

Someone Like Me

By Elaine Forrestal
Published by: Penguin Books (Australia) Ltd

Before reading the book

1. First read the blurb on the back cover of ***Someone Like Me***. What sort of story is this going to be?
1. Now read the blurb on this page. What sort of story is this going to be?



*You're a snooper. Snoopers are trouble.
Where I come from they don't survive'.*

Tas's uneventful life is changed for ever when Enya and her family move into the farm next door. They have come to Australia to escape the violence of their home in Northern Ireland, but when the past catches up with them, Tas is trapped in the middle.

OR: Go to the bottom of this page and find the picture of a boy swinging on a rope.

Compare the two boys on this page with the one on the cover of ***Someone Like Me***.

Write a few comments about each one:

- a) What sort of kid is he?
- b) Would you like to be him?
- c) Would you choose him as your friend?

Someone Like Me is published in Australia, the United Kingdom and Italy. Each edition has a different cover illustration and different blurbs.

Why do you think this is?

WARNING: Read the book now!

If the ending of ***Someone Like Me*** is revealed to you before you read the book, it will change the way you view the characters.

Analysis and application of knowledge

Read and discuss the novel.

Throughout the text there are lots of clues to the surprise ending.

Can you find them?

eg. P11 That was the good news.

P14 She's scared of the dark. But I'm not. etc.

1. Using the new information revealed at the end of the book, write a follow-on chapter.

Music is very important in Tas's life. Not only does he have his own CD player, he is familiar with his father's CD collection.

4. Make a list of:

- a) the songs he plays on the mouth organ that Granny Anne gives him
- b) his favourite classical CDs
- c) the instruments he plays during the course of this story.

There is a turning point in this novel when the orchestra comes to Tas's school. How does this incident change Tas's life? What effect does it have on

- a) the other kids in the school?
- b) his family?
- c) his future?

5. Turn this Chapter of the book into a play. You could produce it in two acts. The first using the Prokofiev version of Peter and the Wolf with actors playing the parts of the characters in the folktale. In the second act, you could use other class members for the musicians, the kids and Mr Mac. Or, you could divide it into two separate plays.

6. Make a list of the things you can do now that you couldn't do when you were younger. Describe how you felt the first time you achieved one of those things.

Extension activities

Develop a band or a pop group using the kids in the class who already play instruments.

Invite a local group or orchestra to come and perform at your school.

Go on an excursion to hear an orchestra or band play.

Choose three things that you read about in ***Someone Like Me*** that you would like to know more about.

Someone Like Me: the musical

This can be performed as reader's theatre or adapted for the stage as a full scale, end-of-year musical with all the characters committing their lines to memory. As a school drama production it has the advantages of providing parts for a whole class full of kids and being very economical to produce as most of the costumes and props will already be in the school.

NB. The pieces of music used in the original story can, of course, be changed to suit the group performing the play. You will notice that the scenes do not necessarily appear in the same order as in the book and some elements of the original story have been omitted.

Act 1

Scene 1: (In which Grella visits and gives Tas his grandfather's mouth organ.)

Tas's house

Bottom of p14 (last paragraph, Puffin edition) to
End of Chapter 2 on p17.

Scene 2: (In which we meet Mr Mac, Dreadlock, Enya and the rest of the class)

Classroom

Beginning of Chapter 3, to
End of second last paragraph on p21.

Scene 3: (In which Tas and Enya get to know each other while listening to

Beethoven's 5th Symphony)

Tas's house

Second paragraph, p22, to
Bottom of p24.

Scene 4: (In which Enya tells Tas she is not allowed to visit his house anymore)

On the school bus

P69 (after the break) to
End of Chapter 8.

Act 2

Scene 1: (In which Tas fights with Dreadlock and his gang)

Schoolyard

Middle of p39 ('When I get to school...') to
Middle of p43 then
P120, second last paragraph, to
P121 ('Dreadlock head-butts me in the chest...') then
P47, beginning of Chapter 6 to
Middle of p48 ('Their lives weren't worth living...')

Scene 2: (In which we meet Tas's parents and Tas runs away, feeling rejected by everyone)

Principal's Office

Middle of p48 to
Middle of p50 (second part of this scene could take part outside the office)

Scene 3: (Tas, feeling miserable, teaches himself to play *Four Strong Winds* and/or *Danny Boy*)

Tas's hideout

P81, beginning of Chapter 10 to
Top of P83

Act 3

Scene 1: (In which Tas discovers that he is not completely useless and can do something that none of the other kids can do)

School Assembly Area

Whole of Chapter 17. (*Peter and the Wolf*)

Scene 2: (In which Enya explains why her family left Ireland and why her father doesn't want anyone to get too close to them.)

On the school bus

The dialogue in this scene will have to be changed to leave out any mention of the shooting, but keep the sense of reconciliation between Tas and Enya. Bottom of p124, to end of Chapter 16.

Scene 3: (In which Tas auditions for a music scholarship)

The city school

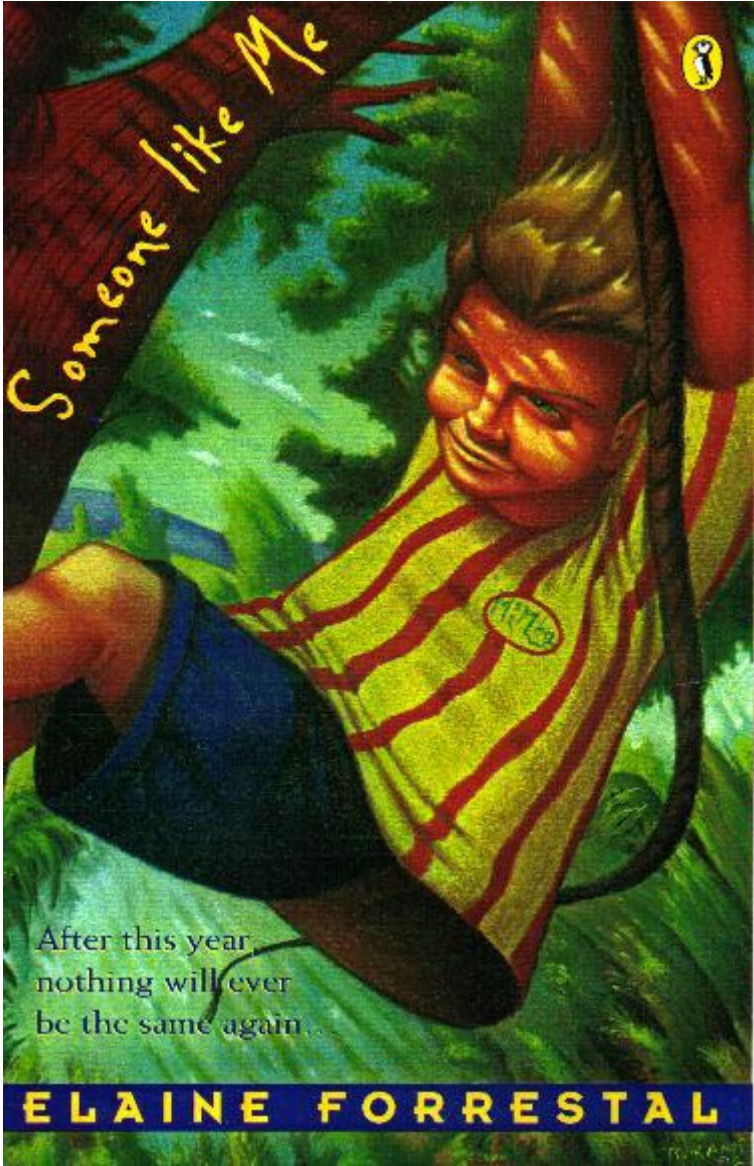
Beginning of Chapter 19 to

Bottom of p147 ('... warm, comfortable feeling')

Scene 4: (In which, at an end-of-year party at the school, Mr Mac announces that Tas had won a music scholarship. Everyone congratulates Tas – even Dreadlock, though a bit hesitantly. The scene ends with the others all leaving and Tas standing alone on the stage, looking to the future.)

This format can, of course, be varied to suit individual needs.

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Someone Like Me

After this year,
nothing will ever
be the same again...

ELAINE FORRESTAL