



The Puzzle Ring

Kate Forsyth

Teachers' Notes

Introduction

Kate Forsyth is the internationally bestselling author of numerous books for children and adults. She won five Aurealis awards in a single year for five books in her 'Chain of Charms' series. Kate lives by the sea in Sydney with her family and pets.

Her latest book, *The Puzzle Ring*, is the story of twelve-year-old Hannah Rose Brown, who learns that her family is cursed. She travels across the world with her mother to find out the truth about her father's disappearance. Hannah discovers a web of dark secrets that plunge her into different worlds and unexpected dangers.



Curriculum Links

English: Reading, Writing, Research, Presenting, Talking, Listening

Creative and Performing Arts: Designing, Drawing

Mathematics: Mapping, Calculations

Science and Technology: Design and Make, Using Technology

HSIE/SOSE: Significant Places and People

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
- devise, act and rehearse drama for performance to an audience
- examine different functions within the English language such as palindromes and similes.

Before you read

Look at the title and front cover picture of *The Puzzle Ring*. Work with a partner and write a short paragraph suggesting what the story may be about. Share your group's ideas with the rest of the class. Share other book titles by Kate Forsyth. Read the back cover of the book. Discuss other stories of a similar genre you may have read and enjoyed.

Read the book

Read *The Puzzle Ring*, stopping every now and then to re-evaluate where you think the story may be heading. Discuss your ideas with a classmate as well as parts of the story you like and why.



After You Read

Use the following questions to promote discussion of the book.

1. Why was Hannah going to be expelled from her school?
2. What is a curse? Do you believe people can be cursed? Why or why not?
3. Why wasn't Scarlett very nice to Hannah when they first met? How did their friendship change?
4. What was a hag stone? What were some of its powers? If you had a hag stone what magic would you do with it?
5. Why do you think Hannah and Donovan got on so well?
6. What was the significance of the number four in the story?
7. What were some of the differences in personality between Hannah and her mother? Did they change throughout the story?
8. What does the word Audacia mean in the story? Name three times the children needed Audacia.
9. Who was Miss Underhill? What was her role in the story?
10. How did the children get rid of Irata, the evil queen?



Activities

Family Crest

Hannah's mother received a letter with their family crest on it. Use this example on page 4 as inspiration in designing a special crest for your family. Think carefully about the shapes, symbols and colours. Draw or make it!

World Travel

Hannah moves from Australia to Scotland. Locate Scotland on a world map. Calculate the distance between Scotland and Australia (from Sydney to Edinburgh). Max's mother came from Malta. Locate and mark Malta on the map too. Calculate the distance between Malta and Scotland.

Word Play

In the book the word maudlin is used. Maudlin means sad and sentimental. Find some interesting similes of your own for these ordinary words – nice, old, funny, happy, young ... Add some more of your own.

Wintersloe Castle

Using the description on page 29, sketch your idea of Wintersloe Castle. If you have access to recyclable materials, make a 3-D model of the castle.

Action

Work in groups of 4–6 students. Choose a section of the story to act out for the class. Write, rehearse and perform your piece for the class. You may bring in props and costumes. Tell the class why your group chose to act this particular piece.

Titles

Various royal titles are mentioned in the story. Research these different titles and write what each means. For example, Count, Viscount, Earl, Queen and King.



Palindromes

Palindromes are words or numbers that read the same backwards and forwards. There are many palindromes in *The Puzzle Ring*; for example, '88' and 'Hannah'. Research more examples of single words and sentences that are palindromes (e.g. 'Do geese see God?'). Find out what the longest single-word palindrome in the English language is and who coined it.

Special Dates

Work with a partner to learn about the winter solstice and the spring equinox. Find out when they are and what they mean. Check if their dates are the same in the Northern Hemisphere and the Southern Hemisphere. Share your information with the class.

Halloween

Find out about the origin of Halloween as well as traditions linked with this event. Work with a friend to present your information as a PowerPoint display or use a computer program you have access to. If you celebrate Halloween, write down what you do. What is the difference between 'guising' and 'trick and treating'?

Secret Codes

Hannah has to decode her father's writings. Invent your own special language or secret code. Write a secret message or code for a friend to decipher.

Circle Meeting

Discuss the topic 'Time travel does exist'. Go round the circle saying whether you agree or disagree with the topic. Go round the circle again giving reasons for your answers and adding new ideas. Keep going round the circle, adding interesting ideas and comments about the topic. You may say Pass at any time.



Research Projects

Choose one of the following topics to research:

1. Mary, Queen of Scots. Include the dates of her birth and death, family history, places she lived, countries she ruled, how she died and interesting facts.
2. The cycles of the moon. Include the names of the cycles of the moon, when the cycles occur and interesting facts.
Present your findings in an interesting way.

Recount

Re-read the section of the book where Hannah is pulled down into the water on page 171. Write a short recount of this part of her adventure. Give a personal comment on how she must have felt.

Angus

Use the description on page 199 to create a cartoon or caricature of Angus both before and after he was turned into a toad.

Think About It

Think about the saying 'keep your friends close, and your enemies even closer' on page 244. Discuss what this statement means. Share whether you agree or disagree with the statement and why. Add any extra comments relevant to the topic.

Book Review

Write a short book review for *The Puzzle Ring*. Include the following:

- Title
- Author
- Favourite characters
- Brief plot summary
- Favourite part of the novel
- Recommendation (who you would recommend the book to and why)
- An illustration.

Visit the author's website (www.kateforsyth.com.au) and email her your review. The best reviews will be put up on the website.