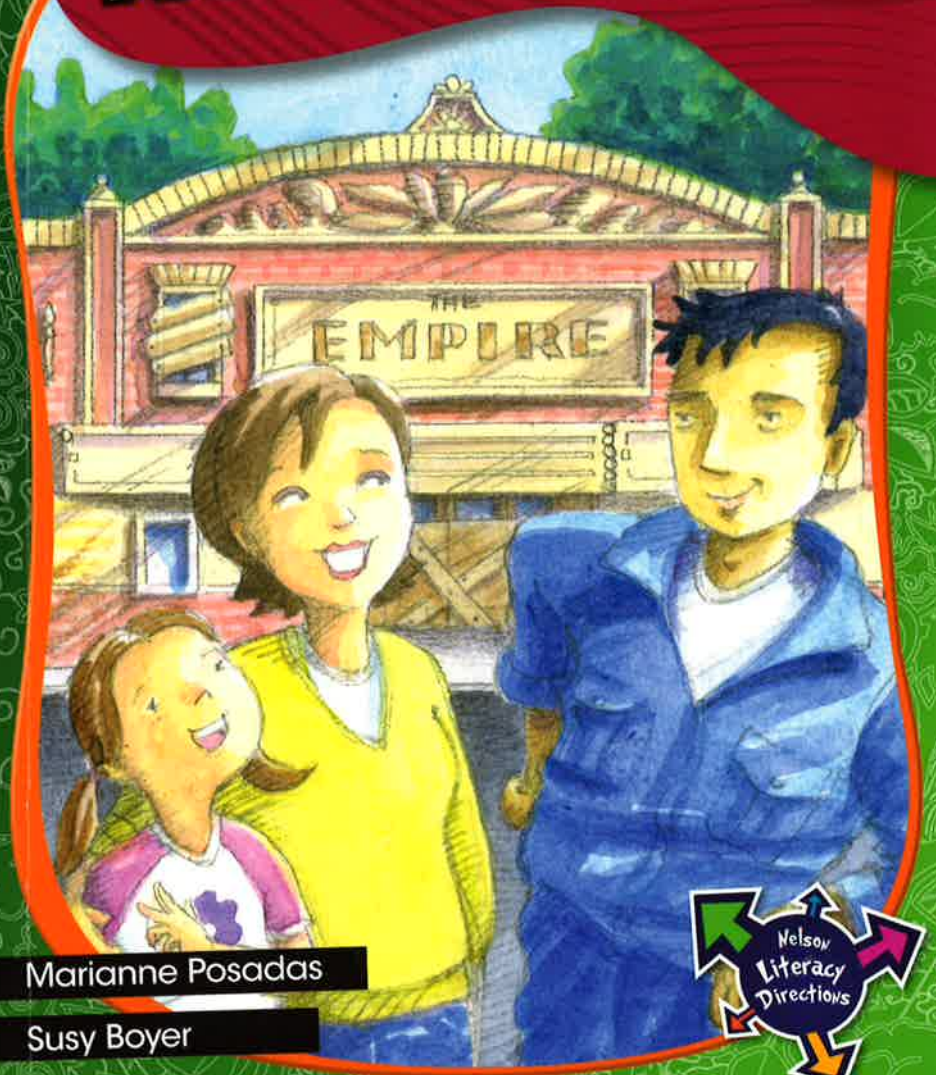
Stars of the Red Carpet



Marianne Posadas

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Nelson Literacy Directions



Stars of the Red Carpet

For teachers' inspection ONLY

Written by Marianne Posadas
Illustrated by Susy Boyer

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Meet the Characters

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Eva Schiavoni

A city lawyer.



Tania Schiavoni

Eva's eleven-year-old daughter.



Steve

A tow-truck driver (among other things).



Myrtle

A bakery manager.



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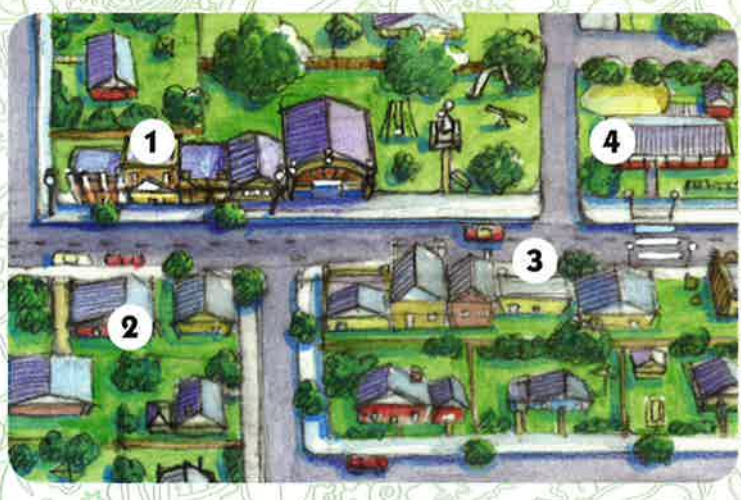
POSTCARD

Dear Reader

Like many people, I lead a busy life. I'm always rushing here or there, and never seem to have a moment to myself. At the end of a busy day, I sometimes flop down on the couch and think how nice it would be to change everything and have a relaxed, peaceful life. Here's a story about a busy family who felt the same way.

Marianne Posadas
Author

A Quiet Little Town



1. The Empire theatre
2. Steve's garage
3. Myrtle's bakery
4. The school

1 A Stressful Day

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"That's it!" declared Tania's mother Eva, as she struggled awkwardly through the door of the apartment. "I've had enough!"

She slumped against the hallway wall. An ominous pool of water slowly spread out from the leather shoulder bag she had dumped unceremoniously on the floor. Her hair was wet and bedraggled. Her eye make-up was running down her face. Her expensive Italian suede shoes squelched like a pair of sodden thongs that someone had found drifting in a swimming pool.

Tania looked across at the spectacle that was her mother. She put down the knife she'd been using to slice vegetables for dinner and hurried into the hallway with a dry tea towel.

"How was your trip to Sydney?" she asked, handing her mother the tea towel. It had been quite a different scene earlier that day.



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"Eva Schiavoni, entertainment lawyer, ready for action!" her mother had said, as the first rays of the sun had crept over their apartment balcony that morning. "How do I look?"

At that point, with her smart suit, careful make-up, perfectly styled hair and confident manner, Tania's mother had looked every bit like a Hollywood lawyer, ready to use her steely gaze to cut deals for the international movie chain she represented.

Now she looked more like she'd got a part in a Brollywood movie. Except they'd forgotten to give her the umbrella.

"Grrr!" said Eva from underneath the tea towel, as she furiously rubbed her hair dry. "Don't even ask me about that diabolical trip to Sydney, Tania! Grrr!"

Tania knew she wouldn't have to ask again. As soon as her mother had dried her hair, rubbed the ghoulish-looking mascara off her cheeks and found some dry clothes, Tania had little doubt that she would hear all about it.

Eva squelched off towards the bedroom, her shoes sounding like ducks quacking after a crust of bread floating downstream.

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Tania finished slicing the vegetables and tidied up the kitchen bench, just in time for her mother's reappearance.

Eva pulled up a bar stool and rested her elbows dejectedly on the kitchen bench. "What a day!" she exclaimed, grabbing a carrot stick and talking and munching at the same time. "There was an incredible traffic jam on the freeway to the airport. No parking spots within kilometres of the terminal. Frustratingly long, winding check-in queues. I got the middle seat of the row – you know how much I hate that – and the flight attendant spilled orange juice on me as he was reaching across to fill people's glasses."

Tania's mother took a deep breath, and another carrot stick, then continued.

"Late taking off. Circled Sydney for hours because of air-traffic congestion. Another incredible traffic jam on the freeway into the city. Late for an important meeting about the new movie releases. Late for my flight home. Traffic jam on the way back to the airport. Huge check-in queues. Another middle seat, can you believe it? Bad weather delayed take-off. Bad weather delayed landing. Torrential rain floods the entire carpark where, of course, I've had to

park right at the other end. Get soaked. Ticket too soggy to put in the parking machine. Finally get out, only to hit a traffic jam on the freeway into the city."

Eva looked at Tania, and waggled the last of her carrot in despair.

"It took me longer to drive home than it did for me to fly from Sydney. Can you believe that?"

"Sounds just like last Friday," said Tania, shaking her head. "I'm sorry you had such a stressful day, Mum."

"Anyway, that's it," declared Eva. "I've had enough of this ridiculous lifestyle. I'm supposed to go in to the office tomorrow morning and give a presentation on today's meeting, but I'm not going to."

"It's Saturday tomorrow," protested Tania. "You shouldn't have to go in to work on a Saturday."

"I'm not. I'm going to email in my report and, after I've finished that, you and I are going to spend some time together. Some relaxing time."

"That would be nice," smiled Tania. "You know, it's been a long time since we had a whole Saturday together, Mum."

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"I'm going to email the office right now," said Eva determinedly, "and then we'll decide what to do with the weekend. *Our* weekend."

Eva jumped off the bar stool and retrieved her laptop from the damp shoulder bag sitting on the hallway floor. She brought it back to the kitchen bench and lifted up the screen.

Tania watched from the other side of the bench as her mother pressed the power button. But instead of the usual log-in beep, the laptop let out a wheezy fizzle.

Eva peered at the laptop in dismay.

"Oh, dear," said Tania.

Just to remove any lingering doubts about its condition, the laptop let out a tiny puff of steam.

"That's it!" the wet laptop seemed to say. "I've had enough, too!"

