

The Wish Kin

Joss Hedley

Teachers' Notes

Introduction

The author Joss Hedley inherited storytelling from her father and writing from her mother. She grew up in Wollongong and lives now in Sydney where she tutors in performance studies at university.

Joss' first novel *The Wish Kin* is a futuristic story set in Australia when the earth has been plundered and natural resources depleted. Society has broken down completely, and small groups of people live in suspicion, desperately hoarding their meagre supplies.

Colm and his sister Lydia are part of a generation of children who have never seen rain. As they wander through the landscape, moving north to where they hope to meet up with their father, they hear of a great underground fire that is slowly incinerating the earth. They learn of the Wish Kin – people who are said to have the power to heal the earth at an event called the Rekindling.

Curriculum Links

English: Reading, Writing, Research, Presenting

Creative Arts: Drawing

Science and Technology: Earth and its surroundings, Using Technology

Mathematics: Mapping

PDHPE: Interpersonal relationships

Learning Outcomes

Students will have the opportunity to:

- read texts independently and in groups
- respond to themes and issues in a text
- draw on a range of skills and strategies to read and comprehend a text
- analyse techniques used by authors to create certain effects and use language creatively
- make positive contributions to the planet with solutions to environmental problems
- understand that the activities of people can change the balance of nature
- understand that groups of living things have changed over long periods of time.

Before you read

Look at the title and front cover picture of the novel. Work in pairs and discuss what the story may be about. Share your group's ideas with the rest of the class.

Read the book

Read *The Wish Kin* as directed by your teacher in one of the following ways:

- as a whole class
- in small reading groups
- individually

Stop every now and then to re-evaluate where you think the story may be heading. Discuss your ideas with a friend as well as parts of the story you like and why.





After You Read

Use the following questions to promote discussion of the book. Discuss these questions as a class or write the answers down.

1. What is instinct? How does it work for Lydia? Who else has instinct in the novel? When have you had to use your instinct?
2. What caused Turi to be deformed and rat-like? What toxins are in our environment and in what ways can they be harmful?
3. What are some of the clues that show you the story is set in the future? What details are given to show that some things haven't changed from the present? (Proud entrant of tidy town, 2027')
4. Who are the Wish Kin and what is their job?
5. What is slowly destroying the Earth and why?
6. What is the Inner Speech and how does it help Colm and Lydia?
7. How does Colm find comfort when he becomes fearful or exhausted?
8. Colm and Lydia have to take a risk and trust Moss.
How do you know if you can trust someone? Is it OK to take risks in trusting someone? Explain.
9. Why is the sea such a relief to the children as well as to you, the reader?

Activities

The Future

The Wish Kin is a futuristic novel. Imagine you live in the year 2050. Describe and/or illustrate what your environment may be like. Take into consideration new inventions as well as damage to the environment and how society may be. Draw what your house may look like.

Survival

Picture yourself in the same position as Colm and Lydia, imagining you may have to quickly escape from your home. List what you would take with you in your backpack. Consider how useful each item will be and how heavy they may be to carry long distances. Rank each item in order of importance, explaining why each item is important or useful.



Bush Tucker

On their travels Colm and Lydia have to survive on whatever they can find to eat. Use books and the Internet to research different types of bush tucker, what they are, where they are found and how to prepare them for consumption.

Mapping

Work with a partner and map an escape route from your school to a safe haven. Use a map key as well as coordinates to find things you will need on the way.

First Aid

Take some time to do a first-aid course or read a first-aid manual. Find out the treatments and techniques for the following:

- CPR
- bandaging
- exposure or hypothermia
- heart attack
- stroke
- broken bones
- snake or spider bite

Death and Burial Rituals

Colm and Lydia witness a burial ritual in the outback. With a partner find out about different customs in different cultures for death and burial. Include what happens in modern-day Australia.

Elements

Different natural elements can work for you or against you. In columns list the positives and negatives of these three elements: rain, wind and fire.



Circle Meeting – Nature or Nurture

Moss is brought up in the Clan yet sides with Colm and Lydia in their quest. Have a class circle meeting with the topic: ‘Do you think people become who they are through nature or nurture.’ Go around the circle choosing nature or nurture, discussing the topic, giving reasons for your answers and adding interesting facts.

Industria

The ‘industria’ was a complex labyrinth of cells, tunnels and buildings. Use books or the Internet to study some drawings by the artist M. C. Escher, then try to draw a labyrinth of your own.

Future Roles

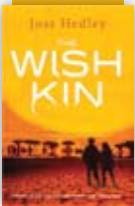
In chapter 11 the different genders take on stereotypical roles with the males hunting and gathering and the females as the homemakers and nurses. Discuss as a class whether you think this is true today and whether you believe it will be the same in your future.

Look after our planet

Colm’s father was a scientist and was trying to come up with a pollution solution. Working in a small group, choose a pollution problem and as a group create ways or invention ideas to solve this problem. List how we can help look after our planet as individuals, governments and businesses. Include small environmental issues as well as larger issues.

Decisions

The hardest thing for Colm and Lydia in saving their planet was to leave their father, knowing he would die. Write down the hardest thing you have ever had to do and the sacrifices involved.



Book Review

Write a short book review for *The Wish Kin*.
Include the following:

- Title
- Author
- Character descriptions
- Plot summary
- Favourite part of the novel
- Recommendation (who you would recommend the book to and why)
- Illustrations