

Home > Education > Reading

The 65-Storey Treehouse gets even sillier

SHARE

Caroline Berdon | Aug 13 2015 at 8:28 AM



Andy Griffiths' spent seven hours signing books for his biggest fans. *Photo: Andrew Vincent*

When adding extra levels to the Treehouse in his books, author Andy Griffiths says he likes to feel like he's "walking a trapeze without a safety net".

"We're getting sillier and bigger," he says of his next instalment, *The 65-Storey Treehouse*, in which Andy and Terry (Denton, the illustrator) go on another crazy, dangerous adventure instead of writing their book.

"I like to raise the bar in difficulty for me and Terry every time we write."

The new book, aimed like the others at children aged between six and 12, is certainly ambitious, taking readers on a time travel adventure, from 650 million years ago to 650 million years into the future.

"I wasn't sure we could pull that off," smiles the author, who as a 53-year-old looks remarkably like he does as a 10-year-old in his books - small, with a constant smirk.

In the new model of treehouse, there is also a lollipop shop, a birthday room (where it's always your birthday), a quicksand pit and a room full of exploding eyeballs.

Sitting aghast at the description of the 13 new storeys added since the last book, *The 52-Storey Treehouse*, are six-year-old fans Aaron and Emmeline.

They eagerly make suggestions for the new book. Emmeline's keen for a storey full of monkey bars, while Aaron's after a level devoted to Karate, another for Minecraft, and a "make-me-strong machine".

Griffiths admits he doesn't really know what Minecraft is, but the machine gets a thumb up.

Trending



Why I'm glad I sent my son to a single sex school



My son's school is forcing him to sign this unfair contract



Starting age for first year of school



The perfect family road trip soundtrack

Sponsored

"That's a great idea, because if I was having an argument with Terry in the book, I might just get him and squeeze him until his head popped off. That would be cool."

But despite the fantastical images of new storeys and contraptions, Aaron is left with one niggling question for the author: "Why are you in the book?"

Griffiths has appeared in all his books since his first, *Just Tricking*, in 1997. His inspiration, he says, came from Jerry Seinfeld, who starred in his own sitcom.

"It felt normal to write about myself. That was the only way I could get myself to believe my stories.

"I was nervous in my first book, I thought people won't think this is proper writing but I don't care. It feels right and it's funny so I trust it."

His instinct paid off. The 52-Storey Treehouse was Australia's top selling book last year, according to Nielsen Bookscan. And next year's 78-Storey Treehouse is already in the works.

Griffiths and Denton have now collaborated on a total of 27 books. And in real life, they've never had an argument.

It's not just the characters Andy and Terry who are borrowed from real life. Jill, their animal-loving neighbour in the series, is Griffiths' wife, co-writer and editor. And Silky the cat was once their pet.

Mr Big Nose, however, is pure fiction. Griffiths' publisher, he tells the kids, is female, and with a very small nose - "like a full stop".

"She never gets mad at us, either," he smirks.

Griffiths wants his books to appeal equally to girls and boys, and relies on his wife to help him balance the plot.

"Terry and I will think it's hilariously funny to have someone hurtling through space for 10 pages and Jill will come in and say, 'I really like conversation and feelings!'"

He also makes sure Jill is a strong and active participant in the adventures.

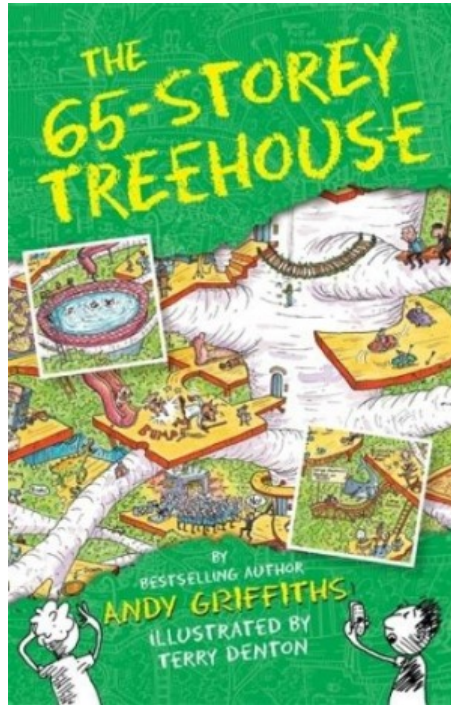
It's she, for example, who will jump into the shark tank to rescue the sharks from the underpants they've swallowed, while the boys stand around a bit scared.

Again, Griffiths smirks. "It really reflects how the world works anyway."

* *The 65-Storey Treehouse* by Andy Griffiths, published by Pan Macmillan, is out now, RRP \$A12.99.

AAP

SHARE



The 65-storey treehouse is out now. Photo: Macmillan Australia

In Pictures



Last minute Christmas gift ideas for kids



10 chocolate-free advent calendars for kids



10 best advent calendars for adults



The top 20 toys kids will be begging for this Christmas

Need a nanny or babysitter?

Search Australia's largest database for free in your area

Recommended