



cb 
Book
of the
Year
Awards
2014

Children's Books Ireland
Leabhair Pháistí Éireann

Shadowing Pack 2014

Introduction

A very warm welcome to this year's CBI Book of the Year Awards Shadowing activity pack! The highly anticipated 2014 shortlist has now been announced (see next page for details) and it is time for the scheme to begin in earnest! Over the coming weeks hundreds of young readers across the country will be reading, reviewing and debating their chosen books, before finally deciding on their overall favourite.

Once again the judging panel's selection serves to showcase the strength and vitality of contemporary Irish children's literature across a variety of styles and reading levels.

This pack is designed to help you and your group get the most out of the Shadowing process from selecting and sourcing suitable titles to choosing and nominating your winner. CBI recognises that every group is different and will tackle the activities in their own way. The suggestions made on these pages are therefore designed merely as a guide for you to use and modify as you see fit.

We have had a lot of fun compiling this year's Shadowing activities and really hope you find them useful and enjoyable too. As always, we love to hear from Shadowing groups nationwide, so why not find Children's Books Ireland on Facebook or Twitter and share images and news from your group during the Shadowing process?

Best of luck and happy Shadowing!



Aoife Murray, CBI Programme and Events Manager

Selecting and Sourcing Your Books

In response to group leader feedback in previous years, we have included a suggested reading age for each of the titles on the shortlist below. These are intended as a guideline only and we still recommend that you use your own discretion when it comes to choosing which books to read with your group. A plot summary for each title is also included in each activity pack to help give you a sense of content and themes.

The Book of the Year Awards Shortlist 2014 Cycle

***THE DAY THE CRAYONS QUIT* illustrated by Oliver Jeffers– suitable for all ages**

Publisher: HarperCollins (London)

ISBN: 978-0007513758 (HBK)

***MYSTERIOUS TRAVELLER* illustrated by P.J. Lynch – suggested age 8+**

Publisher: Walker Books (London)

ISBN: 978-1406337075 (HBK)

***HAGWITCH* by Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick – suggested age 10+**

Publisher: Orion Children's Books (London)

ISBN: 978-1444006377 (PBK)

***TOO MANY PONIES* by Sheena Wilkinson – suggested age 9-12**

Publisher: Little Island (Dublin)

ISBN: 978-1908195258 (PBK)

***SKULDUGGERY PLEASANT LAST STAND OF DEAD MEN* by Derek Landy- suggested age 12+**

Publisher: HarperCollins (London)

ISBN: 978-0007489206 (HBK)

***HEART SHAPED* by Siobhán Parkinson – suggested age 12+**

Publisher: Hodder Children's Books (London)

ISBN: 978-1444903607 (PBK)

***THE SLEEPING BAOBAB TREE* by Paula Leyden – suggested age 9-12**

Publisher: Walker Books (London)

ISBN: 978-1406327939 (PBK)

***WARP: THE RELUCTANT ASSASSIN* by Eoin Colfer – suggested age 10+**

Publisher: Puffin Books (London)

ISBN: 978-0141341750 (PBK)

Important Dates

- Tuesday 18th March: Awards shortlist announced - **Shadowing begins**
- Friday 9th May: **Shadowing vote deadline** - ballots returned to CBI
- Tuesday 13th May: Awards announcement and prize-giving ceremony
- Late May: Shadowing Certificates issued

Reaching a Final Decision and Submitting Your Vote

This year CBI is asking all participating groups to submit a ballot sheet giving a score for every title they read. This very closely echoes the way in which the adult judging panel decide on the CBI Book of the Year Award winners. Before making your nominations, however, we recommend that you engage in at least one of the following activities as a way of making your group think critically about their final decision.

'Reader Response' Group Discussion

Before making their final judgement, it is important to give all group members the opportunity to discuss and debate the various books they have read. One technique that has proven to be very effective in encouraging this kind of critical dialogue in young people is often referred to as 'Book Talk'.

First, ask your group to form a circle with their chairs – you should sit in with them too. Begin by asking a simple, open question, such as 'What do you think....?', (i.e. 'What do you think the book is about?'). Going around the group from person to person, each individual should be asked to respond to the question with an opinion and give an example to back it up (i.e. 'I think the book is really well written because...') or to something that has been said already (i.e. 'I agree with Jim because...', 'I don't agree with Jim because...').

It is very important that every participant is given the opportunity to gather their thoughts before speaking – this 'waiting time' should be respected and the participant should be encouraged to stop, think and choose their words carefully. Other participants should not be allowed to jump in and interject if someone is taking time to get their opinion across. Using the framework 'I think...', 'I agree...', 'I disagree...' should help to structure their ideas more clearly.

The discussion can continue around the circle until no one has any more to contribute. Then a new issue can be introduced (i.e. 'What do you think about the main character?') and so on. When discussing picturebooks, this technique can be particularly effective if you circulate the illustrations so the participants can refer to them whilst they are speaking. *NB. If an individual has not read the title they can obviously 'pass' to the next person who has.*

Favourite Book Presentations

Ask each young reader to present their favourite book to the rest of the group. They must try to convince the others to vote for their chosen title. Set strict time limits, no more than two or three minutes each. These presentations can also be backed up with additional materials made by the children, utilising some of the worksheets and activities contained within this pack.

Courtroom Drama

Establish a mini courtroom scenario with the group. Select a jury and nominate someone to propose a book (highlight the good points) and another member to oppose the book (highlight the negative points). Repeat this for all the books they have read and then ask the jury to vote on a final score for each title.

Book Fair

Hold a mini Book Fair. Give each title a table in the room or a display board, on which fans of each book can create a display of their work. Then assign one or two nominated presenters to each 'stand'. Give the other group members time to visit each stand, view the material and talk to the presenters. At the close of the Fair, ask everyone to come together and discuss the merits of each book/stand before casting their final vote.

Making Your Final Nomination - Ballot Sheet

Having gone through the reading, deliberation and debating process, the final step is to submit the ballot sheet overleaf on behalf of the group as a whole. First draw a line through any of the shortlisted books you DID NOT read. Then fill in a score out of 100 for each of the remaining titles, as decided by all members of your group who have read it. Finally, return your completed form to CBI by Friday 9th May at the address provided.

Further Information and Contact Details

We love hearing from all our Shadowing groups! Why not send us photos or videos of your Shadowers along with some of your book reviews or simply share with us what is working for you and your group? You can contact any of the CBI team using the details below. We would be more than happy to answer any of your questions in relation to the CBI Book of the Year Awards and the Shadowing scheme.

Email: aoife@childrensbooksireland.ie

Tel: **01 872 7475**

Address: **CBI Book of the Year Awards Shadowing Scheme,**

Children's Books Ireland, 17 North Great George's Street, Dublin 1

Find us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter!

CBI Book of the Year Award Shadowing Scheme – Ballot Sheet

Please carefully complete the ballot sheet below and return to Children’s Books Ireland no later than **Friday 9th May**.

Note to Shadowing Group Leaders:

You should submit only one ballot sheet per group, with scores contributed only by those who have read the title in question. To calculate your overall group score, first ask each reader to score each of the books they have read out of 100, then average these out to get a final overall score for each title.

Note to Group Members:

- Think carefully about all the books you have read and give each a score out of 100.
- If you have not read a particular book for any reason please draw a line through the box and do not contribute a score. This will ensure we are able to count up the scores fairly.
- You may award books identical scores if necessary.
- Exceptionally high or low scores should only be used when you deem a book to be of exceptionally high or low quality.

Title	Score (out of 100)
<i>THE DAY THE CRAYONS QUIT</i>	
<i>MYSTERIOUS TRAVELLER</i>	
<i>SKULDUGGERY PLEASANT LAST STAND OF DEAD MEN</i>	
<i>THE SLEEPING BAOBAB TREE</i>	
<i>WARP: THE RELUCANT ASSASSIN</i>	
<i>HEART SHAPED</i>	
<i>HAGWITCH</i>	
<i>TOO MANY PONIES</i>	

School/ Library/ Bookshop: _____

Group Leader Name: _____

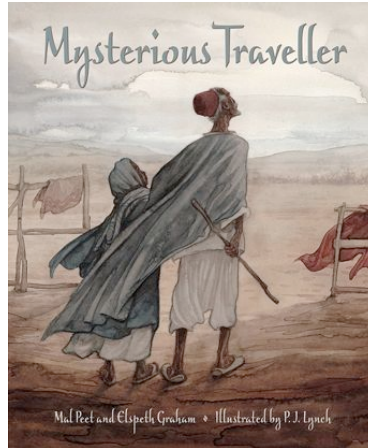
Number and age of young readers in the group: _____

Ballot forms can be returned by post to **CBI Shadowing Scheme, 17 North Great George’s Street, Dublin 1** or by fax to **01-8727476**. You can also submit your score by emailing: aoife@childrensbooksireland.ie or by calling 01 8727475.

MYSTERIOUS TRAVELLER

Illustrated by P.J. Lynch

Suggested age 8+



ISBN: 978-1406337075 (HBK)

Walker Books

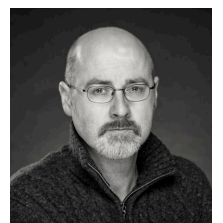
Summary

Issa is the greatest of all the desert guides and knows the desert better than anyone else. One particular day, the desert reveals something that will change Issa's life forever. In the aftermath of a dangerous storm he stumbles upon a camel that is protecting some precious cargo: a basket containing a baby girl. Issa decides to raise her as his own granddaughter and as a child of the desert. Over the years, Issa loses his sight and so Mariama must become his eyes. When a mysterious traveller arrives at their house Issa does not see the clues that would reveal his true identity and both he and Mariama embark on a perilous journey, eventually leading to a surprising revelation.

Judges' comments: With an emphasis on browns, tans and blues, Lynch's superb and stunning textured paintings transport readers/viewers into the desert landscape of the tale and guide us through the emotional journey of Issa and Mariama.

About The Illustrator:

P.J. Lynch is one of the most well-known illustrators working today. He has illustrated many books, including *The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey* by Susan Wojciechowski, *When Jessie Came Across the Sea* by Amy Hest and *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, and won many awards, including the Mother Goose Award, the Irish Bisto Award (twice) and the Kate Greenaway Medal (twice). P.J. lives in Dublin with his wife and three children.



Questions

Before you begin the book:

- Look at the front cover of the book. What do you think this book might be about?
- Where do you think the book might be set?
- What do you think is the connection between the girl and the man?
- What might they be thinking?
- Look at the back cover and describe what you see. How does it make you feel?

When you have read the book:

- Did the pictures make you feel like you were in a faraway place?
- Do the pictures make you want to visit the desert?
- What is your favourite picture in the book? Describe it.
- What is your least favourite picture? Describe it.
- Would you have picked the same illustration for the front cover?
- Do you like the colours used in the pictures?

Questions for older readers:

- Do you think the colours suit the story and setting?
- Would you have liked to see more illustrations?
- Which character has huge black pearls for eyes?
- What do you think Issa and Mariama were thinking in the picture where we find out Issa has lost his sight?
- Can you find the page with the rock shaped like a lizard?
- Were you surprised when you found out the story behind the medallion?
- Would you like to live in a palace like the one at the end of the story?
- What did you think when you first saw the mysterious travellers? Did you change your mind about them as the story went on?
- Do you think the illustrator does a good job of showing us how the characters feel? (See anxious Mariama, caring Issa, etc.)

- How did some of the pictures make *you* feel? (See double page spread of landscape, mysterious travellers leaving the house.)
- Do you think the details of the landscape are well drawn?
- What age group do you think this book is intended for?
- Do you think older readers can enjoy picturebooks too? Did you enjoy looking at the illustrations alongside the text? Did it help you to visualise the story more than words would have?

Activities

- Write a short review of the book.
- Do you have anyone in your life that you look after? Who is it? Draw a picture of you with this person.
- Is there someone special who looks after you? Who is it? Write about the ways in which they look after you.
- What do you think the inside of the palace looks like? Draw it!

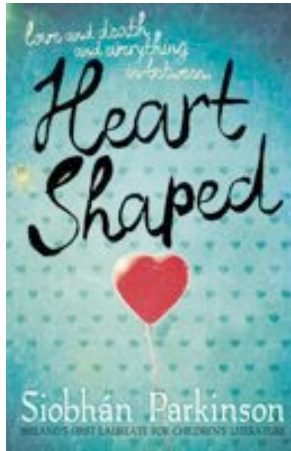
Activities for older readers:

- Try to draw or paint a picture in a similar style to the artist. Do you think this will be difficult?
- Imagine your own story that takes place in a desert. Illustrate the story with pictures only and no words.

Heart Shaped

Siobhán Parkinson

Suggested age 12+



ISBN: 978-1444903607 (PBK)
Hodder Children's Books

Summary

Heart Shaped is the companion to Siobhán Parkinson's novel *Bruised*, which tells the story of a brother and sister's escape from their alcoholic, abusive mother. The narrator of *Heart Shaped* finds herself in the middle of Jono and Julie's story, and while trying to discover what has happened to the missing Jono, she is also struggling to cope with her own grief.

Judges' Comments: Parkinson's convincing and beautifully-written narrative centres on fourteen-year-old Annie's search for answers to her past. Through an authentic and credible teenage voice, difficult subjects are handled with great care and sensitivity.

About The Author:

Currently based in Dublin, Siobhán Parkinson has written and published over twenty books, in both English and Irish. Siobhán has won numerous Bisto and CBI Book of the Year awards for the novels *Mairíóisce* (2011), *Something Invisible* (2007), *The Moon King* (1999) and *Four Kids, Three Cats, Two Cows, One Witch (Maybe)* (1998). Siobhán also works as a publisher, heading the publishing house Little Island. From 2010 to 2012 Siobhán served as Ireland's first Laureate na nÓg.



Reading Journal

The suggestions below highlight some important things to look out for as you progress through the book. Try to make notes and record your changing responses to the story, as this will be useful when you come to tackle the questions and activities featured on the following pages...

Before you begin the book:

- Below the title of this book it says “Love and death and everything in between.” Look at the cover. Is there anything to suggest that this book is not just about love?

Read Chapters 1 & 2

- The book opens with a quote from Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*. Have you read this play before, or any of Shakespeare’s plays? What do you think “beshrew” might mean?
- How does the narrator describe her nightmare?
- Who do you think Dr Thing might be?
- From reading the first few pages of Chapter 2, what impression do you get of the inside of the house?

Read Chapters 3 & 4

- In Chapter 3 you learn the narrator’s name. Do you think this name suits her? What name would you have picked?
- Does Annie have a good relationship with her father?
- Why does Annie call herself a nerd? Do you think these things make her nerdy?
- In Chapter 4, Annie says “they are never going to be in films.” Is Annie a pessimist? Or is she simply being realistic?
- Which character do you relate to more, Annie or Emma?
- What impression do you get of Annie’s mother?

Read Chapters 5 & 6

- Do you like that Jono’s texts are all spelled correctly and written like letters? Annie considers herself to be a nerd, so should she like the fact that Jono uses apostrophes in his texts?
- Is it true that boys aren’t as keen on Facebook and Twitter as girls? Why do you think girls use social networking sites more than boys?
- What does Keith do after taking his hand away from Annie’s mouth?

- Why would Annie have preferred if one of the boys had pulled Keith off her, and not Mr O'Connell?

Read Chapters 7 & 8:

- Who do you think The Toad might be?
- What was your reaction when The Toad believed Keith's side of the story, and not Annie's? How could Annie have dealt with the situation in a better way?
- How does Annie describe her heart before Jonathan disappeared?
- Why does Annie write so many lists? Is she trying to create some sense of order in her life?
- Which two organs, according to Annie, don't count?
- Which one of the nine things about Jono do you like the best? Do you agree with Annie that these things make him a good person?

Read Chapters 9 & 10:

- What makes Annie's father angry in Chapter 9?
- In Chapter 10 Annie says, "I think the modern thing is better, where everyone is all partners now and you can't count on people in the same family having the same name". What does she mean by "the modern thing"?
- Is Annie jealous of Emma? Why?/Why not?
- Why does Annie think she isn't allowed to cry anymore?

Read Chapters 11 & 12:

- What does Keith say that stops Annie feeling sorry for him?
- What do you learn in Chapter 12 about the body Annie found at the beginning of the book?
- What makes Emma realise that the text is a reply to another message?
- Is it unusual that Emma is only interested in the love story and not with Annie's traumatic experience?
- What is Emma referring to when she says "that Middle Ages stuff"?
- Why does Annie think the guards are so anxious about Julie? What does she realise about Jono?

Read Chapters 13 & 14:

- In Chapter 13, Annie discovers something about her nightmares – what is it?
-
- Do you agree with Annie that parents make it confusing for kids?
- In Chapter 14, what does Annie call Jono’s mother?
- Why does Annie say “Like me, too” after mentioning Julie’s age?
- Why does Annie think it’s so important to laugh?

Read Chapters 15 & 16:

- Is Annie being selfish when she gets mad at Jonathan for not telling her he misses her?
- What do you think might be in the envelope? Why doesn’t Annie want to accept the gift?
- Are there any clues in the book about how Annie’s mother died? What do you think might have happened to her?

Read Chapters 17 – 19:

- Does Annie’s “I like jam” memory change your perception of Annie’s mother?
- Why do you think Annie gives nicknames to other characters? (Dr Thing, Toady, Lulu Fortycoats.)
- In Annie’s opinion, who is the best teacher in the school?
- In Chapter 19, were you surprised that Annie got offended after Keith called Emma “gorgeous”?
- What does Keith tell Annie about Jonathan?

Read Chapters 20 – 22:

- What does Danielle tell Annie about Julie and Jono’s mother?
- What did you think of Danielle’s attitude towards alcoholism? Is she being fair or unfair?
- Why did Annie decide not to tell Julie the truth about her own mother’s death?
- In Chapter 22, what does Annie receive from her father?

Read Chapters 23 – 25:

- In Chapter 23, Annie talks about her memories, and how she is going to try and remember in colour. What do you think she means by this? Why were her memories in black and white before this?
- In Chapter 24, what does Annie remember about the blanket?
- Annie discovers who put the blanket on Jono's mother – do you think it's suspicious that he did this and then left the house? What do you think might have happened to Jono and Julie's mother?

Read Chapter 26:

- Did you guess what WYGOWM meant before Annie Googled it?
- What does Annie learn about depression and suicide at the end of the novel?

Questions

1. Did you think this book was funny? Were there any passages that made you laugh?
2. Annie asks the school principal if he thinks her heart-shaped earrings might have provoked Keith into kissing her. Afterwards, Annie makes a list of things which could be banned in order to stop boys kissing/attacking girls in schools. Do you think it was Annie's fault that Keith kissed her? Do you agree that jewellery, bags, purses etc. should be banned in schools?
3. Discuss the main themes of this book. Do you think it's important that books for young adults discuss issues like depression, suicide, alcoholism and sexual harassment? Is the content of this book age appropriate?
4. Annie doesn't consider Julie to be old enough to hear about suicide. Do you agree that Julie is too young to be introduced to such a serious issue?
5. *Heart Shaped* is the sequel to *Bruised*, which tells the story from Jono's point of view. Do you think you would have enjoyed *Heart Shaped* more if you had already read *Bruised*? If you have not read *Bruised*, are you curious to read it and find out exactly what happened to Jono and Julie's mother?
6. Bullying, and cyberbullying are features in this book. Danielle sends texts to Julie calling her "scum". Do you think children as young as 8 should be allowed to have phones? Jono replies to Danielle's text and threatens to beat her up. Can you suggest a better way in which Jono and Julie could have dealt with the situation?
7. How has Annie grown and developed over the course of the novel? Do you think she has a better understanding of depression and suicide at the end of the book than at the beginning? What, or who, has helped her to mature?

Activities

1. Throughout *Heart Shaped*, characters from other books are mentioned, and Annie Googles the names of characters she is unfamiliar with, like Eeyore. How many of the books and characters mentioned in the book had you heard of before? Make a list of all the references made to other books and write questions based on these references to quiz your class/group. Your first question to the class/group could be what book is Toad of Toad Hall from?
2. In Chapter 6, Annie describes a statue of a family in St Patrick's cathedral. The daughters in the statue have long, wavy hair and are wearing dresses from the Middle Ages. Research women's fashion in the Middle Ages and then draw your own version of the statue.
3. Annie talks about great short words and extremely long words. The longest word she knows, Antidisestablishmentarianism, has 28 letters. Do you know a longer word? See how many words you can find in antidisestablishmentarianism.
4. *Heart Shaped* focuses on the impact suicide has on a family. Design a poster for an organisation which offers counselling to families who have lost a member of their family through suicide. Create a logo and think up of a name for the organisation.

HAGWITCH

By Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick

Suggested age 10+



ISBN: 978-1444006377 (PBK)

Orion Children's Books

Summary

In 16th-century London, Flea Nettleworth, apprentice to a playwright, watches as his struggling master's fortunes turn, and all of a sudden London is in his thrall. But soon Flea's master can no longer tell where the imagined world ends and the real one begins. Could the arrival of a mysterious Faery Hawthorn trunk hold the answer? Modern-day Lally lives on a barge, roaming the canalways and performing shows with her puppeteer father. Then, after Lally's father pulls an ancient piece of wood from the canal and fashions it into a puppet, his success seems unstoppable. As her father's obsession with his puppet grows and his plays become darker, Lally begins to wonder if there is something rather sinister, dangerous even, about the wooden doll.

Judges' Comments: Fitzpatrick brings the reader on a journey down a canal, through a world of theatre and puppetry, and into a realm of magic and mystery. This expertly-crafted novel, with its meticulous attention to detail, seamlessly interweaves the two narratives of present-day Lally and sixteenth-century Flea.

About The Author:

Born in Dublin, Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick is an award-winning children's book author and illustrator. Apart from history, her interests include photography, travelling and chocolate. Her work has won numerous accolades, including



three CBI Bisto Book of the Year Awards. She lives in Wicklow with her husband Michael Emberley, also a writer and illustrator.

Reading Journal

The suggestions below highlight some important things to look out for as you progress through the book. Try to make notes and record your changing responses to the story, as this will be useful when you come to tackle the questions and activities featured on the following pages...

Before you begin the book:

- Look at the front cover carefully. Who do you think the character on the front cover might be? What age do you think she is? Where do you think this novel might be set? What era is this novel set in?
- Look at the quote on the back cover 'Myth. Magic. Secrets. Theatre.' What do you think this might refer to? What sort of novel do you think this might be?

Read Pages 1-24

- When the book begins, Lally and the reader feel a little uneasy despite the beautiful sunny setting. Why is this?
- Why does Lally take such an instant dislike to a simple piece of wood?
- Read Pages 23-24. Make a list of words to describe Lally and her emotions when she changes her room décor.

Read Pages 25- 31

- This section is written in a completely different style, why is this?
- Who are Nashe, Hobbes, Well and Bennett? Where is the setting?
- Make a list of the unusual or strange words in this section.

Read Pages 32- 61

- Do you think Master Waller is a good playwright? Do you think the men in the company are good actors? What do you think about the reference to Shakespeare on Page 44?
- What does Lally think of Claudine and Gilles when she first meets them? Does this change later in the book?
- Do you think Flea is right to worry about Master Waller?

Read Pages 62- 95

- What is the link between Lally in the present day and Flea in the past? Why do you think the legend of the hawthorn tree has endured?
- On Page 72- 74 Lally and Gilles communicate via puppets. Why do you think they can say more to each other this way than face-to-face?
- Who do you think the Master of the Revels is? What would his job involve?

- On Page 86- 87 Lally secretly agrees with Gilles that Eoin's plays are a little stale but won't admit it openly. Why do you think that is?

Read Pages 96- 125

- On Page 98 Lally explains some of the barge and river culture to Gilles, does it sound very different to the culture of those who live in houses? Would you like to live like Lally? Do you think living on a barge is cool, like Gilles does?
- Make a list of the changes that have happened to Eoin and the changes that happen to Master Waller. Are there any similarities and differences?
- Do you believe any of the folklore around the hawthorn tree?
- What do you think about the sleeping arrangements in Master Waller's house?

Read Pages 126- 154

- Do you think what Flea witnesses in Master Waller's room is real or a dream?
- Lally enjoys her day in London with Gilles and Claudine. Do you think it is unusual she knows so little of London and hasn't explored its streets before? Why do you think that is?
- Why do you think Carla, Nette and Eoin seem to care so little about Lally's education? Do you think it is fair on Lally?
- On Page 143 Lally, Claudine and Gilles quote from Shakespearean plays. Make a list of which plays they are from.
- What do you think caused Carla's accident?

Read Pages 155- 184

- What has happened to Carla? How has she changed?
- Why does Carla want Lally to get away from The Beetle?
- What is the general atmosphere on the two barges like at this stage? How does the author create this atmosphere?

Read Pages 185- 212

- Flea says he is happy at his new place of work. Do you believe him? Do you think he misses the excitement of the stage?
- On Page 192 are you surprised to learn the truth about Lally's birth mother?
- Do you think Eoin, Carla and Nette were right to protect the infant Lally the way they did, giving her a life as a water gypsy?
- What do you think of Lally's mini rebellion when she runs away? Why does she smoke the cigarette, do you think?

Read Pages 213- 263

- Before you read Lally's and Flea's plans to lift the hawthorn curse what do you think is going to happen?
- What are your reactions to the ending of both Lally and Flea's stories?

Questions

1. When and where are the two stories set? What details tell you about the two different time periods? If you wanted to change the setting, what eras and locations would you choose?
2. Make a list of the similarities and differences in Flea and Lally's lifestyles and routines? Which era which you prefer to live in?
3. Do you think the hawthorne stump Lally's boat comes across is the same one that Flea throws into the Thames?
4. Do you think the canal lifestyle is suitable for someone of Lally's age? What kind of experiences does Lally have that someone else mightn't?

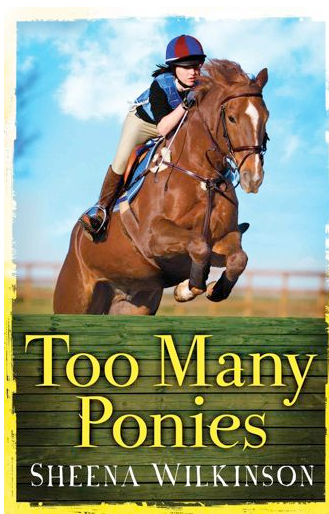
Activities

1. Write a short story about the evil spells the hawthorn stump might have been casting while stuck under water.
2. The language of Flea's sections of the novel is unusual and much of the dialogue it contains is written in a distinctive dialect. Pick out ten words or phrases which caught your attention. Can you translate them into modern day language?
3. Lally and Flea feature as the central characters and the narrators in this novel. Retell the story from Eoin's or Master Waller's perspective.
4. Research the folklore of the hawthorne online or in books in your public or school library. What else can you learn about it?
5. Create a flyer or poster for the group's production of *The Children of Lir*.
6. What do you think Lally's time in Paris will be like? Imagine she keeps a diary of her visit and write two or three diary entries describing her adventures.

TOO MANY PONIES

Sheena Wilkinson

Suggested age 9-12



ISBN: 978-1908195258 (PBK)

Little Island

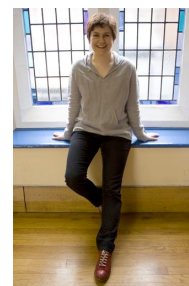
Summary

Rosevale is a sanctuary for abandoned and abused horses, but Aidan's family can't afford to run it any longer. If Rosevale closes down, though, what is going to happen to all the horses that are looked after there? Then Lucy comes up with a super idea: there's a cross-country competition offering an unbelievable prize of £5,000. Can they possibly muster a team that is good enough to beat the posh stables and win the competition? Not without Aidan's help – but Aidan has lost his nerve and is terrified of riding. The future of Rosevale is at stake. Aidan is going to have to help. He *can't* – but he just *has* to.

Judges Comments: Wilkinson's brilliant story of underdogs, friendships, and ponies is both insightful and intelligently written. With great skill and integrity the author brings a fresh perspective to the pony tale.

About The Author:

Sheena Wilkinson's first novel, *Taking Flight*, won two CBI Bisto Awards, the Honour Award for Fiction and the Children's Choice Award. The follow up, *Grounded*, won both the CBI Book of the Year and Children's Choice award. In November 2012, only two years after the publication of her first novel, Sheena was awarded a Major Individual Award by the Northern Ireland Arts Council, which has allowed her to take a year off her full-time teaching job to concentrate on writing. Sheena lives in County Down with a lot of books, a timid cat and a naughty pony.



Reading Journal

The suggestions below highlight some important things to look out for as you progress through the book. Try to make notes and record your changing responses to the story, as this will be useful when you come to tackle the questions and activities featured on the following pages...

Before you begin the book:

- Look carefully at the front cover. What do you think the book will be about?
 - If you saw this book in a shop, do you think you would want to read it, based on its cover? Why/why not?
 - Look at the back cover and read the blurb. What do you think will happen at the end of the book? What kind of person do you think Aidan is? Why do you think he might be scared of riding?

Read Chapter 1

- List all the characters we meet in this chapter, and write down one word to describe each of them.
- Imagine that you were in Aidan and Lucy's class at school. Who do you think you would be friends with? Why?

Read Chapter 2

- The teacher says "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet." What do you think this means? Can you find out where this quote comes from?
- What do you think of Olly and Josh? Why do you think they are behaving as they are towards Aidan?
- How do you think Aidan feels? The author says talks about the "sick churning of his stomach and the cold creeping of his skin". What does this tell you?

Read Chapter 3

- Why do you think Lucy's mum didn't allow Lucy to go to Erin's house?
- Describe the relationship between Lucy and Aidan. Are they friends? How do you think they feel about each other?
- This chapter is called 'Lucy's Brilliant Idea', but we don't find out until Chapter 4 what Lucy's idea is. What do you think it could be? Do you agree that it's a brilliant idea?

Read Chapter 4

- In this chapter, we learn a lot about Lucy. Write down all the things the author tells us about her in this chapter. Why does she sit with her chin in the air on the bus, not making eye contact with Aidan?

- How would you describe Kitty?
- Kitty and Aidan work hard at Rosevale. What does this tell you about them and their family?

Read Chapter 5:

- Lucy is determined that the Rosevale team will win the competition. Do you think Aidan's dad, Declan, will say yes and be part of the team?
- Lucy hasn't seen Declan jump a horse for a long time. Why do you think this is? What might have happened?

Read Chapter 6:

- Aidan is nervous about riding in front of his dad, but he doesn't mind if Lucy and his sister watch him. Why do you think this is?
- In this chapter, the author tells us what Aidan is thinking by putting the text in italics. Pick another character in this chapter and write down what they are thinking during this chapter.

Read Chapter 7:

- Why do you think Lucy chooses Jade as her partner for class? How do you think Erin feels?
- Think about what the author tells us about Sunnyside, where Jade's team rides, and what we already know about Rosevale, where Lucy keeps her pony. What are the differences? Which would you rather go to, and why?
- When Olly tells Aidan he can't wait to see him perform, do you think he means it? How do you know?
- Cam says "It's meant to be fun." Do you think Aidan is having fun? What about Kitty and Lucy?
- Is Lucy worried when Aidan falls off his horse? How do you know?
- Do you think Aidan, Lucy, Kitty and Declan make a good team? Why, or why not? Do you think they can win the competition?

Read Chapter 8:

- Aidan's dad says 'I wish he wasn't so ...' What do you think the last word in the sentence was? Why do you think his dad feels this way?
- At the end of the chapter, Aidan decides that he doesn't want to be part of the team any more. What do you think will happen next?
- How do you think Aidan's dad feels about Aidan dropping out?

Read Chapter 9:

- Do you think Lucy and Kitty have similar personalities? List the words you would use to describe them both.
- Why is Seaneen so mad?
- Why doesn't Lucy want to go to Erin's grandad's house? Do you think Erin was right to be mad? What would you have done if you were in Lucy's position?

Read Chapter 10:

- Do you think Aidan is sulking? Why, or why not?
- Declan says no when Lucy asks to put jumps in the empty field. What do you think Lucy will do next?
- The next chapter is called 'Lucy's Secret'. What do you think that could mean?

Read Chapter 11:

- What is the little voice in Lucy's head? Why doesn't she listen to it?
- Lucy doesn't actually tell any lies about what she has been doing that morning, but she feels uncomfortable when Declan asks her about it. Do you think what she did was right?
- Would you like to have been at Jade's birthday party? Why, or why not? Why do you think Lucy went?
- How do you think Lucy feels when she reads Kitty's text message? Imagine you are in Lucy's position. What would you text back?

Read Chapter 12:

- Aidan calls Lucy a coward. Do you agree with him? Why? There are lots of examples in the book of people being brave or cowardly. List some of the ones you can think of, and say why you think the characters behaved that way.
- Aidan's family tell him he is generous, thoughtful and a team player. Is this true? Why, or why not?
- This chapter deals with the theme of pride – several people say that they are proud, and other people are too proud to admit that they are wrong. Do you think pride is a good or a bad thing, in relation to the characters in this chapter?
- Neither Aidan or Lucy tells anyone about what Lucy did. Why do you think that is?

Read Chapter 13:

- Describe Lucy's relationship with her parents.

- Why are Olly and Josh bullying Aidan? Why doesn't he tell anyone about it? What would you do if you were in his position? What if you were in Lucy's shoes?
- Are Jade and Miranda Lucy's friends? Why, or why not?
- Do you think it was a good idea for Lucy to send the picture of Aidan and September to her classmates?
- What do you think will happen next?

Read Chapter 14:

- Both Aidan and his dad were bullied as boys because they like horses. Why do you think this is?
- How does Aidan's dad show that he loves him?

Read Chapter 15:

- Lucy's mum called Aidan's house a hovel. What does this make you think about her?
- When Lucy has a fall, she doesn't tell anyone about it. Why do you think this is? Do you think Lucy is brave for carrying on through the pain, or cowardly for not telling the truth?

Read Chapter 16:

- How do you think Lucy's mum reacts to her having a broken arm? Do you think Lucy tells her the whole story of what happened?
- How do you think Aidan feels by the end of this chapter?
- Do you think he will be able to ride when they get to Greenlands?

Read Chapter 17:

- Who do you think the old man in the baseball cap might be?
- Kitty says she thinks Dermie Doyle must be a nice man, while the other riders gossip about him. What does this tell you about Kitty?
- Aidan goes back to the lorry to look for gloves and runs into Olly. Why does he hope not to find Kitty's pink gloves? What do you think about this?
- Josh and Jade are twins. Do you think their personalities are alike?
- How do you think Aidan feels by the end of the chapter?

Read Chapter 18:

- Lucy says that Kitty shouldn't have been so reckless, and Aidan says "This, from Lucy!" What does he mean?

- Imagine that you are Lucy. What would you say to Aidan to reassure him before his turn?
- Why does Aidan decide to attempt the big jumps? What would you have done if you were Aidan?
- When Aidan finishes and the team crowds around him, there are three lines when the author doesn't tell us who is speaking. Who do you think says each line? Why?
- Cam tells Lucy that she has a lot to learn about being sporting. What does she mean by this? What would be sporting behaviour in this situation? Do you agree with Cam?
- If Lucy hadn't broken her arm, do you think the Rosevale team would have won?
- We don't see the end of the conversation after Dermot Doyle makes an offer to the Rosevale team. Write down what you think Lucy, Kitty, Aidan, Seaneen and Cam said in answer to his proposal.

Read Chapter 19:

- Imagine you are Erin. Would you have told your classmates who your granda was? Why, or why not?
- Aidan names the new horse Victor. Why do you think this is? Can you think of any other good names for him?
- What do you think will happen at school on Monday? Imagine the conversations between Jade, Josh, Olly, Lucy and Aidan. Do you think they will be friends from now on? Why, or why not?

Activities

1. Imagine that you are Aidan on the first day of secondary school. Write a diary entry about what happened that day and how it made you feel.
2. Rosevale, which is run by Aidan's parents, is a sanctuary for abused or abandoned horses. Research animal sanctuaries in your area and find out what kind of work they do. Make a poster about their work, or present a project to your class.
3. The book is set in Belfast. Are there any words in the book that the author or the characters use that might tell you this? Make a list of any words or phrases that you think might be a clue to the book's setting.
4. Many of the horses in this book have stories behind their names – September arrived in September, for instance. Declan used to ride a horse called Flight – how do you think that horse got its name? Write a story about an animal and how it got its name.

5. In Chapter 7, Lucy and Aidan's class make posters for the charity fundraiser. What would you have done to raise money for Rosevale? Make a poster, either on your own or in a group, to tell people about it.
6. Pretend that you work for a newspaper, and your job is to write about the competition at Greenlands. Think of a name for the newspaper, then write a headline and an article about the competition. Make a poster that looks like the front page of the newspaper with your story on it.
7. Sometimes in this book the author *shows* us how someone feels instead of *telling* us. For example, in Chapter 8, when "Aidan stared at his cornflakes and his stomach churned," we know that he is upset. List some other examples like this, and write down what each character is actually feeling.
8. All the teams in the jumping competition have different kits or uniforms. Imagine that you are part of a sports team, and design a kit that you think would make you stand out from other teams.
9. When you have finished the book, look at the cover again, and read the blurb on the back cover. What would you change, if anything? Design a new cover and write a new blurb for the book.
10. In Chapter 14, Declan, Aidan's dad, finds Aidan home from school early one day, he knows something is wrong. Declan mentions a few things that Seaneen, Aidan's mum, said to him. Imagine the conversation between Aidan's mum and dad about what they think is wrong with Aidan. Write it down as a story or act it out with a partner.
11. What do you think Aidan's dad was like when he was younger? Imagine him as a boy and write the story of *his* first day at secondary school.
12. The author talks about numnahs, browbands and haynets. Look up these items, and any other words you read in the book that are related to horse-riding. What are they for? You could do a group project on horse-riding or showjumping, or if you take part in another sport, you could tell your classmates all about the equipment you use and how to play. Are you part of a team? Is it like the Rosevale team?
13. In Chapter 17, the author describes the course at Greenlands. Draw a map of the grounds, including the course layout and any other facilities that might be there (toilets, the burger van, the house etc). Compare your map with other people's, and look at the differences in how you imagined it.
14. Can you think of an alternative title for *Too Many Ponies*?
15. Look up the author Sheena Wilkinson and find out some more information about her. Can you imagine why she would have written this book?

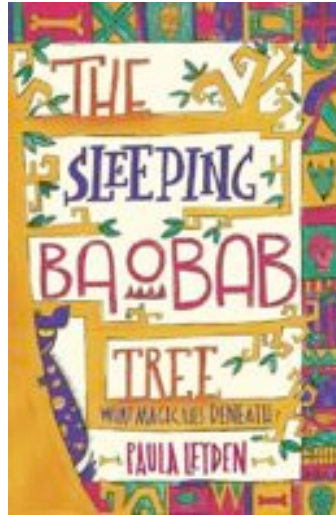
16. Imagine what life is like for Aidan and his family one year later. What do you think will have changed?

17. There is a short review on the back of the book from Ponymadbooklovers.co.uk. Look up the website and see if there are any other books reviewed on that site that you might like to read. Write a review of your own, giving the book a mark out of five, five being the best score.

THE SLEEPING BAOBAB TREE

Paula Leyden

Suggested age 12+



ISBN: 978-1406327939 (PBK)

Walker Books

Summary

One morning twelve-year-old Fred wakes up with an unaccountable sense of foreboding, which his friend Bul-Boo, one of the twins from next door, insists is just in his imagination. However, the feeling persists – and grows stronger when Fred’s terrifying great-granny, Nokokulu, asks him to accompany her on a trip to an ancient burial site known as the Place of Death. Then Bul-Boo overhears her parents talking about patients going missing from her mother’s AIDS clinic, and when one of the patients turns out to be Fred’s Aunt Kiki, the children suddenly view Nokokulu’s trip in a different light. Could the two events somehow be linked? As the three friends and the old woman journey into the heart of Zambia, each of them hopes to right wrongs, both past and present ... but dark clouds are gathering and ancient magic is in the air.

Judges Comments: Combining robust character development with vivid descriptions of the Zambian landscape, Leyden skilfully creates an evocative and atmospheric narrative that explores themes of friendship, family and human rights.

About The Author:

Paula Leyden was born in Kenya and has two sisters and a brother. Her family moved from Kenya to Zambia and it was in Zambia where she spent most of her childhood. They then moved to South Africa where, after college, she taught for a number of years in the Western Cape before moving to Johannesburg. While living in Johannesburg she worked for human rights organisations both during the struggle to end Apartheid and after the first



democratic elections in 1994. In 2003 she moved to Ireland with her partner and their five children. They farm in Kilkenny, breeding Irish Draught horses, and it was in Ireland where she started writing fiction. *The Butterfly Heart*, her first novel, won the Eilís Dillon award for a first children's book.

Reading Journal

The suggestions below highlight some important things to look out for as you progress through the book. Try to make notes and record your changing responses to the story, as this will be useful when you come to tackle the questions and activities featured on the following pages...

Read Chapter 1:

- How many characters are we introduced to in the opening sentence of this book?
- Sister Leonisa seems to have a special interest in stories. What special interests do you think your teacher has? How can you tell?
- What words would you use to describe the opening to Sister Leonisa's story?
- What 'Little People from Ireland' do you think Bul-Boo is referring to?
- None of us are perfect, not even our mothers. Make a list. On one side detail all the good things that Bukoku's mother did and on the other side detail the bad or careless things.

Read Chapter 2:

- List the six senses.
- Look up the definitions of the words 'optimistic' and 'pessimistic'. Which word applies to Fred?
- What are Fred's hopes and dreams as revealed to us by this chapter?
- Chitimukulu is a Zambian chief. In Ireland, what kind of figures were children traditionally named after? Give some examples.

Read Chapter 3:

- What does Bul-Boo's mam worry about?
- How many of Lula's patients have stopped attending her clinic?
- What reason does she give for this having happened before?
- Can you think of a possible explanation as to why the patients might have disappeared?

Read Chapter 4:

- Why might Madillo be upset about Fred having a crush on Bul-Boo?
- If Bul-Boo and Madillo were in your class at school do you think you would be friends

with them? Why/Why not?

- Who do you think Fred has most in common with, Bul-Boo or Madillo? List three traits they share.

Read Chapter 5:

'They're all stuck in a spindly skinny body that creaks around the place like a rusty bicycle.'

'Silly voices, chirping and squawking like chickens with sore throats.'

'I'm so sick that my stomach feels like it's caught between the jaws of a giant crocodile.'

- Pick your favourite sentence from this chapter and draw a picture to illustrate it.
- What do you think Nokokulu has planned for the man beast?
- Why do you think Nokokulu wants to go to the same place as the man beast will be?
- Fred feels terrified about going on this trip. What two thoughts console him?
- What is the difference between how Fred's mother believes children should be treated and how Nokokulu believes children should behave?

Read Chapter 6:

- What does it mean to be 'in cahoots' with someone?
- Think of some well known phrases and research their origins
- Name a famous ancient burial ground in Ireland.

Read Chapter 7:

- Predict what will happen when Fred and Nokokulu go to the ancient burial site of Ng'ombe llede. Write 3 paragraphs detailing your predictions.
- "Just because you haven't seen something doesn't mean it doesn't exist". This is the second time this assertion has been made. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain your answer.
- What faults can you see in Madillo's plan? Make a list.

Read Chapter 8:

- Why might Lula's work make her worried and sad?
- Look up the words 'benign' and 'dictator.' Explain what these words mean when put together.
- Who is suspect number 1?
- Is Madillo the only twin prone to dramatics?

Read Chapter 9:

- In your own words explain what Sister Leonisa means when she says 'Death by jewellery'.

Read Chapter 10:

- What kind of things do you imagine yourself doing when normal rules no longer apply?
- Nokokulu sometimes tells her great grandsons stories that aren't true. For what reason does Nokokulu tell these stories?
- What kind of person do her stories reveal her to be?

Read Chapter 11:

- Why do you think Bul-Boo edits some of the stories she tells her Mum?
- Do you think Nokokulu cursed Fred's goldfish? What other possible explanation could there be for his bad luck with pets?

Read Chapter 12:

- Fred was worried that Bul-Boo and Madillo might have been impaled on a tent peg. What does this mean? Is it typical of Fred to think the worst?
- During this chapter we've had an up close view of Nokokulu from Fred's perspective. Write an entry in your book of observations entitled '5 things I've noticed about Nokokulu'.
- What does Fred imagine might happen because of Nokokulu denting the gates at Munda Wanga?

Read Chapter 13:

- Where did Fred get his tendency to predict catastrophe from? Give a reason for your answer.
- 'The doctors know you are here?' Who is Nokokulu referring to when she says this?
- For what reason do you think Fred became embarrassed?

Read Chapter 14:

- Bul-Boo has two options. Which option would you choose if you were in her situation?
- Nokokulu believes that children should not use their phones while in the countryside especially not in Ng'ombe Ilede. In what situations are you forbidden to use your phone?
- Who are Bul-Boo's prime suspects?

Read Chapter 15:

- 'When you took my flower away from me I should have come after you. Now you are taking the next one ... He has come to take Kiki home.' Explain this paragraph in your own words.
- Why do you think this place is known as the Land of The Lying Down Cow?

Read Chapter 16:

- Why might it be a good thing for children to think that there are some things that deserve our fear?
- What does Nokokulu mean when she says 'We can see things with our brains and our hearts. But if you run like crazy things you'll see nothing.'
- Why does Fred pretend to see The Purple-Striped Burrowing Mantis?

Read Chapter 17:

- An oxymoron is a self contradictory phrase e.g pure rubbish / seriously funny / pretty ugly / old news. Think of some oxymorons of your own.
- What do you think happened to Aunt Kiki?
- Who do you want to be like when you grow up? Give reasons for your answers.

Read Chapter 18:

- What 'other kind of smile' might Fred be hoping for?
- In your opinion, does Fred imagine his gift?
- Which category would you put yourself into, those who believe in things they can see or those who believe in things they can't see?

Read Chapter 19:

- If you were to create a meal on a campfire what would you cook?

Read Chapter 20:

- Imagine that you are Nokukulu. Make a list of things to pack for your trip to Ng'ombe Ilede.
- What would it mean if you saw two paw prints?

Read Chapter 21:

- Imagine that you and your two friends are forced to spend the night sleeping at Newgrange. Write about the setting, your thoughts and feelings, the sounds and smells of the night.
- How does Fred's attitude to Nokukulu change in this chapter?
- Bul-Boo can read Madillo as though she is a book. What evidence is there in this chapter to support this statement?

Read Chapter 22:

- Why do you think the author is asking us to see this really important chapter through Madillo's eyes?
- What do you think happened to Madillo?

Read Chapter 23:

- Why does Bul-Boo's voice crack a little?
- Bul-Boo is not looking for scientific evidence any more. She is listening to her heart. What is her heart telling her about Madillo at the beginning of this chapter?
- Who does Bul-Boo turn to for help?

Read Chapter 24:

- How has your opinion of Nokokulu changed?
- Which category would you put Bul-Boo into now, those who believe in things they can see or those who believe in things they can't see?
- 'The river never wanted to be a dam ...' Find out what a dam is and attempt to explain this statement.

Read Chapter 25:

- Who do the shadows belong to?
- Why do you think Madillo needs this deep sleep?
- In your opinion who is it that is carrying Madillo?

Read Chapter 26:

- What is the most important event in this chapter? How is it significant that this event is told from Fred's perspective?
- Why do you think it is that Nokokulu does not want to tell Fred's parents the details of their real adventure?

Read Chapter 27:

- What are Bul-Boo's thoughts when she first wakes up?
- What do Ratsberg and Wrath promise?
- What do Ratsberg and Wrath accuse regular doctors of doing?
- What does Bul-Boo suspect Ratsberg and Wrath of?

Read Chapter 28:

- Unlike Bul-Boo and Fred, Madillo seems untouched by the events of the previous night. Can you explain why?
- Explain how Lula's patients ended up disappearing.
- Why did Ratsberg and Wrath make the patients swear to secrecy about their whereabouts?

Read Chapter 29:

- Why did Nokokulu make the journey to Ng'ombe Ilede?

- Do you believe that what happened there saved Aunt Kiki?
- Is Nokokulu right in saying that Madillo doesn't remember what happened?
- What are Madillo's memories of the trip?

Read The Epilogue:

- Are you a person who believes in things that can't be seen?
- Ng'ombe Ilede is a place where people seek answers from those who have gone before them. What question do you think Nokokulu asked her daughter? Did she get an answer?
- What did Nokokulu free the tall man from doing?
- Explain how Nokokulu has freed the man from 'the burden of failure'.

Activities

1. Create a map of Ng'ombe Ilede on a sheet of A4 paper. Include a compass points and a legend to make it easy to navigate.
2. Look up Baobab trees and Ng'ombe Ilede online or using books in your local or school library. What else can you learn about them?
3. Now that you have finished the book, write a review of it? What was your favourite part? What was your least favourite part? Did you like the characters?
4. Look at the front cover of the book. Do you think it gives a good indication as to what the book is about? Would you make any changes? Create you own book cover, illustrating what you think the important elements of the book are.
5. What do you think the key themes of the book are?
6. Research the AIDS epidemic online or using book in your local or school library. Did reading this book help you understand more about people living with AIDS and HIV virus?

THE DAY THE CRAYONS QUIT

Illustrated by Oliver Jeffers

Suitable for all ages



ISBN: 978-0007513758 (HBK)
HarperCollins

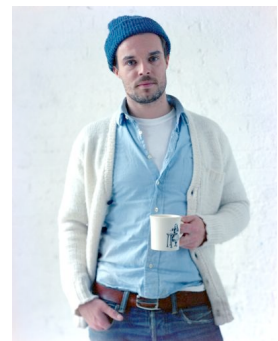
Summary

Poor Duncan just wants to colour. But when he opens his box of crayons, he finds only letters, all saying the same thing: His crayons have had enough! They quit! Beige Crayon is tired of playing second fiddle to Brown Crayon. Black wants to be used for more than just outlining. Blue needs a break from colouring all those bodies of water. And Orange and Yellow are no longer speaking, each believes he is the true colour of the sun. What can Duncan possibly do to appease all of the crayons and get them back to doing what they do best?

Judges Comments: Jeffers incorporates vibrant child-like illustrations into a narrative that explores the possibilities of colour in life. The complexity of the plight of the crayons is subtly revealed through humorous pictures that encourage the reader to rethink the ways in which colour can be used.

About The Author:

Oliver Jeffers' creates illustrated picturebooks. His other titles including *This Moose Belongs to Me*, *How to Catch a Star*, *Lost and Found* – which was made into an animated film – *The Way Back Home*, *The Incredible Book Eating Boy*, *The Great Paper Caper* and *The Heart and the Bottle* have won many awards including the Nestle Children's Book Prize Gold Award, CBI Bisto Book of the Year Award for Illustration, and the Irish Book Awards Children's Book of the year, and he has been shortlisted for the Kate Greenaway Medal. Originally from Belfast, Oliver now lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.



Questions

Before you begin the book:

- Look at the cover – What are the crayons doing?
- We know from the title that the crayons have quit, but what do you think they have quit doing and why?
- How would you describe the artwork on the front and back cover?

When you have read the book:

- Did you enjoy the story? What did you like or dislike about *The Day the Crayons Quit*?
- Do you think the crayons make good characters? Why or why not?
- How does Oliver Jeffers give the crayons personality?
- Have a look at some other books illustrated by Oliver Jeffers, such as *Lost and Found*, *How To Catch A Star* or *Stuck*. How does the artwork in *The Day the Crayons Quit* compare? What similarities and what differences do you notice?
- Which of the crayons is Duncan's favourite? Which is your favourite and why?
- If your own box of crayons (or markers or paints, whichever you use most) were to write you letters, what would they complain about? Think about which colours you use most and for what.
- What is Red Crayon complaining about? What does Duncan use Red Crayon to colour? What else could he use Red Crayon to colour?
- Duncan uses Purple Crayon for grapes, crayons and wizards' hats, but what is he angry about? How does Oliver Jeffers show Purple Crayon's anger in the illustration?
- Why is Beige Crayon sad? What, other than turkey dinners and wheat, could Duncan use Beige Crayon for?
- Duncan loves drawing elephants, but poor old Grey Crayon is dreadfully tired. What other colour, or combination of colours, could Duncan use instead to give Grey Crayon a break?
- Why does White Crayon feel empty and what could Duncan do to solve this problem?
- Why is Black Crayon upset? Think of some more typically colourful objects that Duncan could use Black Crayon for.
- Green Crayon is quite happy with his lot, colouring crocodiles, trees, dinosaurs and frogs, but why are his friends, Yellow Crayon and Orange Crayon, not speaking? What are the two crocodiles in the picture doing, and why do you think Oliver Jeffers chose to show them doing this?

- Yellow Crayon and Orange Crayon each think they are the true colour of the sun. Which do you think is the rightful colour of the sun and what could Duncan do to settle the argument fairly?
- Poor Blue Crayon is short and stubby from overuse! Which colours could Duncan mix to make blue and give the crayon a rest?
- Pink Crayon is woefully unused and says this is because Duncan thinks it's a girl's colour. Do you think pink is a girl's colour? Why is this?
- Peach Crayon is naked and embarrassed to leave the crayon box! What could Duncan use to clothe Peach Crayon? What could you use Peach Crayon to colour?
- What does Duncan do to stop the crayons from striking? Do you think this solution made the crayons happy and why?
- Examine Duncan's new picture and describe what's going on it. Does this picture solve all the problems the crayons wrote to him about? How?
- We never actually see Duncan, the boy the crayons are writing to, in the book. What do you imagine he's like?

Extra questions for older readers:

- Oliver Jeffers has a distinctive illustrative style. What makes his style so distinctive? Look at characters, colours, fonts, and materials used in his illustration.
- Does this book have a particular moral or message for the reader? If so, what do you think it is?
- The story is told from the unusual perspective of a box of crayons. How are the crayons brought to life? Do they make convincing characters, and why?
- *The Day the Crayons Quit* is commended for its originality. What makes this book original? Look at characterisation, the format of the storytelling, design and illustration for discussion cues.
- All of the letters are addressed to Duncan, yet we never see him. Why do you think the author and illustrator chose not to show Duncan and do you agree with this decision?
- Have a look at the fonts used in *The Day the Crayons Quit*. Why is some of the text typed and the rest handwritten? What role do the fonts play in telling the story?
- Examine the artwork throughout the book. Can you identify the materials and techniques Oliver Jeffers used in illustrating *The Day the Crayons Quit*?
- It is suggested that Duncan doesn't use the Pink Crayon because he thinks pink is a girl's colour. Which colours are associated with girls and which are associated with boys, and why are they associated with certain genders? What else (for example: jobs, clothing, sports) is thought of as being particularly 'male' or 'female', and why do we think of them as such?

Activities

1. *The Day the Crayons Quit* is the result of collaboration between an author and an illustrator – Oliver Jeffers created the artwork and Drew Daywalt wrote the story. Get into pairs and collaborate on your own story, with one person writing the words and the other making the pictures.
2. Duncan solves the crayons' problems by thinking creatively. Have a look at each of the crayons' letters again and make your own picture in response. For example - Red Crayon is overworked so you might want to use very little red in your picture, Purple Crayon hates being drawn outside the lines so be very neat when using purple, use Beige for something other than wheat or a turkey dinner. Use all the colours featured in *The Day the Crayons Quit* to make your picture and be sure to use, you guessed it, crayons.
3. Stage a dramatisation based on *The Day the Crayons Quit*. You'll need 12 actors to play the Crayons, and you can decide whether or not to cast someone as Duncan. How will you stop the Crayons from striking in your play?
4. Pretend you are Duncan and write a letter of response to the crayons. Will you apologise to the crayons in your letter or will you defend your right to use them however you see fit? Don't forget to begin your letter with "To" or "Dear" and finish with the appropriate sign-off.
5. Imagine how each of the Crayons felt after Duncan made the picture that earned him a 'good work' sticker from his teacher. Are they happy, relieved, or excited? Maybe you think some of them are still sad or angry. Draw a picture of the Crayons that illustrates how they feel now. Like Oliver Jeffers, use their facial expressions and body language to convey their emotion.

SKULDUGGERY PLEASANT: LAST STAND OF DEAD MEN

Derek Landy

Suggested age 12+



ISBN: 978-0007489206 (HBK)

HarperCollins

Summary

In this, the eighth installment in the Skulduggery Pleasant series, war has finally come. But it's not a war between good and evil, or light and dark – it's a war between Sanctuaries. For too long, the Irish Sanctuary has teetered on the brink of world-ending disaster, and the other Sanctuaries around the world have had enough. Allies turn to enemies, friends turn to foes, and Skulduggery and Valkyrie must team up with the rest of the Dead Men if they're going to have any chance at all of maintaining the balance of power and getting to the root of a vast conspiracy that has been years in the making.

Judges Comments: Landy's ability to write a story of this scale and complexity with such dexterity and control is incredible. This is a rollicking good read about war, betrayal, power, and temptation.

About The Author:

Derek Landy is far too modest to talk about any awards or accolades his books may have won. He will not, for instance, mention the fact that his first book, *Skulduggery Pleasant*, won the Bord Gáis Energy Irish Book of the Decade Award AND the Red House Children's Book Award, or that his second, *Playing With Fire*, won an Irish Book Award for Children's Book of the Year, or that his third, *The Faceless Ones*, is his mother's personal favourite. He lives in Ireland with a variety of cats, a German Shepherd, and two geriatric Staffordshire Bull Terriers who keep peeing on his kitchen floor because they think it's funny.



Reading Journal

The suggestions below highlight some important things to look out for as you progress through the book. Try to make notes and record your changing responses to the story, as this will be useful when you come to tackle the questions and activities featured on the following pages...

Before you begin the book:

- Take a look at the cover of the book and write down what you think the story will be about.
- Look at the phrase at the bottom of the cover 'No one is safe.' How does the phrase interact with the title and the image?

Read the two introductory chapters

- Take note of your initial reaction to the book. Does it hold your interest? Is there one sentence in particular that grabs your interest?
- How do you think this section is preparing you for the later events?
- A mechanical robot – 'The Engineer' is mentioned – what do you think of the name of the robot?

Read Chapters 1-10

- Throughout these chapters keep note of the characters as they are introduced and how they are related.
- How does Skulduggery trick Broin?
- What presents does Valkyrie get for her birthday? How does the variety of presents represent the different sides of personality?
- Scapegrace changes gender. What problems of gender stereotypes are presented?

Read Chapters 11-20

- The Supreme Council's channel is hacked – what is the role of media? Do you think this happens in your life as well?
- What do you think the importance of the vision is? What do you predict will happen based on this vision?
- Finbar says: "You are an evil man for coming here to kill me and you're an evil man for forcing me to do what I've had to do. I hope you burn in whatever hell you believe in." How does this quote make you feel? Why do you think it's important?

Read Chapters 21-30

- Chapter 21 is called "Making Plans." Predict what you think plans will be made in the coming chapters.

- The setting keeps shifting – do you find it confusing to follow the story?
- Valkyrie is now considered one of the ‘dead men.’ Do you think her role has massively changed or the group has just accepted her importance?

Read Chapters 31-40

- Madame Mist is acting mysteriously – what do you think is driving that?
- Valkyrie fights with her reflection. Have you ever felt that you had two different personalities fighting inside of you?
- China claims to have nothing to lose. Do you think this will make her a good or bad fighter?

Read Chapters 41-50

- Scapegrace thinks about his life, ‘So what if he couldn’t be a notorious villain or an adored hero? He could still be a good person. He could still live a good life, now that he’d thrown his mask away.’ What has he learned? Why is it important?
- ‘War is no place for a girl’ – what do you think?

Read Chapters 51-60

- Kenny says: “We’re journalists...we have journalistic integrity. What you... what you were talking about sounded like you’d be telling us what we could and could not... you know.... film.” What are the issues of media presented here? What do you think is the best thing to do?
- Valkyrie puts on the clothes of a Bride – what is the role of clothing and appearance in the novel?

Read Chapters 61-70

- Stephanie is reading Stephen King’s *The Stand*. Look up the book – what is the relevance of this point?
- Skulduggerry admits the Dead Men have fallen – why is that important? Do you agree?

Read Chapters 71-79

- Kenny thinks: ‘War is hell’ – what are the representations of hell in the book?
- Darquesse says Valkyrie is gone – not even a little voice inside her head – do you think this is true?
- Why do you think the book ends the way it does? What do you predict for the next book?

Questions

1. How well do you think the cover and initial phrase conveys the story?
2. The book is over 70 chapters long – did you find the size of the book intimidating? How did you find the pacing?
3. If you have read the other books in the series – how did you find the weaving together of plot threads? If you haven't read the other books how did you find the book as a standalone read?
4. Some say the book lacks a “natural flow” since it jumps around a lot. Did you find this problematic or did you think it was a good way to tell the story?
5. The book seems to jump between genres. Identify the different genres the book could be considered as and pick the one you think works best for the book.
6. There are two wars in the book – The war between Sanctuaries and the war inside Valykrie with herself. How do they mirror each other and what are the differences?
7. Valykrie says: “They have a name for it these days. They have a name for *everything* these days.” (pg 75). How does Landy use naming throughout the book?
8. What roles do religion and superstition play in the book?
9. Landy mixes together horror and comedy throughout the book – how do you think that it comes off?
10. How does war effect the different characters? What do you think is the book says about war?
11. How does Landy build suspense in the novel? Is it effective? Give examples.
12. Some critics have claimed that because the book focuses on war it is more of a boys novel – however one of the main characters is female. Do you think the book favours one gender over another?
13. Were you shocked by the ending? Is there anything you would have changed?

Activities

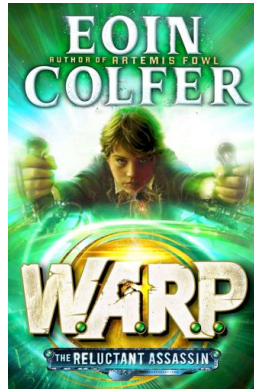
1. Come up with a character card for your favourite character. Include their name, age, magical abilities, profession, outstanding characteristics, and draw a picture of what you think they look like.
2. Names are important in the book. Come up with your own name that mirrors the style of name in the book and explain what it means. Use mythology, books about names and a dictionary. Put all the names in a hat and each person takes out a name and tries to guess who it belongs to.

3. What do you think was the most important part of the book? Design a cover in any style you choose. Come up with a tag line, similar to the one used on the book – “No one is safe.”
4. Landy introduces many new characters in the book. Come up with your own character and describe them as he describes his characters. Be sure to mention physical description, movement and voice. Write a short story explaining how this character fits into the rest of the plot.
5. Imagine you have to create the film version of the novel. Who would you cast as the stars? Re-write your favorite scene in dialogue format.
6. The next Skulduggery Pleasant book is the last in the series. Write what you think will happen in the first chapter.

WARP: THE RELUCTANT ASSASSIN

Eoin Colfer

Suitable ages 10+



ISBN: 978-0141341750 (PBK)

Puffin Books

Summary

The reluctant assassin is Riley, a Victorian boy who is suddenly plucked from his own time and whisked into the twenty-first century, accused of murder and on the run. Riley has been pulled into the FBI's covert W.A.R.P. operation (Witness Anonymous Relocation Program). He and young FBI Agent Chevie Savano are forced to flee terrifying assassin-for-hire Albert Garrick, who pursues Riley through time and will not stop until he has hunted him down. Barely staying one step ahead, Riley and Chevie must stay alive and stop Garrick returning to his own time with knowledge and power that could change the world forever.

Judges Comments: Moving between Victorian London and the present day, Colfer constructs a fantastic fast-paced time-travel adventure with an intricate plot and wonderful characters.

About The Author:

Eoin Colfer is the megaselling author of the Artemis Fowl series, *Half Moon Investigations*, *The Supernaturalist*, *Airman* and *The Legend of . . .* books. He lives with his family in Ireland.



Questions and Activities

Before you read the book:

- Look at the cover carefully – who do you think the reluctant assassin of the title is – and why is he or she 'reluctant'?
- Read the description on the back cover. Does it make you want to read the book?

- What era do you think this novel is set in?

When you have read the book:

- Is it clear from the first few chapters what is unfolding or are you confused? This is how an author sets up suspense. Write down what you think the story is going to be about.
- What two time periods is this novel set in? Do you think the author does a good job differentiate between them? What tools does he use to achieve this successfully?
- What are the pros and cons of writing a book set in the future or in the past? Do you think the author slips up at any point, or does he use the time zones and eras as an effective story-telling tool?
- What do you think of Riley's adopted stage name at the end – what do you think this says about his relationship with Chevie?

Activities:

- This is the first in the W.A.R.P series. If you were writing the next installment, what era would you set it in? Remember you could go to the future!
- This is a novel full of mystery and suspense. How does the author build suspense throughout the novel? Find a chapter that you think is full of suspense and list the ways in which the author builds the tension.
- This novel jumps between time zones. Highlight a few instances where the author relies solely on language to let the reader know what time zone or era you are in. The author also uses the language difference as a tool for humor, find these instances and list them.
- The character Tibor Charismo, uses his 'spitualisim' to predict the future. Highlight the numerous things that would not yet have occurred in 1898 that he seems to know about.
- London is a very different place in 1898 to today. Pick one aspect of daily life e.g. environment, dress, food etc and research how changed London is. You could focus on areas mentioned in the book for example; Old Nicol, Bedford Square etc.
- We meet many larger than life characters in the novel, Garrick, Otto Malarkey, Bob Winkle, Tibor Charismo etc. Imagine you are a casting director. Before you can cast your actors you need to draft a full character profile. The author provided very detailed descriptions, gather them together into a casting notice. Focus on accent, appearance, character traits, dress, attitude etc.

- Garrick will be tricky since he went through the wormhole. How would you deal with this, would you cast a few different actors or the same actor?
- If you went back into the past with some future knowledge what would you bring and what would you do with it? It would be like a superpower, would you use it for good or evil?
- There are great many acronyms and terms in this book along with some cockney colloquialisms. Make a list as you go of any terms or phrases you don't understand and, as a group see if you can help each other out. If not research them.
- The author has written a very strong female character in Chevie but in a few instances we find Riley is unaccustomed to a female acting and dressing how she does. Research the difference in how women were treated, dressed and how they behaved in 1898 in comparison to now.
- H.G Wells wrote the original Time Travel novel, and invented the term 'Time Machine' Research his novel and the impact it had on modern day literature – time travel, time machines etc are all very common today but in 1898 they would have been unheard of. List all the problems dual timelines present an author.
- Below is the summary of the second installment of the W.A.R.P series. Using this write the first chapter of what you think happens. Use your knowledge of this novel to set the scene, do you think Riley and Bob are still running the theatre? Is Chevie a full agent now?

'Young FBI agent Chevie Savano arrives back in modern-day London after a time-trip to the Victorian age, to find the present very different from the one she left. Europe is being run by a Fascist movement known as the Boxites, who control their territory through intimidation and terror. Chevie's memories come back to her in fragments, and just as she is learning about the WARP program from Professor Charles Smart, inventor of the time machine, he is killed by secret service police. Now they are after Chevie, too, but she escapes--into the past. She finds Riley, who is being pursued by futuristic soldiers, and saves him. Working together again, it is up to Chevie and Riley to find the enigmatic Colonel Clayton Box, who is intent on escalating his power, and stop him before he can launch missiles at the capitals of Europe.'

See more at: <http://www.eoincolfer.com/books/title/warp-2-the-hangmans-revolution//#sthash.SCt0hNfm.dpuf>