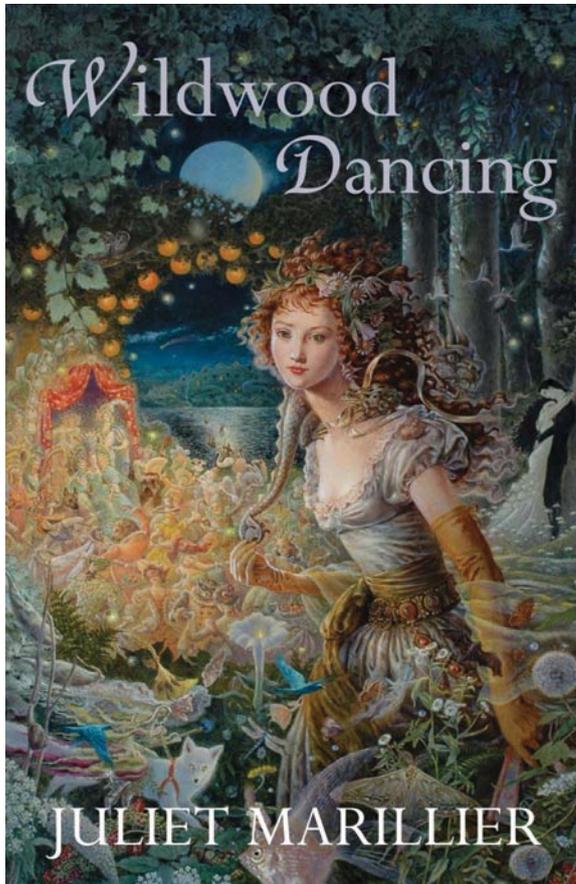


# Wildwood Dancing

## Juliet Marillier

### Teachers' Notes



These Teachers' Notes have been divided into the following five sections:

- Pre-reading
- Reading for understanding
- As a group
- Be creative
- Extension activities

Teachers should be encouraged to springboard from the suggestions into further work with which the class will identify and enjoy. Teachers should simplify, modify and extend any activities to suit the needs and interests of their class.



## PRE-READING

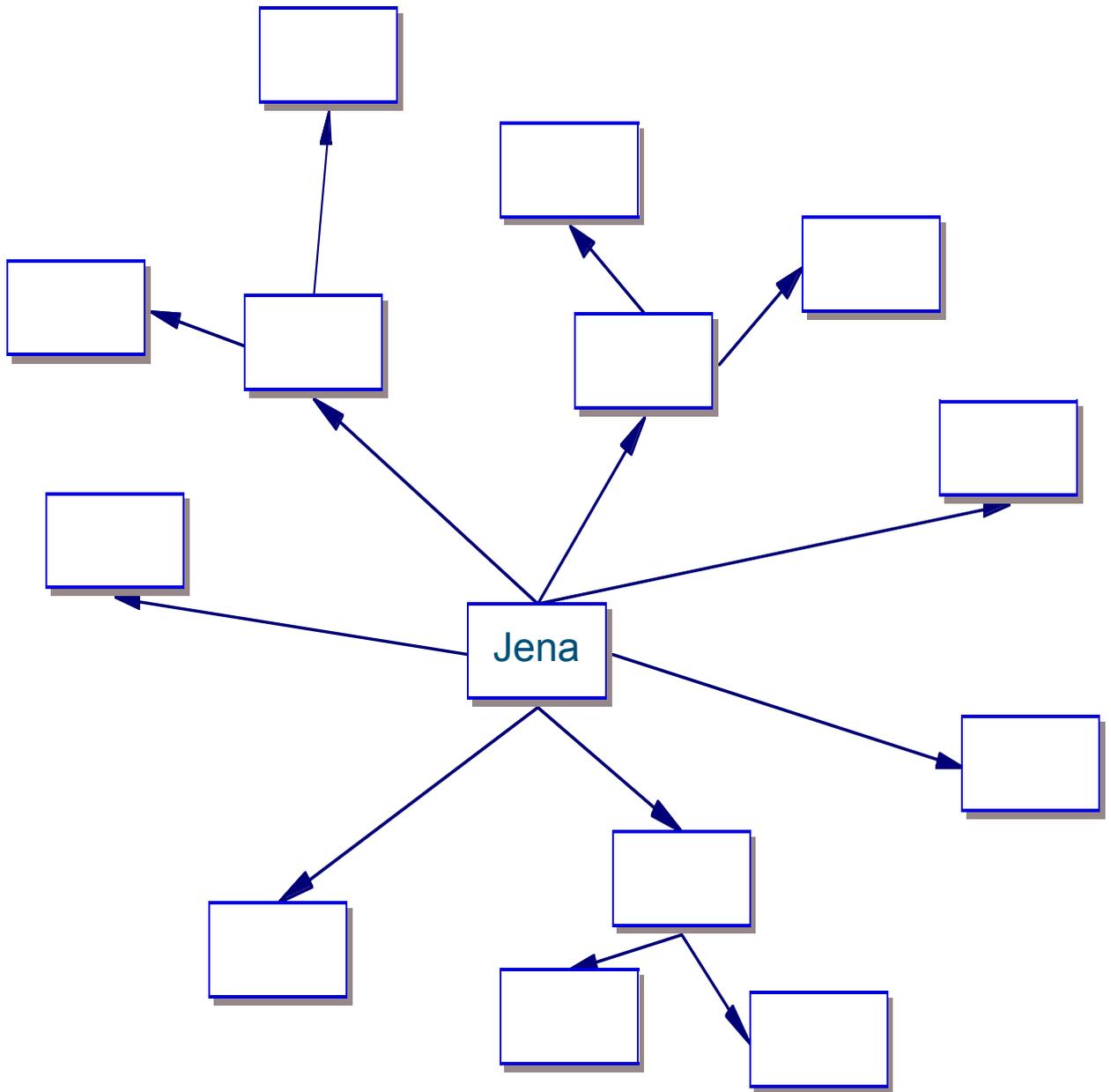
1. Have students make predictions about what they think the book will be about by analysing the front cover in terms of: colour, illustrations, font and layout.
2. Read the blurb of the book with the students. Students should write predictions as to what they think the story will be about.
3. Decide as a class what genre or text type the book might be. From there, make suggestions about what type of characters and narrative could be expected.
4. Discuss as a class the connotations/symbolic meanings of some illustrations on the cover and words in the blurb:
  - Full moon
  - Frog
  - Owls
  - White fox
  - Orange lanterns
  - Forbidden love
  - Young sisters
  - Witch
5. Spend some time working with the phonetic dictionary. Try constructing a class phonetic dictionary with student's names or an Aussie slang phonetic dictionary.



# READING FOR UNDERSTANDING

## CHARACTER STUDY

1. Starting with the first few chapters, students should maintain a character web in which they relate all characters to Jena. Students could continually add to the web as new information is revealed.



2. Encourage students to draw pictures of each of the sisters and to annotate their picture with as much information as they can draw from the text.





3. The villain of the story is Cezar. Have students keep track of his wrong-doings by keeping a 'Cezar's Crimes' list in their books. They could use the template below:

#### CEZAR'S CRIMES

Action	Quote that supports	Page number

4. Formulate a table which can classify the information Jena gives the reader about the Night People. This can also be added to throughout the class reading.

#### THE NIGHT PEOPLE

	Jena's description of their appearance	Jena's opinion of or rumors she has heard about the Night People	What the Night People say of themselves
The Night People			

#### SECRETS

1. Students need to, in their own words, describe the secret the sisters share every full moon.

#### PLOTTING THE ACTION

1. Students should maintain a plot line in their exercise books for the plot of the book.

2. Students should create a tension graph. On a large piece of paper, students should draw a graph which represents the tension of this story. Use a scale of 1-10 for 'tension' on the vertical axis and the number of the chapters in order along the horizontal axis. Individually they should track the tension while reading.

3. Students could also maintain a plot line of the happenings in the Other Kingdom as it is revealed throughout the novel.

4. By the end of the novel, we have learned what really happened the day Costi drowned. Enrolled as detectives, students could track this information in their exercise books recording quotes and page numbers.



## THINKING SKILLS

1. Individually, students should complete a W Chart imagining that they are at one of the full moon parties at the Dancing Glade.

W CHART (Ralph Pirozzo, 2003)

Looks like	Feels like	Sounds like	Tastes like	Thinks like

## AS A GROUP

### MAPPING THE TWO WORLDS

1. As a class, draw a map of the girls' 'real' world and the world of the Other Kingdom. This should be added to and constantly used throughout the class reading.

2. Chapter one gives many descriptions of the path to the Other Kingdom. Locate on the map:

- Piscul Dracului
- Portal
- Gallery of Beasts
- Taul Ielelor: the Deadwash
- Bright Between (read carefully)
- Dancing Glade

### ACTING

1. Re-enact the battle between Costi and Cezar at the end of the novel on pg 323. Students should try acting the scene:

- realistically;
- in silence using only sound effects;
- both in fast forward and slow motion

2. Tell the story of *Wildwood Dancing* in 30 seconds.

• Don't know what 30 second theatre is? It's pretty easy really: it's a piece of theatre which tells a story in 30 seconds. (For example, imagine telling the story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' in 30 seconds. What are the most important pieces of information you would need to include?)

• In groups of 4–5 you have 5–10 minutes to rehearse and should NOT use a script. You may make very simple props (for example name cards) if you need to (but remember this will cut into your rehearsal time).

• Everyone in the group MUST have a role in your play. You may play more than one character. Your aim is to be the group who tells the story clearly and in an entertaining fashion, and in a time closest to 30 seconds.



3. Luck vs magic – Discuss this theme as a class.

- Some students may have their own magic tricks or have them rehearse a silly, fake one (eg: a flea on their palm etc.)
- Ask the class to perform their magic tricks to the person beside them or to the entire class.
- Do you believe in magic? Do you believe in fate? Do you believe in luck or do you think people create their own luck?
- Having discussed the issue, students should write a persuasive speech to their classmates convincing them of their beliefs on this topic.

### EXPERT GROUPS

1. At the end of the novel we learn that Gogu is actually Costi and has been all along.

- Students should be put into groups of five. They should then number off 1–5 within the group. Each student is now responsible for 1/5 of the novel.
- Once allocated new ‘expert’ groups should be formed. All 1’s should move together and do the first fifth of the novel, all 2’s to do the second fifth and so on.
- As expert groups, students should revise their part of the novel making a list of the hints in the novel that suggest that Gogu was Costi all along.
- All original groups should be re-formed and information shared so that the entire group has a list of hints for all five parts of the novel.



## BE CREATIVE

1. Using a computer or library lesson, students should research Romania.
  - Students should design a pamphlet which you would give to people as they arrived in Romania which illustrates this research. It should include a map and reference to the many 'myths' Romania is famous for.
  - The 'Author's Notes' at the end of the book could be a good starting point.

2. Students should design a poster which could advertise the full moon party at Dancing Glade for members of the Other Kingdom.

3. 10 minute journal writing on the following topics:

- The day my deepest darkest secret was exposed!
- The night I visited the Other Kingdom . . .
- If my pet could talk . . .
- My own Other Kingdom would be . . .

*(Rules for journal writing: spelling and grammar isn't checked and try not to lift your pen off the paper!)*

4. Jena has a pet frog named Gogu. Individually students should design their 'ultimate pet'. Students should detail/annotate their design and write a paragraph explaining the features of their ultimate pet. This could then be developed into a piece of work on advertising.

5. Design a new book cover for *Wildwood Dancing*.

6. Students should imagine they are the casting director of *Wildwood Dancing* the movie. Using famous actors, or members of their family, they should decide who is to play each character and in one sentence explain why they have chosen that person and what makes them ideal to play the part.

7. In role as costume designers students should interpret the information given on page 159, and draw/design the girls' party dresses.

8. Create a storyboard or comic strip re-telling the events of the entire novel in only 15 frames.



## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

### PERSPECTIVE AND POSITIONING

1. On page 115 Jena leaves Gogu behind. Students could develop a personal narrative in form as a diary or letter, from Gogu's perspective.
2. Until the very end of the novel, we are positioned to doubt the good intentions of the Night People. Using the information recorded in their 'Night People Table' students should write in role as Tadeusz. They should be encouraged to reposition the audience to feel as if the Night People have been grossly misunderstood.
3. On page 113 Jena runs away after a conversation with Tadeusz. Students should write her diary reflecting on this conversation, her concerns about Tati and her feelings about losing Gogu.
4. We are positioned to dislike Cezar by the author. Students should imagine that they are Cezar at the end of the novel and write a letter to the editor as Cezar that will position the audience to like him and/or to understand the reasons for his actions.

### TRANSFORMING TEXT

1. Write a news report for the Brasov Gazette detailing the events of
  - the 'capture' Cezar talks about on page 167.
  - Cezar and Costi's fight on page 323.
  - The day Costi drowned.

### THEMES

#### 1. Control

- In order for Jena to find true happiness she must forfeit control of many things. Discuss.

#### 2. Sacrifice

- Jena, Gogu, Costi, Tati, Sorrow and Cezar must all sacrifice things in order to achieve happiness. Students could begin by listing the sacrifices and then develop this into an analytical essay based on the following topic: 'Characters in Wildwood Dancing are asked to sacrifice things in order to achieve balance and harmony in both worlds.' Evaluate this statement using specific examples from the text.



### 3. Love

- Sorrow and Tati are forbidden to love each other. Students should brainstorm as many stories that they can think of which revolve around the concept of forbidden love.
- Develop this work into a play script in which students individually write about two characters trapped in a forbidden love.
- Jena and Costi fall in love. Students could discuss how large a role physical appearances play in falling in love with someone. Internet romances and arranged marriages could also be researched. An informative or persuasive oral might follow.

### 4. Forgiveness

- To what extent does this novel explore the theme of forgiveness? Discuss.

### 5. Trust

- Begin by playing some trust games with the class such as blindfolded walks and trust falls.
- As a class, discuss how the theme of trust is developed in the novel. Through what events and characters?
- In pairs, students should discuss the trust put in the hands of Cezar and how it is abused.
- '*Don't trust, don't trust, don't trust . . .*' Jena says to herself on page 299. Through what incidents and characters does Jena learn to do this?

