

## Strictly Come Writing with Maisie Chan!

Explore what is important to you with  
*Keep Dancing, Lizzie Chu!*



**Level:**

P5–P7 / KS2

**Explore themes of:**

√ Overcoming Challenges √ Responsibilities √ Favourite Things √ Finding Inspiration

**Subject Checklist:**

√ Creative Writing √ Expressive Arts √ English Language √ Health & Well-being

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**At a Glance**

*Before watching Maisie's event or reading the extract!*

1. Do you recognise the phrase 'keep dancing'? Where from? Why is this a good philosophy in life?
2. Why do you think it might be important for Lizzie Chu to 'keep dancing'?
3. What are your favourite things? Which TV shows, hobbies or books inspire you?

### Book Cover Activity: My Own Glitter ball!

Look at the glitter ball on the front cover of the book. Think about what the glitter ball symbolises. In a circular template, write down words that spring to mind when you look at the glitter ball on the cover of *Keep Dancing, Lizzie Chu*. Consider the following categories:

- *Colours*
- *Feelings*
- *Memories*
- *Thoughts*

What might the glitter ball represent in the story? Share ideas with your classmates!

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### Read the Extract

*Taken from Chapter One of 'Keep Dancing, Lizzie Chu'.*

### Discussion Questions

1. How does Lizzie feel about Saturdays? Is there anything she likes about Saturdays?
2. What is Lizzie's relationship with Wai Gong? How can you tell? Pick out quotes or sections from the text to back up your ideas.
3. Why do you think Lizzie knitted the scarf for Wai Gong?
4. Do you think Lizzie is a responsible person? How does she care for Wai Gong? Find examples.
5. What is 'grief'? How have Lizzie and Wai Gong each experienced their grief?
6. Who is Guan Jin? What does this reference tell you about Lizzie and Wai Gong's cultural identities?
7. How does the author, Maisie Chan, create humour and warmth in Chapter 1, despite the bad things that happen?
8. What challenges do you think Lizzie and Wai Gong face together? What sort of 'weekly budget' do they have? Where do they live?
9. What can you tell about Lizzie from the items that were in her shopping bag?
10. What are your first impressions of Lizzie? What sort of person is she? Find key words and descriptions in the extract.



## Get to Know the Author and the Book!

### Cross-Generational Relationships

*Twelve-year-old Lizzie Chu lives in Glasgow with her granddad Wai Gong, and he's been acting a little strange lately. Lizzie is worried about Wai Gong, but doesn't really know what to do to help him...*

- What do you know about Maisie Chan? How have her own experiences or relationships influenced the story that she has written?
- In the book, Lizzie is a carer for her granddad. She has a lot on her plate! Make a list of the different responsibilities that Lizzie has – both for Wai Gong and for herself.
- First, draw a template of a plate. On the plate, write down all of the things Lizzie has to do for her granddad.
- You might want to split your plate into the sections below:
  - *Emotional Responsibilities*
  - *Practical Responsibilities*
  - *Personal Responsibilities*
- Now think about your own responsibilities in life. Create your own plate. Do you also care for members of your family and try to do things to help them?
- What are your own relationships with your grandparents? Share pictures and describe your relationships to a friend or a classmate.
- Finally, think about how it feels to have lots of responsibilities in life. Write a diary entry from Lizzie's point of view. Imagine she is going to bed after the events in Chapter 1. How does she feel about the day?

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## Your Turn: What's Important to Me?

### My favourite things...

*Lizzie decides to try to help Wai Gong by taking him on the trip of a lifetime, to Blackpool – to the Tower Ballroom. This is a place he always longed to go, to dance with Grandma Kam, to rekindle that love for dancing. But can it help Wai Gong find his mojo again?*

- Sometimes, appreciating our favourite things can help us to feel better when we are stressed or worried. During lockdown, for example, Maisie loved watching *Strictly Come Dancing* as it made her very happy in an uncertain time.
- Write a list of challenges that you face in your own life. They can be big or small. Look at the below to see some examples!
  - *I have lots of exams that make me feel stressed out.*
  - *I am worried about what is happening on the news.*
  - *I haven't had time to do my homework.*
  - *I have had an argument with a friend or a sibling.*
- Then, think about some of your favourite things in the whole world. What makes you happy? How can these things help you with your challenges?
- Write your favourite things down and cut them out. Place them in a jar, a bag, or a box. This way, you can keep them safe. Whenever you feel like you need some inspiration, you can always open up your jar to help you feel better!
- Choose one of your favourite things (it might be a TV show, like *Strictly Come Dancing*). Prepare a short presentation about why it is important to you or how it inspires you. Turn your presentation into a plan for a story of your own.

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## Reflection and Further Questions

### Reflection Activity

*Think over all that you have learned. Perhaps you have been reflected on the responsibilities that you face in your own life? Or you've come up with a list of your favourite things to help you overcome challenges, and even write a story of your own...*

*Design a front cover for a book about your favourite thing or the thing that makes you happy in times of uncertainty. Consider what imagery you will use and how it will make readers feel. Come up with an inspirational title for your book!*

Lastly, do you have any final questions you would like to ask Maisie if you got the chance? Try to think of at least two and make a note of them.

Keep your eye out for more awesome books from Maisie Chan, as well as the other authors from the Edinburgh International Book Festival!



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