

# PANTOMIME



WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY  
astroNOT

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### PARAMETERS FORM

#### TEAM DETAILS

STATE:	VIC
DIVISION:	Upper School
SCHOOL/GROUP:	Box Hill High School (BOX HILL)
TEAM NAME:	AstroNOT
TEAM ID:	193

#### PARAMETERS AND RANDOM WORDS

##### Parameters

Primary character 1	Juggler
Primary character 2	Interpreter
Non-human character	Werewolf
Setting	Forest
Issue	Getting fit

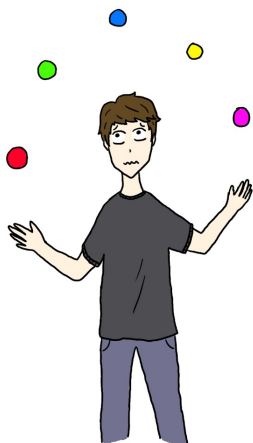
##### Random words

Whistle
Light
Gold
Hungry
Bubbly

  
Write a Book  
in a Day



# Chapter I: Bankrupt



Everything was going fine, perfect even. John had a nice paying job, a good friend, a cosy house with an endless supply of hot chocolate and a warm fireplace.

John worked as a juggler at the biggest circus in the country, Pantomime. And *oh boy*, was he good at juggling.

Everything was going great, until one unfortunate day.

It was yet another day at work, the temperature being particularly hot. The crew was preparing for their next act where John was going to juggle on top of an elephant. Everything was going to plan. The show was later that night, so the manager decided to give the crew some rest after a hard day at work.

“Be back by 7.30 guys,” the manager said.

And just like that, ten minutes later, everyone had left, deserting the circus. One could hear the sounds of the animals, who were well trained and didn’t need to be kept in a cage.

The sun was scorching, causing the animals to be very thirsty, and due to some careless mistake, one of the staff members forgot to leave water for the animals. The animals began to grow more and more restless by the minute, and eventually started rampaging through the circus. One elephant accidentally broke a mirror, shattering it into a million pieces where it flew everywhere, one of the pieces dropping right underneath the sunlight. The **light** reflected off the mirror, slowly birthing a fire. But because no one was there, nobody could put out the blaze. The fire continued to grow until it was raging throughout the circus, grabbing the animals’ attention and startling them. They

all ran towards the exit, injuring themselves in the process. Fortunately, every animal was safely out of the tent.

The crew returned to the tent at 7.30, horrified by the sight they were met with. A once colourful circus had been reduced to black ash. Nothing was left. The crew put out the remaining fire, but was it any use?

“What am I gonna do?,” the manager cried in agony.

“We’ll find a way sir, it’s not the end of the world,” the crew calmed him.

“For me it is; my whole life I have dedicated myself to this circus,” said the manager.

To make matters worse, the circus was built without insurance, making the whole crew - including John - jobless.

All John knew was juggling; he had dropped out of school and had been mute since birth, making it particularly hard for him to find a job.

He *needed* to survive. The only possessions left with him was a whistle given by his father to signal to people and his house, which too had to be sold after the rest of the savings were spent.

His cozy home, where he would spend his time reading books and drinking a cup of hot chocolate. After bidding his final goodbye to the house, John left for his friend’s house Indra. Indra was the only person he knew. After a long journey on the bus, he finally reached her house.

Indra was an interpreter, also known as a translator. When presidents from different countries came to visit Australia, Indra interpreted for them, making it easier to understand. She knew every language including sign language, which is how she communicated with John.

“John, What happened? Why are you crying?” queried Indra, startled at the sight of a weeping John, a rare sight.

*“I lost my job and now, I’m bankrupt,”* John explained through sign language, *“I sold my house, and don’t have any money left.”*

“It’ll be alright, John.” Indra offered helpfully, “You can live with me if you like.”

*“Nah, it’s fine, I’m going to live in the forest, as I can easily build a house there. I don’t want to be a burden on you. Can you please come with me to help build a home?”* asked John through sign language.

“Sure, anything for you!” replied Indra.

## Chapter II: A New Friend

“So what exactly happened at the circus?” asked Indra whilst walking towards the forest.

*“Not sure, there was a fire and everything burnt down. There are many theories of what was the reason, but honestly I’m not sure which one is credible”* said John using sign language.



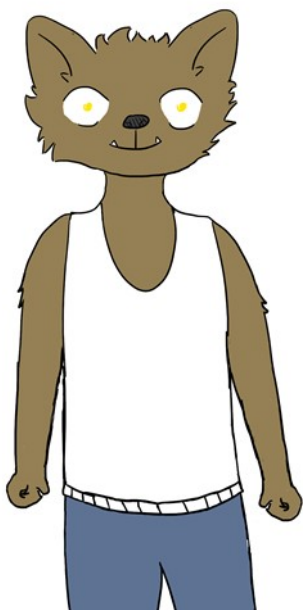
They walked in silence for a while, not knowing what to say. Well, at least it was a nice day for a walk in the forest. The crimson and auburn foliage was a magnificent sight, as this was the season known as autumn. There was a gentle breeze, creating the single sound of rustling leaves. The two kept on walking in the beautiful weather where birds were singing sweet melodies.

Suddenly, they heard the sound of a twig breaking.

“Was that you John?” asked Indra.

John shook his head signalling no. They ignored it and kept walking. Along the way, they looked at places to build a small house. John was getting tired, and so was Indra. They were also getting **hungry**, but they kept on walking.

After a few minutes, they heard a low growling sound. They



were beginning to get scared when out of nowhere, a werewolf jumped in front of them. He had golden eyes, like never seen before, reminding them both of gold mines. He was tall, strong and looked cunning. However, he also seemed quite friendly.

“Hey, visitors, welcome to my forest! My name is Wesley. So nice to see you,” Wesley introduced himself.

“Hi, my name is Indra, and this is my best mate John. He can’t speak and he lost his job,” replied a saddened Indra.

“Oh, don’t worry about it John, everything will be fine, I hope you become very successful and become your own boss.” said Wesley, “Hey, why don’t you two come to my house for a feast? You look like you’re starving.”

They both agreed instantly. And why wouldn’t they, when their stomach was like a black hole that could even gobble up light? Wesley told them to enjoy the sunshine, while he got everything ready. They found themselves resting at the side of a large oak tree, admiring the beauty of the woods that surrounded them.

“It’s been a while, should we go look for Wesley?” asked Indra. John nodded in agreement. Wesley did leave a card.

“Let’s go find him, I’m starving!”

## Chapter III: The Best Tea Party

John and Indra walked past the fairy mushrooms. The temptation to take one with him was large but Indra held him back. He stopped to make a puppy eyed face but she ignored his reaction and kept walking, following the dirt path towards the small plain distinctively covered in wild plants that would scratch at your ankles, and fallen petals from the flowering gum trees. The afternoon was quite warm, with the sun almost melting the two into liquid icy poles and the forests were alive with the sound of crickets echoing from the unexplored bushland.

Indra took a look at the card, a bit useless with only a description and no address of where the tea party was going to be held. She kept going until realising she could only hear her footsteps, finding John leaning against a tree with his face flushed.



*'My legs are hurting like crazy Indra, where's the tea party? I'm so **hungry** I could eat a horse.'* signed John, his annoyance written on his face.

"Hold your horses, we're almost there," Indra replied and speaking of the devil, Wesley's silhouette appeared in the distance.



“My, my. Welcome to the tea party! You have arrived and just on time too. Please,” Wesley gestured towards the long table, “take a seat.” A beautiful polished wooden table was lined with all sorts of savoury and sweet treats. It was centered in the middle of the green grass with a clear cover protecting the wood. The strong aroma wafted towards John and Indra, making the stomachs growl. There were cake stands covered in lamingtons, and small boxes of Tim Tams, plates of fairy bread and Vegemite covered toasts, freshly baked Anzac biscuits, party pies and a drink dispenser filled with Milo.

John’s eyes became lanterns in the shape of hearts, throwing Indra an eager look. His taste buds begged for a savour of the food in front of them and the three stood awkwardly for a bit before she gave him a nod, and John dug in.

The juggler scoured over the table, grabbing a plate and piling it with food when he came to a realisation that whatever he took, it would regenerate. An infinite supply. He walked to the cake stands, grabbing a lamington and smirking as he watched another one form, taking that piece too. He took bites out of it while moving down to the plates of fairy bread, grabbing a few of those and then a cup of Milo. He watched the dispenser bubble its way back up and sat down laughing like a child.

“What’s he doing?” Wesley asked, a bit concerned. Indra turned her head, covering her mouth with petite mannerisms as she swallowed her food.

“He’s laughing,” she says blatantly. “Since he’s mute it’ll sound a little different, but regardless, it’s good he’s happy.”

“Oh I see, you learn something new everyday don’t ya?” The conversation ended and Wesley picked up an Anzac biscuit, the both of them admiring the scenery of their surroundings.

“Nice weather we’re having today,” Wesley spoke up in an

attempt to break the silence. The others nodded, before going back to diminishing their food.

*'Feels like we're melting but the Milo is keeping us from becoming a river of sweat,'* John laughs, barely able to sign his words as he chugged some raspberry cordial to avoid choking on his food. Wesley let out a howl as his elongated canines peeked out from the edges, and Indra could barely stop wheezing at his weak attempt at a joke.

They could definitely get used to this.

## Chapter IV: Getting Fit

Indra dabbed at her lips with the serviette before getting up from the table.

“That was lovely, thanks Wes,” she smiled. But Wesley didn’t respond; instead he observed John, who was eating his fifth serving of fairy bread. He had downed the most during the tea party and it worried Wesley to the point where he snatched the plate off John’s hand.

“Wesley!” Indra cried, running to John’s aid as the juggler stared in shock.

“This is not good for you,” Wesley assured, placing the plate on the seat beside him. Indra nodded slowly as John wiped his hands on a paper towel.

*“But I’m **hungry**,” He pouted. “..and the fairy bread here hits different,”*

Indra bit back a laugh but gave him a reassuring smile.

“I can see that, John,” she said. “But you have to stop stress eating. It’s not good for you.”

Wesley stayed quiet but walked around the table whilst clicking multiple buttons and weirdly-adjusted contraptions. At the flick of a switch, the food flipped over and an inbuilt vacuum sucked the crumbs and leftovers off. Wesley pulled a mini lever that was fixed to the ground and the food was back to where they started.

“Wow,” Indra exclaimed. The girl stared at the freshly baked food, looking just as good as what they had arrived to. The scent of freshly baked pies once again perfumed the air. The stacks of fairy bread were placed in a pyramid-like orientation

and bottles of raspberry cordial glowed underneath the afternoon sun.

*"Delicious,"* John signed. Indra shook her head as the trio started to head out into a sitting area. Mushrooms the size of chairs were sprouted near the end of the clearing. Wesley jumped on and smiled as the others took their own seats.

"We need a plan if our goal is **getting fit** and living our best life," he announced as he shifted his weight onto one arm, a makeshift toothpick in the other.

"A fitness plan," his eyes shone as he tried to contain his excitement. John and Indra swapped questioning glances as the werewolf on the ground drew something in the dirt.

*A what?* Indra thought. Wesley didn't hold back but leaped towards stray sticks and rocks and tried to collect as many art supplies as possible. He recalled seeing a few paint bugs around but for now, less colour would do.

*"What's he doing?"* John signed, observing their furry friend as he used sticks and stones to add minor details.

"It looks like a visualisation of his idea," Indra said, although it was unclear from where she sat. The blur of lines was hard to decipher but she could make out the faint outline of a treadmill.

"Ta da!" Wesley yelled as he gestured towards the large scale drawing. The image was clearer now and John saw the drawing of a bunch of gym equipment and a list of possible exercises. He observed a particular drawing that looked a lot like where they were sitting, except the large mushroom chair had been turned into some sort of exercise equipment.

"A DIY bench press station?" Indra piped up, almost as if she read his mind.

“Yes, ma’am,” Wesley responded with a grin. He added a border so that the idea stood out more. It would be an understatement to say he was proud of it.

“No can do,” Indra crossed her arms. “It’s a good idea though,”

Wesley’s ear drooped down at an angle as the **light** in his eyes dimmed down.

“Why not?”

*“We can’t spend time making a gym, Wes,”* John gestured, *“We just want to build a house.”* His eyebrows were knitted together and lips stayed pursed, Indra agreed.

“As John said, we don’t have the time or energy to make a gym, and use it straight after,” her eyes avoided eye contact with Wesley as she explained. “We could always upgrade later if things go well.”

The werewolf slumped down. He wasn’t mad of course, but he felt a small tinge of sadness as the duo rejected his idea.

“Anyway, I have a second idea,” He chirped, trying to mask the woeful tone with a cheesy smile. “A fitness plan without the equipment.” He pointed towards the second half of the drawing with a list of exercises.

Wesley's exercises

10 minute run

30 squats

10 sit ups

John liked the way it sounded. An equipment-less gym sounded much more easy to carry out and it wouldn’t matter where they were.

“Sounds like a plan,” Indra smiled as John used his **whistle** to mark his approval. Wesley’s ears pricked up at the newfound appreciation and he soaked in the praise with a happy heart.

“For starters, who’s up for a run?”

## Chapter V: House Of Requirement

“This is good for you, you know?” Wesley chirped as he jumped ahead of John and Indra, the bitter cold biting at the juggler’s skin every minute not fazing the **bubbly** werewolf in the slightest. Another breeze swept through, bringing with it another shiver that wracked John’s body as he found himself envying the thick fur that lined Wesley’s skin, wishing for nothing more than something that would keep him warm at that moment.

*‘We’ve been walking for an hour’* he signed with his fingers in frustration, eyeing the thin streaks of **light** that filtered through the heavy canopy of trees, bits of the sky illuminated in hues of orange and purple by the setting sun. *‘The only thing this walking is doing is annoying me.’*

A muffled laugh came from beside him, Indra apparently finding the situation funny. He scowled at the girl, conveying his visible indignation, yet she merely smiled and kept walking, saying, “He says that all this walking is annoying him.”

“Just keep going for a few more minutes. We’re almost there,” the werewolf mumbled, swiping through a thick clump of bushes with his paws, clearing the area. “It should be through this.”

John’s eyebrows furrowed. Wesley, so conveniently, decided to tell John *now* that they were walking through the woods with a purpose. He genuinely thought the werewolf was trying his hardest to annoy the juggler.

Did Indra know about their destination too?

His lips clamped around the silver piece of metal hanging around his neck as he blew, the shrill noise of the **whistle**

bouncing off the plants around them and effectively causing Wesley to stop and turn around, eyebrow raised in a look of query.

*'Where are we going?'* John signed, using the opportunity to quicken his pace and catch up to the werewolf.

"Legend has it that there's a house in these woods." Indra spoke before Wesley had the chance to as she caught up to two of them. "Know of Harry Potter, John?"

John sighed in exasperation, signing *'Who doesn't?'*. What did she take him to be? A guy living under some rock?

He might be mute, but he made sure to stay up to date with everything happening in the world.

"That house is called the 'House of Requirement'," Indra smiled warmly. "It's rumoured to possess whatever the finder is looking for."

"It should be through this bush here," Wesley spoke, jabbing a thumb towards the cluster of bushes, surrounding what seemed like an entrance to some sort of tunnel.

It was your typical, mysterious-entrance-to-a-lost-land kind of thing, complete with the purple and white flowers adorning the sides of the tunnel, with little patches of **light** green moss showing up in random places.

It was so fairytale-like that John had to turn to Indra, signing *'Are you seeing what I'm seeing?'* for the confirmation that this wasn't just some dream.

Indra proceeded to give him a smile, indeed confirming that he was not dreaming, and that beauties like this existed in the world. It made him wonder; if the tunnel itself was so fascinating what would they find on the other side?

Wesley turned around and disappeared into the tunnel, John and Indra following close behind.



The whole time (which wasn't very long, for the tunnel was quite short), John was admiring the view on the other side, the opening of the tunnel letting him see more and more of the new world with each step he took, like a rapidly expanding picture.

The second John stepped out of the tunnel and into a plain field, he was hit with how *warm* the air was, nothing like the chilly breeze on the other side of the tunnel. The goosebumps on his skin had receded, and his mood had instantly brightened, the change in the weather doing wonders.

But what amazed him the most, was the cute little cottage that stood in the middle of the clearing, cream walls and a red tiled roof giving off classic fairy-tale vibes. Vines crawled up the walls, wrapping around the house as if protecting it.

Yet, as much as the house looked adorable, John doubted it would have what he needed.

A gym.

The cottage was far too small to accommodate a full-sized gym, but a sliver of hope still lingered in his mind as he followed Wesley and Indra into the cottage.

John found that the house, despite looking like a small cottage from the outside, was in fact a massive house, complete with a living room (which had a fireplace too),



kitchen (John was slightly disappointed at the lack of fairy bread in the pantry, finding vegetables and fruit instead) and three bedrooms with en suite bathrooms (which were all furnished with everything that the three needed).

Despite having a rather comfortable home, John couldn't explain the heavy feeling in his chest at the absence of a gym; the very reason he agreed to all of this.

He trudged dejectedly towards the back of the house, hoping for some fresh air, but noticed a door leading to a room that the three had not seen before.

Curiosity was evident in every step he took towards the room, the sliver of hope morphing into much more.

'Please be a gym, please be a gym' he pleaded in his mind, as he twisted the handle and the door swung open, revealing the very thing John had wished for. He could not contain the inexplicable excitement that formed inside of him, and in spite of being mute, a sound conveying his happiness escaped his lips.

A whole gym, with every single kind of machine John had ever dreamed about. From rowing machines to bench presses to treadmills; it was like a dream come true for John.

Almost in a trance-like state, he went around the room, touching every piece of machinery there was. He strode over to the chest press machine and tried it; it didn't work. It felt off, didn't sit right with him. He did that with a couple of other machines, yet they resulted in the same feeling.

Discontentment.

Sometime during that, Indra and Wesley had found the room, yet John was too busy ogling a specific piece of equipment - one that he had seen countless times on the internet, and one which he had not tried yet - to care.

He made his way over to the machine almost cautiously, and clicked a few buttons, the machine whirring to life. And at that moment, he knew.

He had found what he was looking for; a treadmill.

## Chapter VI: Sweet Success

“Treadmill,” Indra smiled. “John likes the treadmill.”

John nodded eagerly in confirmation, the **whistle** hanging off his neck bouncing with the simple movement. He liked the pleasant sensation of it thudding against his chest; it was comforting to be constantly reminded that he still had it in his possession and could use it in case of danger. Not that he would be in danger around Wesley and Indra, both of whom were as non-threatening as ice-cream cones. But the thought was reassuring nonetheless.

“Great, we can get you started right away, then,” Wesley exclaimed while clapping his hands. His **gold** eyes burned brighter under the fluorescent tube lights, an embodiment of the sun itself, and the fur on his skin stood on end to display his excitement.

The other machinery littering the room vanished at the werewolf’s clap, leaving only three treadmills lined against the wall facing the floor-to-ceiling windows. The view of the sunset when they’d arrived earlier had been magnificent, but under the **light** of the moon, the forestry and foliage glowed silver. It magnified the surreal beauty of the woodland John had come to adore.

John allowed Wesley to lead him to the treadmill in the middle while the werewolf and Indra took up the machines either side of him. After fidgeting around with the buttons and knobs and dials, John had the perfect setting; neither too slow, nor too fast. It wasn’t a walk, but it wasn’t a sprint. A **light**, simple jog. Nice and easy, John thought.

Together, the three newfound friends began their running on the treadmill, keeping steady pace beside each other. It was quiet except for their heavy breathing, but John preferred it that way.



Living his whole life being mute, silence was almost family. It gave space for his thoughts to come alive and run rampant, gave him opportunities to discover hidden parts of himself, made him feel liberated.

John, Indra and Wesley decided upon taking up residence at the House of Requirement until John was fit and healthy, and felt good enough to return to society.

It is said that time flies by quickly when you're having fun, and John hadn't understood the expression until he had started to spend all of his time with Indra and Wesley. It had been half a year since Pantomime had gone bankrupt. 6 months since him and Indra had met Wesley. 26 weeks since the three had taken up residence in the House of Requirement. 182 days since John had started using the treadmill.

Out of the 4380 hours, John worked out for about 2000 of them. And it had helped. A lot. He was growing fitter by the day, and had lost most of his body fat. It had been very difficult to keep himself focused, to keep himself exercising and not give up, but Indra and Wesley kept encouraging and supporting him, always by his side to remind him how

important it was for his health. Gradually, the gym room had grown bigger to accommodate for other machinery and equipment so John could keep up a healthy lifestyle and keep all areas of his body fit. There was even a yoga mat, that Indra had insisted upon, next to a stereo that blasted any kind of music they liked.

They had begun to venture out of the forest too; it was important for John to find a job so he wouldn't have to rely on the House of Requirement at all times. Independence meant a lot to him, and being dependent on a house for so long could lead to the formation of a bad habit. Hence, it was important to find a job and become more self-reliant.

"There's an opening for a barista at a café nearby," Indra commented, reading something off her phone one day as the three of them lounged on their own armchairs in the House of Requirement's living room. Indra's armchair was red and plushy, made of fabric. Wesley's was a shade of midnight blue, but firm and made of leather because fabric made his fur itch. John's was a mixture of both; soft but not sinking-soft, firm but not hard, and a purple hue.

*'No thanks,'* John signed. *'Any news about a circus?'*

"No," Wesley replied, having learned sign language to make Indra's life easier. "But what if you become an entertainer for customers at the café Indra's talking about?"

*'That does sound nice,'* John responded, a thoughtful expression on his face.

And that's how John found himself walking to the café one morning, Indra by his side and a clearly missing Wesley whom he'd grown quite attached to. It wasn't like Wesley could come with them anyway; his furry problem might not give the best impression to people, despite how kind and **bubbly** the werewolf was.

Luckily for John, the manager of the café was more than happy to welcome him on board. Bit by bit, he started saving up money to buy his own house and furnish it with the same gym equipment he used at the House of Requirement on a daily basis. He had also started to come to terms with the fact that once he moved, it would be difficult to maintain contact with Wesley.

But John promised to buy a house close to the forest so they could all meet up at least once every month and have their tea parties. Indra would continue living with John and work alongside him as a comfort too so Wesley's absence wouldn't be felt as much.

On the last day of John living at the House of Requirement, the three friends once again took to running on the treadmills together, John in the middle and the other two either side for old times' sake. It was difficult to believe years had passed since they'd first met; John had only just begun the journey to achieving his dreams, leaving the trauma of Pantomime in the past. He still had a long way to go, but he was slowly building himself into the person he was meant to be.

When he looked back on their time together, John couldn't believe how far he'd come; his odyssey to the road of fitness had introduced him to friends that would last a lifetime. If the circus hadn't burned down, he would probably still be lazing around, only using his body to juggle in shows. He considered it the start of his new life.

He owed it all to Pantomime.



A whimsical world where fairytales meet the land Down Under.

After losing his job at the Pantomime circus due to a freak accident that turned the circus into ashes, John the juggler turns to binge eating to cope with his problems. The mute man leaves his old life and sets off on a quest to get fit with his interpreter, Indra. In a fairytale warped world the duo encounter werewolves, enchanting tea parties and giant mushrooms with a dash of Aussie goodness.