much time with his ear to the ground it's got grass stains (p197)
  - Kane burst through the puberty gate like a bull (p206)
  - I'm as frustrated as a dwarf playing basketball (p215)
  - She ... glides in like a fairy (p216)
  - My heart starts thumpity-thumping and my blood starts pumpity-pumping (p216)

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- The librarian shifts uncomfortably in her seat, like she's got a staple in her butt (p228)
  - I love that girl like a fat girl loves chocolate (p242)
  - I'm so thirsty I could drink the water out of the fish tank across the room (p243)
  - She dropped me like a ton of bricks (p257)
  - It's like I'm on a rollercoaster and I'm just about to take the drop and it's too late to get off (p260)
  - I'm gone like the wind (p260)
  - The wounds are still as raw as the sausages from one of Dad's barbies (p262)
  - Her tongue had my tongue pinned to the floor of her mouth like a WWE wrestler (p279)
- Describe the relationship that Kane and Tony have. Give examples from the text to support your response.
  - In what ways is Ashleigh a high-maintenance girlfriend? How are her ideas about a romance different from Tony's? Discuss.
  - Tony is looking for a part-time job in *How to Get a Job and Lose it in One Day*. Write your own letter of application for a job that you would like.
  - What does Tony prove to himself in *Love Triangles*? Will this lesson stick? Discuss.
  - Using the rules on pp73–74, write your own love letter to Ashleigh or another character in *Don't Kiss Girls and other silly stories*.
  - In what ways is puberty – or the lack thereof – holding Tony back?
  - What do all of the horses' names have in common in *What Are the Odds*?
  - In *Lunchtimes from Hell*, Tony and Kane make up funny names for authors. Discuss their names and invent some more to add to their list.
  - Complete the same poetry activity that Christine Bateson gives Tony and Kane on p227. Share your response with a friend.
  - Do you agree with Christine that Tony uses humour to deflect his real feelings (p230)? Discuss.

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- The visiting poet, Christine, says that, 'to be a poet you need to reach deep inside yourself and pull up powerful emotions' (p230). What does she mean by this? Experiment with this idea when writing your own poetry.
- Discuss Tony's realisation that, 'chicks want you to tell them how you *feel* about them. Not *buy* their love' (p240).
- In *New Girl*, Kane and Tony listen to love songs after they've been dumped (p255). Write a silly love song of your own.
- Tony witnesses his own funeral. Discuss this idea. In what ways has Pat Flynn been able to successfully kill off Tony without it seeming to be the 'wrong ending'?
- Who is your favourite character in *Don't Kiss Girls and other silly stories*? Create a character profile of this person. What music, movies and TV shows would they like? How would they dress? What are their personality traits?
- Which is your favourite story from the text? Why?
- What life lessons have you learnt from Tony? What would you teach him if he was your friend or brother?
- Write your own story about Tony that is suitable for inclusion in *Don't Kiss Girls and other silly stories*. Include turns of phrase, puns and idioms as Tony would.
- Select a story on which to create a play script. Perform this story to your classmates.
- Create a review for *Don't Kiss Girls and other silly stories*. This could be in the form of a vodcast, TV presentation, print, or multi-modal review.
- Visit the following websites where you can create pages about some of the characters from *Don't Kiss Girls and other silly stories*, and learn about Pat's other texts and characters that are mentioned in the final story, *Being Dead*:
  - Fakebook <http://www.classtools.net/FB/home-page>
  - Pat Flynn's website <http://patflynnwriter.com/>

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**AUTHOR MOTIVATION**

*Don't Kiss Girls and other silly stories* is a humorous collection of short stories about Tony Ross – a 13-year-old boy dealing with high school, girls, and a best mate who always seems to have the upper hand in many of their competitions. The book is aimed at 10–14 year-olds who enjoy fast-paced, funny stories about real-life situations.

Author Pat Flynn used his background as a high-school teacher to write about some of the 'firsts' that may be experienced in early teen life, such as a first crush, first kiss, and first broken-heart.

Pat says he threw away the rule book for *Don't Kiss Girls and other silly stories*. 'There are no life lessons and the good guy doesn't always win,' says Flynn. 'But that's what made it fun to write, and hopefully fun to read as well.'

The process of writing the book involved taking the best stories from three previously published novels – *Don't Kiss Girls*, *Get Rich Quick*, and *How to Get Dumped* – while adding new stories and other material to make a cohesive comedy. Pat found reworking previously published material provided a great opportunity to improve writing that had already been through a rigorous editing process. 'It allowed me to reflect on what worked and perhaps didn't work so well in the original stories,' says Flynn, 'as well as improve the jokes!'

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**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Pat Flynn grew up running around an old dairy farm in Queensland before moving to the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra on a tennis scholarship. After playing and coaching on the professional circuit he became a teacher, where his observations of young people – their interests and stories – led to him writing a series about a teenage skateboarder called Alex Jackson.

Pat now writes full time and lives on the Sunshine Coast. *To the Light* was shortlisted for the 2006 CBCA Book Awards, and *The Tuckshop Kid* received an Honour Book prize in the 2007 Awards.

Pat likes to start the day with a surf and end it swimming in the Currimundi Lake with his wife and two kids. He also enjoys the occasional game of tennis.

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