

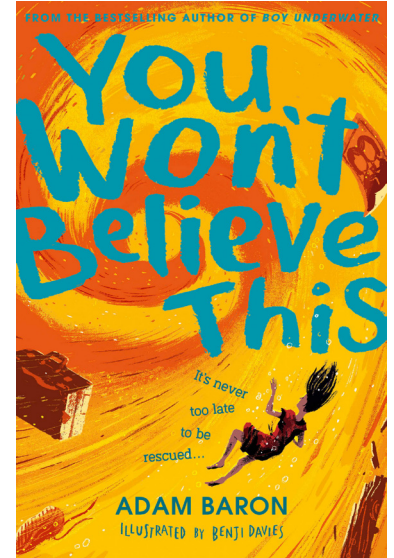
You Won't Believe This by Adam Baron

TEACHING NOTES

FROM THE AUTHOR OF BESTSELLING AND CARNEGIE-NOMINATED DEBUT **BOY UNDERWATER** COMES ANOTHER MOVING, HILARIOUS NOVEL OF FRIENDSHIP AND FAMILY SECRETS, WHICH SHOWS THAT PEOPLE ARE PEOPLE - NO MATTER WHERE THEY'RE FROM.

Here's something you won't believe: someone is doing terrible things to Mrs Martin, Cymbeline Igloo's favourite teacher of all time. Cymbeline has to find the culprit (after he's learned what 'culprit' means). He's also got to help his friend Veronique, whose grandma, Nanai, is dangerously ill.

It seems Nanai has a secret, connected to her arrival in the UK as a Boat Person from Vietnam, a traumatic journey in which she lost her twin sister. Can Cymbeline figure out the mystery in time? One thing is for sure: even the most unexpected people can change your life in wonderful ways . . .



USING THIS RESOURCE

- *inference, interpretation and description*

This resource pack provides an extract from the story where Cymbeline has come to visit his friend Veronique and meets Nanai for the first time.

The teaching sequence below and the supporting resource sheets will give children the opportunity to:

- Practise reading and responding to texts
- Develop their inference skills, reflecting on what they can learn about a character from reading a rich text
- Discuss their own interpretations of a text, using evidence to justify their opinions
- Create their own character descriptions, using a range of techniques to bring a character to life

Depending on time, and the needs of your class, you may want to work through all of these interrelated activities or focus on just one in detail. The resource can be used with the whole class, with a smaller group or even given to individuals to read and then use independently.

TEACHING SEQUENCE

Reading

Read the text (**Resource Sheet 2**) together as a class or group. You might read it aloud to the children or the children could read it themselves, taking it in turns to read sections aloud.

Finding evidence

Next, ask the children to read the text again in pairs or small groups. Allocate each pair / group either Nanai or Cymbeline and ask them to collect information about their character based on the text (using **Resource Sheet 3**).

Feeding back

Once they have finished, ask the children to share what they have found out about their character. Children who were looking at the same character can share their notes with another group to see if they have reached the same conclusions. Children can then pair with a group looking at a different character to share what they have learnt.



Discussion

Now the children are familiar with the text and the characters, have a discussion around the text. You might use the following questions:



Why does Cymbeline tell Nanai that Daisy and Vi, and Vi's sister Frieda, are all good at football? Why might he only mention girls?

What is the first sign that Nanai used to be 'a tomboy' when she was younger?

Can you find two pieces of evidence in the text that tell you Veronique's grandmother is quite old?

Why might the author choose to describe Nanai clutching the photo of her and Thu 'like it was a swimming float'? Do you think this is a good comparison to make? Why / why not?

Cymbeline says refugees are 'people fleeing horrible things'. Why did Nanai have to flee from Vietnam to England?

Was Cymbeline right to 'feel like an idiot' for mentioning not having any brothers or sisters? Why / why not?



These questions are also provided on **Resource Sheet 4**, should you wish to give them to children to answer independently or in pairs before having a whole-class discussion, or in case you would like to use them as a standalone comprehension activity.

Roleplay

Next, ask the children whose version we have of the scene (Cymbeline's: he is telling the story). Tell the children that they are going to work in pairs, taking the role of either Veronique or Nanai and recounting the same scene from their point of view. The children can take it in turns to interview each other, asking questions to prompt a retelling from the child in role. Remind them to try and ask open questions, rather than yes or no questions, e.g.:

“

Tell me about what happened when Cymbeline came to visit and met Nanai...
How did you feel when... What happened next...

”

Afterwards, ask the children to reflect on how Cymbeline, Veronique and Nanai would have slightly different reflections on the same visit: they would have noticed different things, would have felt differently about different moments and would have known more or less about certain things.



Writing

Ask the children to choose either Nanai or Veronique and retell the scene from the story from their perspective. Share with them what might make for an effective piece of writing.

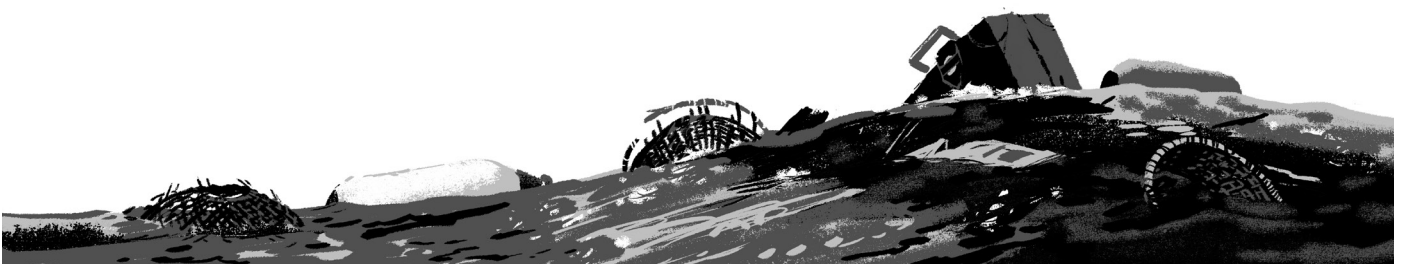
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For example:

- Write in role as one character
- Use the first person (I saw... I couldn't believe it when...)
- Write accurately about what happened
- Write using the voice of the character from whose perspective you are writing
- Share how your character feels as well as describing what happened

”

They could use **Resource Sheet 5** to write their piece or write it on paper/in their book as usual.



Before writing, draw their attention to an aspect of author's craft that can be seen in ***You Won't Believe This***. For example, you might focus on how the author captures Cymbeline's voice, looking at:

“

The use of brackets to comment on what is happening -
e.g. (which looked suspiciously clean)

Capital letters for emphasis - e.g. Oh NO; felt like such an IDIOT

Use of colloquial language - e.g. no bother; blimey; the little one's cute, actually

”

The children could then be encouraged to use some of these features in their own writing.

Evaluation

Once the children have finished their writing, ask them to share their work with a partner or look at some examples together as a class, asking pupils to share the parts they are especially pleased with. Once they have had some feedback, they can look at their work again and make some changes to improve it.

Further reading

After reading and discussing the extract, hopefully some children will be inspired to read the book itself. You could read it aloud as a class novel or direct children to where they can find a copy to read themselves: the book corner, school library, local library or a local bookshop. They might also enjoy Adam Baron's first novel for young people, the Carnegie-nominated ***Boy Underwater***, in which Cymbeline Igloo uncovers a heart-breaking secret about his own family history.



You Won't Believe This

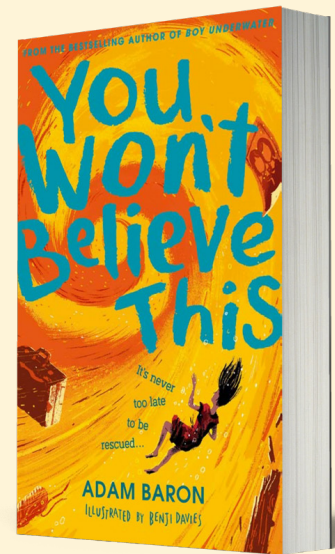
by Adam Baron

Cymbeline Igloo lives with his mum in South London and loves football and art. As his favourite teacher, Mrs Martin, sings about him:

*If you need to get a penalty, don't throw in the towel –
Cymbeline Igloo can draw a foul.*

But someone is doing terrible things to Mrs Martin. Cymbeline has to find the culprit (after he's learned what 'culprit' means). He's also got to help his friend Veronique, whose grandma, Nanai, is dangerously ill. Can Cymbeline figure out the mystery in time?

In this part of the story, Cymbeline has come to visit Veronique and has met Nanai for the first time.



'Seems you really like football, Cymbeline.'

'Course. Did you ever play?'

Nanai said no, and when I told her how Daisy and Vi, and Vi's sister Frieda, were all really good, she pushed herself up from her chair. I fetched the ball I'd given Veronique for Christmas (which looked *suspiciously clean*) and we played in their garden. Nanai hopped about like *crazy*. Defensively she was very strong (her walking stick helped). As an attacking midfielder she was also impressive. She might not have got round Jacky Chapman, but she nutmegged Veronique no bother and scored a goal between two flowerpots. She was tired then, so I only added two minutes on for stoppages. We helped her back to her chair and she beamed at both of us. Veronique especially.

Veronique sat on the edge of her chair and Nanai took her hand before doing something a bit weird. She pushed Veronique's index finger into a triangle and gave it a little nibble! Veronique rolled her eyes.

'She says it's because I'm so delicious,' she explained. 'When I was a baby she wanted to eat me.'

Nanai giggled, and Veronique rolled her eyes again (though I could tell she secretly loved it). And then Veronique brought Nanai up to date on her French and Chinese classes, fencing competitions, violin, clarinet, ukulele and piano lessons, and how she'd

recently got into Tolstoy.

'At your age! Do you like Tolstoy, Cymbeline?'

'I like *Toy Story*. Lance has got a Buzz Lightyear.'

'Your brother, is he, this Lance?'

'Friend. I don't have a brother- or a sister,' I added, which seemed to be a mistake because Nanai stared at me before getting a little panicked, until she turned to the photos on the table by her chair. There was one of a big ship, another of people who looked like they were probably her parents. She grabbed the third one, though - just her as a young woman with another young woman who looked just like her.

Nanai clung to the picture, tight, mumbling to herself as she drifted off to sleep.

Veronique reached forward and pulled Nanai's rug up over her knees. 'She holds on to it all night,' she said, meaning the photograph.

'What? Why?'

'It's a photo of her and Thu,' said Veronique.

'Thu?'

'Her twin sister. You know I told you Nanai was a refugee?'



I did know. It was one of the things that made Veronique and her family

SO interesting. Nanai had been one of what British people called the Vietnamese boat people - refugees, like the people fleeing horrible things now are. They were Hoa, Chinese people living in Vietnam, and they had to escape from Vietnam because the government was burning their houses.

'Well, their ship sank,' said Veronique. 'Or something like that. I'm not *too* sure. Nanai was rescued. Her sister wasn't.'

Oh NO.

I looked down at Nanai, that second time I met her, and felt like such an IDIOT. Talking about not having a sister! I couldn't believe I'd done it.

'Not your fault,' said Veronique, guessing what I was thinking. 'Come on.'

She pulled me into the garden.

'I should have told you,' she said, 'about Thu. It's why Nanai hates being asked about being a refugee. She won't talk about it.'

'Blimey. And they were twins? Were they identical?'

'No. Nanai was a tomboy, she says.'

'You can tell that by the football.'

'But Thu was quiet and arty. Musical. And really beautiful. Nanai says that's where I...'

'What?'

Veronique blushed. 'Doesn't matter. Anyway, I wish I had a sister, don't you?'

I blinked at Veronique, not knowing how to answer. For some reason I thought about Stephan's two little girls, who he brings over at the weekend sometimes. They're okay and the little one's cute, actually. She climbs on my knee and calls me Thimbeline. She draws pictures of me that are hilarious.

But I just shrugged.

I couldn't get the image out of my head, of Nanai clutching that photo like it was a swimming float. Something to keep her safe.

It made me feel close to her and for a second I didn't know why. But then I did. You see, I've lost someone too. It happened when I was tiny, though, and I never knew them. I couldn't imagine what it must have been like for Nanai to lose her twin the way she did.

I shivered, and then Veronique's dad called us in for supper. All through it I thought of that photo in Nanai's hands, and how frail and tired she looked as she clung on to it.



COLLECTING EVIDENCE ABOUT A CHARACTER

Use the table below to collect evidence about either Cymbeline or Nanai. Note down evidence from the text for each point that you make. Remember, the text might give you information directly or you might have to make an inference - reading between the lines to discover something about your character.



My character is _____

<i>What I know about the character:</i>	<i>Evidence from the text:</i>

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WHAT HAVE WE DISCOVERED?

Read the extract from *You Won't Believe This* and then answer the following questions in the spaces provided.

Q1 *Why might Cymbeline tell Nanai that 'Daisy and Vi, and Vi's sister Frieda' are all good at football? Why might he only mention girls?*

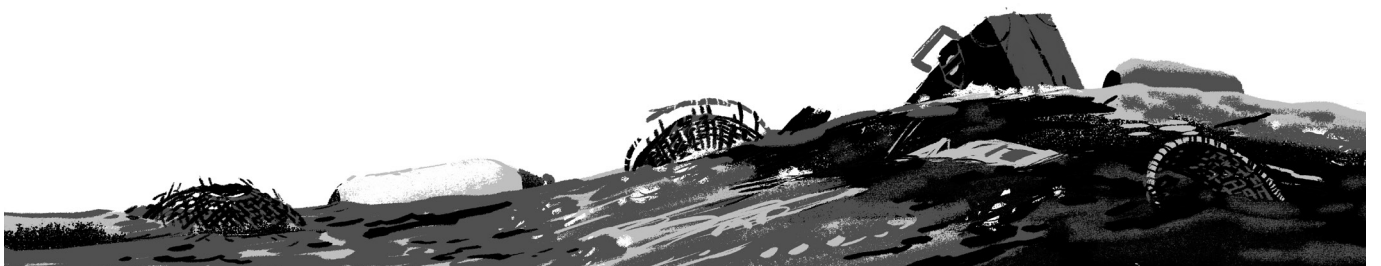
Q2 *What is the first sign that Nanai used to be 'a tomboy' when she was younger?*

Q3 Find two pieces of evidence in the text that tell you that Veronique's grandmother is quite old.

1)

2)

Q4 Why might the author choose to describe Nanai clutching the photo of her and Thu 'like it was a swimming float'? Do you think this is a good comparison to make? Why/why not?



Q5 *Cymbeline says refugees are 'people fleeing horrible things'. Why did Nanai have to flee from Vietnam to England?*

Q6 *Was Cymbeline right to 'feel like an idiot' for mentioning not having any brothers or sisters? Why/why not?*



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WRITING IN ROLE

Retell the scene from *You Won't Believe This* where Cymbeline visits Veronique and meets Nanai. You can write in role as either Nanai or Veronique.



Remember to:

- Write in role as one character
- Use the first person (I saw... I couldn't believe it when...)
- Write accurately about what happened
- Write using the voice of the character from whose perspective you are writing
- Share how your character feels as well as describing what happened