

STARS IN THEIR EYES

by **JESSICA WALTON** and **AŠKA**

ABOUT THE BOOK

Being a queer, disabled teenager with chronic pain comes with challenges. Can Maisie make it through a day at Fancon without falling over, falling in love or accidentally inspiring anyone?

Maisie has always dreamed of meeting her hero, Kara Bufano, an amputee actor who plays a kick-arse amputee character in her favourite show. Fancon is big and exciting and exhausting. Then she meets Ollie, a cute volunteer who she has a lot in common with. Could this be the start of something, or will her mum, who doesn't seem to know what boundaries are, embarrass her before she and Ollie have a chance?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jessica Walton is a queer, disabled writer and teacher. She is the author of picture book *Introducing Teddy* (Bloomsbury 2016), as well as a range of short stories published in anthologies for kids and teens. She co-wrote an episode of *Get Crack!n* focused on disability, which aired on the ABC and is featured in the anthologies *Meet Me At the Intersection* (Fremantle Press 2019) and *Growing Up Disabled in Australia* (Black Inc Books 2020)



ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Aška is an energetic illustrator, storyteller and science communicator. She has illustrated nine books and is a regular contributor to *The School Magazine* and other children's publications. Aška believes visual literacy is one of the most important skills in today's world and she loves projects which explore new ways of communicating and presenting ideas with images.



THEMES FOR DISCUSSION

- This Own Voice graphic novel about a bisexual amputee with chronic pain and anxiety arrives at a time when there has never been a greater need – or demand – for diverse, authentic representation in Australian literature for young people.
- Jessica is keen to discuss diverse books with a focus on disability and bi/queer representation and the need for diverse books in libraries and classrooms. She would like to discuss disability and ableism and the prevailing attitudes around these in the Australian education system. She believes there is still a real gap in major festivals which rarely make space for discussions about disability.



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