

Summary of narrative perspectives:

Third person narrative: When a narrator tells the story as if watching from an invisible point and the narrator is able to see several characters in several places. (e.g. While Ben slept, Elise began her preparations in the kitchen . . .)

Omniscient third person narration: This narrator knows everything and does not seem to be involved or biased in any way, though every narrative has some bias.

Free indirect style is another kind of third person narration: Sometimes called 'close third person' or 'going into character' meaning that the narrator inhabits a character and sees the world through their eyes. In this case, we develop insights about the perceptions and naivety or misunderstandings of the characters. The narrator wants us to inhabit the character's skin at points during the narrative.

Journalist style: Uses the language of reporting and though reporters may claim to have no bias, this is probably rarely true because bias determines what is included and what is left out.

The table below is designed to support reading and directs readers to the narrative perspective and examples of:

- journalist style in newspaper clippings
- free indirect style where Dubosarsky mimics the thoughts and observations of Matilda, aged six, and occasionally her older sisters.

Chapter, page no.	When?	What?	Third person perspective	Example
Once upon a time		Frances reading fairytale to Matilda	Free indirect style	'But there were no pictures, just black letters on the page, like hundreds of tiny footprints.' p. 7. (Also note reference to fairytale on p. 157.)
Newspaper clippings	8, 9, 10 April 1954	H Bomb, Polio, Royal Show ad, court report	Journalistic style	'NEW YORK, April 7 (A.A.P.) – The successful testing of the hydrogen bomb has made possible Professor Albert Einstein's prophecy of a weapon capable of annihilating life on earth, says William Laurence, the science expert of the 'New York Times'.' p. 13
Chapter 1, p.15	Sunday 11 April 1954	Family introduced: Sunday lunch and men arrive next door	Free indirect style	'He was in the merchant navy, far away on a ship in the middle of the ocean, looking for the enemy with his binoculars.' p. 16

Chapter 2, p. 24	Matilda's memory (indicated by 'Matilda knew it was a gun . . . not the first time she had seen one.' p. 24)	Visiting 'crazy old man' next door	Free indirect style	'Matilda knew all about the reds . . . Down at the end of their street was a block of bush . . . there were cowboys and Red Indians hiding in there . . .' p. 28
Chapter 3 p. 30	Matilda's memory (Indicated by '. . . the day the lizard crawled up the back step. . .' p. 30)	Floreal and the radio	Free indirect style	'Sometimes Matilda imagined the Argonauts were tiny little people who lived inside the radio . . . sitting around a tiny kitchen table, just like their own, reading things out from tiny newspapers . . .' p. 32
Chapter 4 p. 35	Sunday 11 April 1954	Elizabeth's nervous breakdown and Yvonne, their mother's friend	Free indirect style	'Whenever she passed a mirror now, Elizabeth inspected herself carefully in case she was turning green . . . Only women could get the greensickness, that's what the doctor said. Silly old fool, thought Elizabeth.' p. 40
Newspaper clippings	Monday 12 April 1954	Missing woman; Tragic story of Man-Woman	Journalistic style	'Roberta Cowell's story, the story of a spitfire pilot who is now a woman, strikes a deep chord of sympathy.' p. 42
Chapter 5 p. 43	Monday 12 April 1954	Matilda meets a man from next door	Free indirect style	'Why didn't he say anything? Maybe he'd had his tongue cut out, like that man in the Arabian Nights.' p. 46
Chapter 6 p. 48	Monday 12 April 1954	Frances and Matilda at school	Free indirect style	'Mark had a desk at the back all by himself. Sometimes he actually fell asleep . . . they would laugh because he snored. The teacher didn't do anything, she didn't tell him to wake up, not even to write the spelling list.' p. 53
Newspaper clippings	Tuesday 13 April 1954	Girl rescued from harbour; Eight Polio cases; Kate at show	Journalistic style	'So far this year, 334 cases of polio, including seven deaths, have been reported in N.S.W.' pp. 57–8

Chapter 7 p. 59	Tuesday 13 April 1954	Preparing for the Pet Parade and getting a lift in the black car	Free indirect style	'Matilda would see the driver's face in the rear-vision mirror . . . It was strange to talk to someone back-to-front, with a face made of glass.' p. 63
Chapter 8 p. 66	Tuesday 13 April 1954	The Pet Parade and Matilda's flashback to the Basin	Free indirect style	'. . . she felt light and crisp like a piece of glass . . . Her skin turned cold . . . and she never knew why she thought of it, she never knew at all, and looking down from high above and seeing everything there was, everything, she leaned against the stone wall behind her and she remembered the Basin.' pp. 70–71
Chapter 9 p. 72	(indicated by 'It had been Uncle Paul's idea to go to the Basin.' p.72, and italics)	Catching the Ferry to the Basin and the train crash in New Zealand	Free indirect style	'Matilda felt her heart beating under her swimsuit that was too tight even though it was nearly new and her mother would be cross. I can't help growing, thought Matilda, I'd stop if I could.' p. 78
Newspaper clippings	Wednesday 14 April 1954	Russian Spies; Petrov 'salted away'; Mrs. Petrov; the Petrov's Alsatian dog	Journalistic style	'A strict and inflexible security screen has been clamped down on all personal particulars of Petrov. It is understood that not even the Prime Minister knows his whereabouts.' p. 82.
Chapter 10 p. 84	Wednesday 14 April 1954	Talking to Mr. Passenger next door	Free indirect style	'Matilda didn't know why, but it made her feel sick to look at the lollipop now it was hers, the multicoloured swirling disc the size of a baby's face, like a little moon in her hands on the end of a stick. She didn't want to talk about it or even see it.' p. 85
Newspaper clippings	Thursday 15 April 1954	He is Kidnapped says Mrs. Petrov; Quiet Couple; Warning on firearms	Journalistic style	'It is an offence to use or carry firearms on a Sunday. 'If it is desired to shoot on private property permission of the landowner must first be obtained.' p. 89

Chapter 11 p. 90	Thursday 15 April 1954	Having fish and chips with Uncle Paul; Matilda recalls climbing a tree at the Basin	Free indirect style	'It was a secret that she had climbed that tree . . . she might tumble down and crack her head open and her brains would fall out . . . once your brains fall out that's it, it's all over.' p. 93
Newspaper clippings	Good Friday 16 April 1954	Suggestion of kidnapping ludicrous; Birds tormented	Journalistic style	'Barricades erected at the Show to protect pheasants were useless, exhibitors claimed yesterday. Birds have been tormented by people poking sticks into cages and by women pulling out feathers.' p. 95
Chapter 12 p. 96	Good Friday 16 April 1954	Matilda spying on the men next door	Free indirect style	'. . . Floreal had said how the men next door were spies . . . Maybe I could be a spy, thought Matilda suddenly. I could watch them, without them knowing I'm here . . . She tried not to breathe. After all, she was a spy.' pp. 100–101
Newspaper clippings	Easter Saturday 17 April 1954	Russian Easter; Good Friday in Sydney	Journalistic style	'Vladimir Petrov is reported to be having a traditional Russian Easter in his Australian security hide-out. A Canberra source said tonight that records of Russian Music had been sent there for him.' p. 102
Chapter 13 p. 103	Easter Saturday 17 April 1954	A trip into the city to see the film, <i>Roman Holiday</i>	Free indirect style	'The State Theatre . . . Even Elizabeth stared. It was a palace. It had golden gates and inside they saw chandeliers and golden-robed statues nestled in the walls, lit from behind by an orange glow like a dying fire.' p. 108
Chapter 14 p. 109	Easter Saturday 17 April 1954	Watching the newsreels Matilda recognises the man next door	Free indirect style	'How strange people sounded in films! Of course, they had American accents but it wasn't only that. They weren't people to Matilda; they were like giant dolls. The air around her smelt of sugar and salt and was thick with whispering and the sound of kisses.' p. 113
Chapter 15 p. 117	Easter Saturday 17 April 1954	Waiting for Mother and Uncle Paul, visiting the hotel	Free indirect style	'She remembered the long sheets of translucent skin that came off her face, her arms and legs. She had eaten some of them.' p. 122
Newspaper clippings	Easter Sunday 18 April 1954	Traffic Jam near the Show; Communist suicide squads	Journalistic style	'New York, Saturday – Suicide Squads of Communist-led Vietminh rebels have cut still more trenches . . .' p. 124

Chapter 16 p. 125	Easter Sunday 18 April 1954	Matilda tells crazy old man next door about the spies	Free indirect style	'You weren't allowed to water the garden because of the drought, but at least you were still allowed to drink.' p. 126
Chapter 17 p. 125	Easter Sunday 18 April 1954 and Matilda's memory – Boxing Day, 1953 (indicated by italics and development of narrative)	The family at the Basin; Matilda puts on her mother's shoes and climbs the tree	Free indirect style	'She could feel something sad underneath her somewhere, shifting like a little crab buried in sand' p. 130 'But as she was looking, she saw something down in the bush and she didn't understand. She wanted to look away, but she couldn't. She kept looking but she was afraid . . . into the depths of the grey-green bush, fell her mother's red shoe.' p. 135
Newspaper clippings	Easter Monday 19 April 1954	Dry spell; party at Embassy; Fear of death; Test for Polio	Journalistic style	'Nothing was so detrimental to health as fear, the Rev. Gordon Powell said at St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church yesterday . . . Irresponsible talk about the hydrogen bomb can produce abnormal and epidemic fear to the great hurt of the people.' p. 137
Chapter 18 p. 138	Easter Monday 19 April 1954	Father goes missing and mother distraught.	Free indirect style	'In the bathroom, Matilda crushed up some toilet paper and put it in her ears, so she wouldn't hear Floreal anymore.' p. 140
Chapter 19 p. 143	Matilda's memory – Boxing Day, 1953 (indicated by italics and development of narrative)	Matilda hears her mother's screams and learns of her father's 'accident'; overhears others on the ferry	Free indirect style	'All those poor sailors dead in the war lying at the bottom of the ocean, ping, ping, ping, all those poor people far away where bombs fell, with no homes left and all their children dead like a ladybird.' p. 147
Newspaper clippings	Easter Tuesday 20 April 1954	Officials drag Mrs. Petrov to aircraft; Wild rush to see Mrs. Petrov; Last day of show	Journalistic style	'Mrs. Petrov was dressed in a grey suit and blue hat on arrival at the airport but her clothing was crushed, crumpled and disarranged, and she had lost a shoe before she finally boarded the plane. Police found it impossible to keep back the crowds of New Australians who began shouting, "Don't let her go!"' p. 148

Chapter 20 p. 150	Easter Tuesday 20 April 1954	Frances visited Mark's home and discovered that he had died	Free indirect style	'She had a funny voice. Was she foreign? Frances did not know any foreign people. She did not know anyone who was not like her.' p. 155
Chapter 21 p. 158	Easter Tuesday 20 April 1954 and Elizabeth's memory – Boxing Day, 1953 (indicated by italics and development of narrative)	Elizabeth thinks about the Petrovs and not returning to school and then recalls the day at the Basin when she knew her father had packed a rope he would use to try to hang himself	Free indirect style	'I am a glass bottle, she realized without surprise. I have turned into glass. I can throw myself into the Pacific Ocean and I will float. I will float all the way around the world, even as far as Russia. I will float as far as my father's ship, and he will bend down and pick me up and shake the water off me.' p. 164 'But Elizabeth had carefully made that day disappear from her thoughts, like ironing out a crease in a shirt. There is was again, crisp and clean' p. 162
Chapter 22 p. 166	Easter Tuesday 20 April 1954 and Matilda's memory – Boxing Day, 1953 (indicated by italics and development of narrative)	Uncle Paul returns in father's absence; Crazy man next door makes a scene and Mother's screams of do something trigger Matilda's memories of the basin and Paul's failure to intervene to save her father.	Free indirect style	'Matilda saw everything, silver and grey like mirrors, like moths, everything. Up in the tree she saw her father with the rope around his neck, what was he doing? She didn't understand, but she was afraid. What are you doing? She tried to call out to him . . . But he wasn't alone . . . Uncle Paul would help him! Uncle Paul would stop him. Uncle Paul! Uncle Paul would help him! Uncle Paul would stop him. He would do something. Do something! But Uncle Paul did nothing. He stood stiff as a stone behind a tree, staring, hands in his pockets. He stood there and he did nothing at all, while his brother hanged himself from the branches of a ghost gum.' p. 169
Chapter 23 p. 172	Easter Tuesday 20 April 1954	Father arrives home; Floreal is dismissed; Uncle Paul has run off in shame; the family overcome their fears	Free indirect style	'Elizabeth seemed somehow different to Frances, too, like the house. What was it? Her voice, her eyes. Perhaps she wasn't having her nervous breakdown any more, thought Frances with relief, perhaps she was better.' p. 173 'All the radios inside all the houses in all the world were humming together, and the sky was filled with electricity. And Matilda was not afraid at all.' p.178

Newspaper clippings	Wednesday 21 April 1954	Man shot dead in Arcade; Mrs. Petrov chooses to stay; images in the garden; the Petrov's dog; newsreel of scenes of Mrs. Petrov at the airport.	Journalistic style	<p>'An unidentified middle-aged man was shot dead in the shooting gallery of a penny arcade in George Street, Haymarket, last night. Police were told the man entered the arcade about 7.10 p.m., went to the shooting gallery, and paid for three shots.' p. 179.</p> <p>'Diplomat's Wife Will Rejoin Husband – Mrs. Evdokia Petrov decided in Darwin yesterday morning not to return to Russia, but to stay in Australia.' p. 179</p>
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