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opening extract from

# Play the Shape Game

written by

## Anthony Browne

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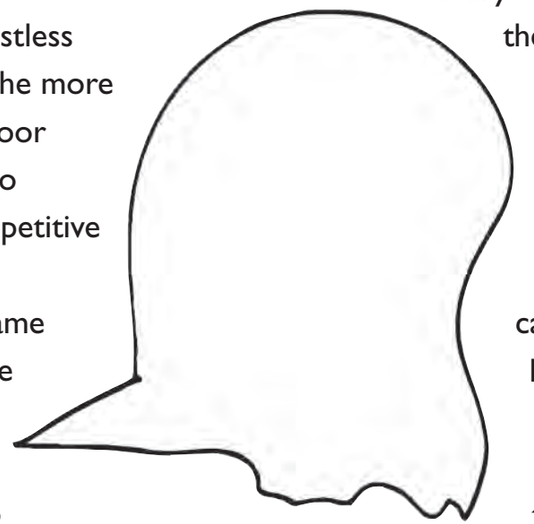
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When my brother, Michael, and I were children, we invented two games.

The first involved throwing a ball to the top of the stairs, watching it bounce back down, and then catching it before it reached the ground. We played this game on many wet afternoons in West Yorkshire – a listless alternative to the more energetic outdoor pursuits for two bored but competitive little boys.

The other game we invented, the Shape Game, was far more interesting – so interesting, in fact, that I'm still playing it to this day. The rules of the Shape Game are very simple: the first player quickly draws any abstract shape at random, the second looks at it and then transforms it into something recognizable. It could be anything – a face, a dinosaur or a fried egg. It could be a doodle or a work of fine art. When we were children, Michael and I thought this game was our invention, but having spoken to children all over the world, I have since discovered that children everywhere know it and play their own versions.



*(The shape everyone started with.)*

The wonderful thing about the Shape Game is that anyone with a little bit of imagination can join in. You don't have to be good at drawing to play and transform a shape. In this book, you'll find drawings by 45 well-known people, including artists, but also authors, actors, sports people, comedians and musicians. I gave them all exactly the same shape to play with, but as you'll see, their imaginations have led them in totally different directions. They have also drawn new shapes for you to transform, so you can join in and play the Shape Game along with us. Like the players in this book, you can use any materials, from a basic felt-tip pen to paints, crayons or collage. Turn the paper upside down or sideways, take as much or as little time as you want – simply let your imagination run wild and have fun!

All the proceeds from this book will be donated to Rainbow Trust Children's Charity, which provides vital support to families who have a child with a life threatening or terminal illness. I'm delighted about this because as Children's Laureate I want to help and connect with children everywhere, and encourage them to use their imaginations and be creative. Although it's just a simple game, I believe the Shape Game is the perfect way to do this. It encapsulates the act of creativity – inspiration is everywhere.

I have played the Shape Game in every single book I have made, and now you have the chance to join in and play it, too. I hope you enjoy looking at the shapes in the book, and will love playing the Shape Game as much as I have!

Anthony Browne

Anthony Browne

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JAN PIEŃKOWSKI



Jan Pieńkowski

ROB RYAN



MICHAEL FOREMAN



Hip, Hippo Hooray for the Rainbow Trust!

michaelforeman 2010

QUENTIN BLAKE



# SIR PETER BLAKE



'Man in a Rainbow Hat' — For Rainbow Trust. Peter Blake. 2010.