



THE EST CAT

BEST CAT

THE



Media Release



STATE LIBRARY®
NEW SOUTH WALES

NSW State Library launches its first children’s book

The Best Cat, the Est Cat by Libby Hathorn, illustrated by Rosie Handley



A FIRST!

The State Library of NSW — Australia’s oldest library — has teamed up with one of our most loved children’s authors, Libby Hathorn, to create the Library’s very first children’s picture book. It will launch on Thursday 4 November 2021.

The Best Cat, the Est Cat stars a mysterious talking cat who takes two children and readers on a rollicking adventure through the State Library. They are chased by ghosts and spy many amazing treasures, before finally learning the Best Cat’s secret. The story will form the basis of many wonderful activities planned for children here at the Library.

WHY A CAT AND WHY EST?

Libby Hathorn has written over 80 books for children and young adults, most recently winning the CBCA Picture Book of the Year Award, Early Readers, 2021.

“Writing a story for children to showcase the State Library’s extraordinary collection was a huge, almost frightening, task,” said Libby.

“How was I to whisk kids around a place so large and so packed with weird and wonderful Australian treasures, unless I used some kind of magic?”

With books to the ceiling, books to the floor. Sure, you’ll want to linger, but there’s more, so much more...

“Then a magic cat (one with real ties to the Library) and the EST idea came to me,” said Libby. “It really seemed to be a winner as kids love secrets, and they like the idea ‘ests’ -the biggest and the smallest, the weirdest and the funniest, even the pooiest!

The finest, the bravest, the boldest, the best, in a box or a drawer, a cupboard or chest.



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SO MANY ARCHIVES

A giant floor map, an ear trumpet, a hundred-year-old message in a bottle, a death mask and a necklace made of hair are just some of the curiosities the Best Cat introduces to his young friends.

With so many hidden corridors, sets of stairs and underground stacks (seven floors below street level!), the Library is a place you can easily get lost in... making it the perfect setting for a children's adventure story.

ARTIST AT WORK

The Best Cat, the Est Cat was a 'dream job' for first-time book illustrator Rosie Handley, who is a graphic designer at the Library. She admits to getting lost there on more than one occasion. Her beautiful illustrations — a unique blend of collage, digital artwork and sketching — capture that sense of wonder of seeing the Library for the very first time and provide a fascinating behind-the-scenes glimpse of one of the great libraries of the world.

A STORY AND A LIBRARY FOR CHILDREN AND OTHERS...

According to State Librarian John Vallance, "The Library holds so many stories, pictures and records of historical firsts, and we are thrilled to be adding our very first children's picture book to the collection. We hope that readers young and older enjoy this charming tale and realise that this Library is their Library with so many things to see and do."

The Best Cat, the Est Cat (RRP \$24.95) is available from October 2021.

Purchase your signed copy from the Library Shop by 31 December 2021 and go in the draw to **WIN** a special behind-the-scenes tour of the State Library with Libby Hathorn and Rosie Handley.

Visit sl.nsw.gov.au/bestcat [to be launched in October 2021]

For more information about Libby Hathorn, visit: libbyhathorn.com.au

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