Notes on: **Composing a picture and colouring it with watercolour** by Liz Honey and Craig Smith
Daradgee 2016 Writers' and Illustrators' Camp

The video can be accessed by searching **Daradgee 2016 Writers' and Illustrators' Camp** or at **www.craigsmithillustration.com**

There are many ways to draw and colour a picture. The accompanying video shows an example of one way of building up a watercolour illustration.
It begins with:
1) first, **what** to draw?
2) then, **how to shape** and colour it.

The materials:
Materials used are a pencil, eraser, watercolours, brush and medium weight watercolour paper.
(The clutch pencil here has a large lead, making it easy to draw thick and thin lines – but really, any pencil in the 'B' range (HB, 2B, 6B …) will do.)

Beginning a rough outline:
There are many questions to ask yourself, and choices to make as you proceed.
Tip: Get reference material (photos, etc) for information as well as inspiration!
The technique shown here of drawing in a **rough, sketchy** way is a way to help you make those choices. It is messy, easily altered.
It gives time for your imagine to work, before you commit to an idea.

The theme: If I Was a Farmer …
Inspired by the theme, this above drawing introduces the characters. And why not start it at breakfast – the beginning of a day. Not a bad choice to begin a story?
Is it clear from the picture from who's **point of view** the story will be told? Not yet. Maybe it will be told through the point of view of the youngster?)

The setting:
This picture is set on the back verandah. This enables the landscape, and the weather, to be featured – both important to a farm. It might be useful to introduce a hint of drama – storm clouds, or the bank manager's car approaching. Something to indicate how the story might progress?

In the video, you'll see how the first shapes – the verandah, the table, the horizon, the body **torso** of the characters – all establish the position from which the viewer sees the picture (**the viewpoint**).
These simpler, larger shapes come first. Perhaps drawn as sketchy guidelines to be erased later? Or kept? That's up to you. The **detail** comes a bit later.
This detail includes **facial expression**. But another thing to be thinking about in this early rough sketch is **body language.**
By that we mean; **what** are they doing and **how** are they doing it? Angrily, happily, anxiously, eagerly, uncertainly … etc, etc
Tip: Use a mirror to try out poses. Act out moods and try drawing what you see.

About watercolour:
There are different ways of mixing and applying watercolours.
One thing about it is the unintended things that happen as the watercolour dries, that end up looking good!
How you apply it is best learnt by trial and error. However, there are some general pointers to help achieve a satisfactory, maybe even gorgeous, outcome.

Using watercolour:
Firstly, keep your brushes rinsed clean, and (usually) mix on a palette. That keeps the watercolours more colourful!

The picture above uses watercolour sort of carefully – but still in a loose way. It certainly does not matter if the watercolour spreads outside of the shapes defined by the outline.
Try to imagine what the colour will look like before applying it. It is not easy to make BIG changes to colour choices! (For example; turning blue into pink.)
So, It might be useful to apply many **layers** of colour. This can slowly build up colour density. You can make some adjustments along the way, including shading.
The colour changes hugely while drying so keep watching – ready to make changes.
Tip: Maybe use a limited range of colours, leaving brighter colours to highlight important details?

Shading, and **shadow** helps shapes stand out. Shadow can be moderate or dramatic. Generally, avoid using **black** as shadow. Rather a darker tone of the underlying colour, mixed with dark blue or purple is better. 'Shadows' actually have quite a lot of colour in them.

Is an **outline** important to your picture? When the colour dries, you can strengthen the outline, or parts of the outline. This can be done with pencil etc. But best of all is a watery outline done in **ink**, applied with a **pen and nib.**