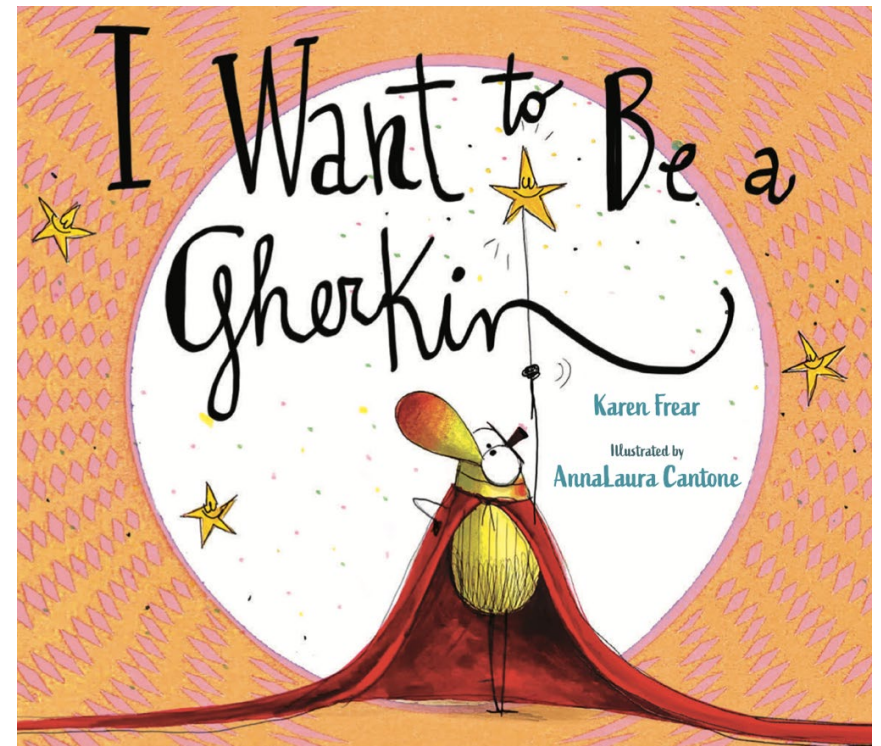


## I Want to Be a Gherkin Teaching Notes

Author: Karen Frear  
Illustrator: AnnaLaura Cantone

### Synopsis:

In the land of Pickleton, a Gherkin is a Gherkin, and a Dill is a Dill, and that's how it's always been. But Dilbert feels differently – he doesn't feel like a Dill! He'd prefer to learn magic tricks than lift bricks. But when he shares his feelings with the other pickles, they all brush him off. Will Dilbert be able to show the pickles his true self? A beautiful story about acceptance and identity that features expressive, joyous artwork.



In the classroom:

### Questioning

Below are some suggested questions you might like to ask as you read the text. These questions are aimed at promoting discussion and as such, may have multiple answers.

#### Before Reading

- Make a prediction about what you think this story might be about and give your reason.
- What clues do the front cover and blurb give about the book?
- Discuss the words 'gherkin' and 'dill' and what they mean. Show images to the class.

#### During Reading

##### Literal Questions

- How are the gherkins and dills described in the book?
- Where does Dilbert live?
- What was the name of the Prince?
- How many characters did Dilbert speak to before Ginger listened to him?
- What did Dilbert want to do?
- How did Dilbert feel at the start of the book?
- How did Gigi feel at the end of the book?
- Why did the Prince change his mind about Gigi?

#### After Reading

- What do you like/dislike about this book and why?
- Why were the dills and gherkins so dismissive of Dilbert when he said he wanted to be gherkin?
- Have you ever felt alone or like you did not fit in?
- What does it mean to feel "truly yourself"?
- How can we make others feel included, like Ginger did for Dilbert in the story?
- What could the pickles and gherkins be a metaphor for in real life?
- What could the butterfly character represent in the story?
- What does "deep down in my gut" mean?
- What are you good at or what do you want to try that others might not know about?
- Why do you think Dilbert wanted to change their name to Gigi?

### Activities:

- Language - create a Word Wall. Suggestions for key words include - inclusive, alone, stereotype, bias, judgmental, metamorphosis, kindness
- Health/wellbeing - role play scenarios. Suggestions include how can we include others, how can we show active listening, how does it feel when others don't listen to you, how can we see things from other people's points of view, how could the dills and gherkins have reacted more positively and supportive to Dilbert
- Grammar lesson - highlight the nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, rhyming words and use of repetition and poetic devices in the book
- Advertising - create a poster advertising Gigi's new magic act
- Health/Wellbeing - create a 'Truly me' poster that includes words and images that show who you are as a person, what you like, what things are important to you
- Visual art – create a before and after collage of Dilbert/Gigi showcasing their emotions and feelings, using words, images, colours, shapes
- Drama – re-create the performance as a Readers Theatre

Health/wellbeing – each student writes their name on a page and the teacher collects them. The sheets are then distributed around the class, where students write a kind message about the person on the sheet. Repeat until the sheet is full. At the end, return the sheet to the original person, so they can see all of the kind things that people have written about them.

### **About the author:**

Karen Frear has always been a book worm. To this day, she spends hours tucked up under a rug reading, allowing her imagination to travel to faraway worlds. Born in Australia, Karen has a bachelor's in media and a Master of Teaching. She is currently a Primary School teacher, where she loves reading stories and picture books to her students. Through her teaching and stories, Karen dreams of encouraging all children to embrace their uniqueness, individuality, and weirdness!

### **About the illustrator:**

AnnaLaura Cantone is an illustrator from Alessandria, Italy. Since graduating from the European Institute of Design, Milan, Anna Laura has become a prolific and well-respected artist. She won numerous awards and recognition for her artwork, including the 2003 Andersen Prize and having work selected at major book fairs. Anna Laura's work has been published internationally, gaining much praise. She has also worked within the film and TV industry and currently teaches illustration.