

MUSEUMS VICTORIA PUBLISHING

When the Stars Come Out



Written by Tanya Hill

Illustrated by Sylvia Morris



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Suitable for ages 3+

THEMES

- Overcoming fear
- Following your dreams
- STEM
- The night sky
- Astronomy

SYNOPSIS

Lily loves going on walks with her family after dinner. Sometimes they walk through the park, sometimes through their neighbourhood, and other times through the city. Lily loves it all – there's always something interesting to see. But when the seasons change and the Sun starts to disappear earlier, Lily's fear of the dark creeps in.

Suddenly, her walks become scary, full of unknown noises and shadows. Lily stays quiet while her family has fun, her fears crowding in around her. But then Lily's mum tells her to stop, and look up at the night sky, where the brilliant full moon shines. Lily's mum points out all the sparkling activity in the sky at night – the moon, the stars, planets, even the International Space Station! Lily's fears start to disappear, and she discovers that she's full of questions and curiosity about the stars. She realises that she doesn't need to fear the night. To find comfort, all Lily has to do is look up!

When the Stars Come Out is based on the author's own childhood fear. Like Lily, Dr Tanya Hill overcame her fear and discovered her own passion for the night sky. Her picture book is a gentle, scientifically accurate, introduction to the world of astronomy for young readers.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Tanya Hill is the senior curator of astronomy at the Melbourne Planetarium at Scienceworks. She's worked at the planetarium since it first opened in 1999, creating award-winning planetarium shows that are shown all around the world.

Tanya loves astronomy and being able to explore the universe, but it wasn't always like that. When she was a little girl, Tanya was scared of the dark. It was her dad who put his hand on her shoulder and encouraged her to look up at the stars—at the Southern Cross especially—and she's been looking up ever since.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Sylvia Morris is a children's illustrator and science communicator, currently living in Marburg, Germany. She grew up in the Adelaide Hills, on the traditional lands of the Kurna and Peramangk peoples, and has a Masters degree in Pure Mathematics.

While studying for that Masters degree, Sylvia got really excited by learning to draw and discovered how much she loves illustrating. It combines two of her favourite things: stories and problem solving.

BEFORE READING

- *When the Stars Come Out* was written by an author who overcame her fear of the dark and found her passion as a result. Invite students to share their own fears and discuss where these fears have come from and how they overcome them.
 - Ask students what they know about astronomy and the study of stars. Does anyone know the names of any constellations?
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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- What do Lily's family do together every Friday? What does Lily see when she looks up at the trees?
- What does Lily notice towards the end of summer? How does this make her feel?
- What are some of the things that make Lily afraid of the dark?
- Lily's brother points at something high up in the sky. What is it?
- Who lives in the International Space Station?
- How does Lily overcome her fear of the dark? Why do you think she feels comforted by the sparkling stars?
- Why does Lily smile when she pictures the astronauts eating together in space?
- What's the name of the brightest star in the night sky?
- What are some of the new things that Lily enjoys by the end of the story?

LITERACY

Astronomy

Astronomy is a field of scientific study that explores the universe outside of Earth's atmosphere. Did you know how much exists beyond our planet? Some of it we can see like Lily, and some is too far away to see without high-powered telescopes.

- Make a list of things you can see at night without any special equipment.
- What kind of equipment do astronomers use to see further?
- What are some of the things that can be found in the night sky that are mentioned in the book? Do some research and make a list of other things that astronomers might study when they look up at the sky.

Constellations

- What is a constellation? What constellations does Lily's mum show her?
 - Do you know the names of any other constellations?
 - Choose one of the constellations in the book and do some research to see if you can discover the story behind its name.
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FINAL REFLECTIONS

- Read Tanya's story at the end of the book. Discuss the similarities between her story and Lily's story. Do you have anything in common with either of them? What can you learn from reading about them overcoming their fears?
 - Explore the constellation maps at the beginning and the end of the book. Are you surprised by how many shapes can be found in the stars?
 - Reflect on your own feelings about the story. How did the ending make you feel? How would you describe the story to someone else?
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CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

- Think about the title of the book, 'When the Stars Come Out'. Use this as a prompt to write (or tell) your own nighttime story, that begins with the line 'When the stars come out I ...'
- If you look closely at the illustrations of the book, you can see that Lily's imagination allows her to see the places she visits differently. Think of a place you go regularly – what does it look like? Draw an outline of it. Now fill in the details, allowing your imagination to guide you. What do you see?
- What are some of the questions that Lily has about the night sky once she becomes interested in it? Come up with a question of your own – can you find the answer and share it with your class?

- If possible, plan an excursion to your local planetarium or observatory. If these aren't an option, make a plan with your family to have a stargazing night outside. Can you see any of the constellations mentioned in the book? Draw some of the images that you see when you're looking up at the sky. What do you notice? Describe how it feels to spend time exploring the stars.
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RECOMMENDED READING

The Darkest Dark by Chris Hadfield

Under the Stars by Lisa Harvey-Smith

'Look Up' (column) by Tanya Hill <https://theconversation.com/columns/tanya-hill-121214>