

Teachers' notes  
Written by Dr Pam Macintyre



## *Our Australian Girl – series 1*

### **General Introduction**

Australia is a country of immigrants, apart from our original inhabitants, and this series explores how some came to live in this country through a focus on the experiences of children, particularly girls. As well, Poppy's story examines the impact of colonisation on Indigenous Australians.

Exploration of this series of books provides excellent source material for supporting the focuses of the Australian Curriculum: English (ACARA, 2010): *'...helps students to engage imaginatively and critically with literature to expand the scope of their experience'* (p1). Students at this level can read to expand their repertoire, find out about other times, places and aspects of Australia's history.

These carefully researched books demonstrate how language is dynamic *'and that changes to English are related to historical developments and the geographical differences of users over the centuries...'* (ACARA, 2010, p3) This series will also support the English curriculum and its relation to history *'Literature, with its emphasis on studying texts from a range of historical and cultural contexts helps students understand the perspectives and contributions from people around the world and both the past and present'* (ACARA, 2010, p14).

The units of work around this series will involve reading, viewing, speaking, writing, creating and reflecting on various aspects of each text.



# *Meet Grace*

## By Sofie Laguna

Set in 1808, this story tells about a poor orphan girl in London living under circumstances that seem utterly shocking from today's perspective. There is no social welfare, no supports for the underprivileged, and so orphaned Grace ekes out an existence looking for metal in the mudflats at low tide of the river Thames. Her uncle has taken her in, but he is brutal and relies on her meagre earnings to provide him with money for drink.

Desperate and hungry, Grace steals apples and a horse, is caught, sent to prison, and through the compassion of a judge, is not sentenced to hanging but to be transported to Australia. On board the *Indispensable* she makes a friend and begins a journey to be followed in the next installment. Many Australians have convict forbears who contributed to the establishment of the country we now know. This is the story of one of them.

### **Life in London the Nineteenth Century**

- The author provides a vivid picture of the life of the poor during the Industrial Revolution. Familiar parts of London are the setting, such as Blackfriars Bridge, Chatham Square, Newgate Prison, St Paul's Cathedral.

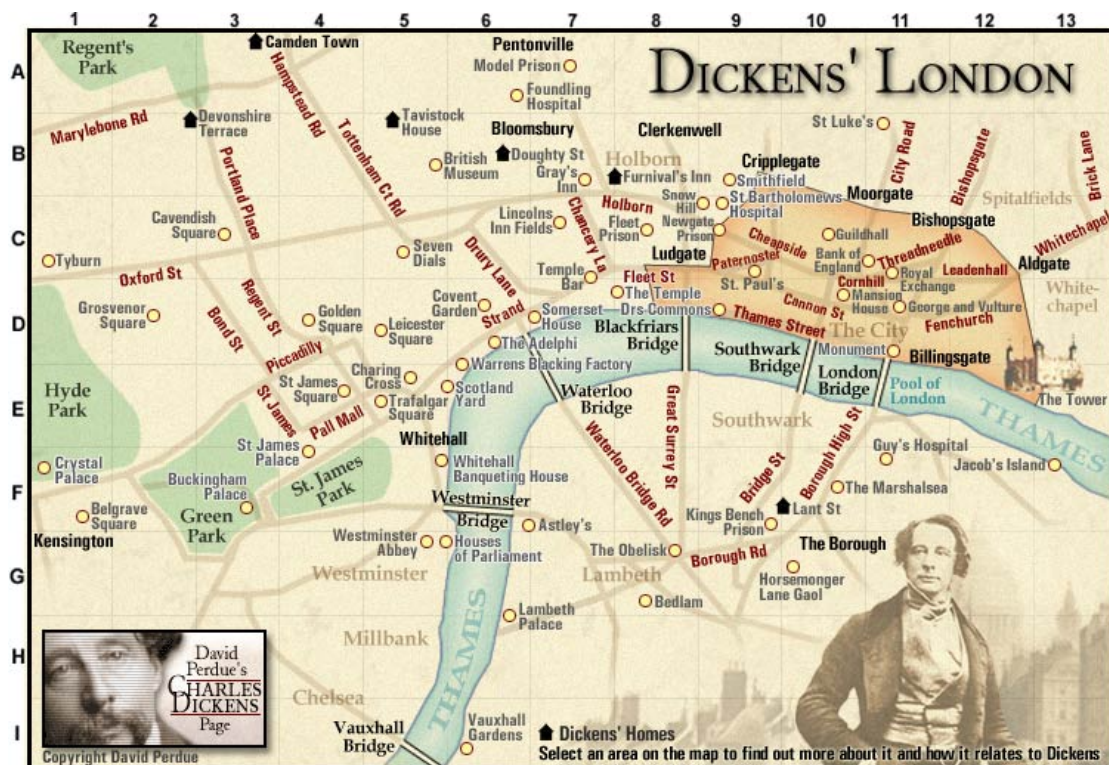
The map below gives students an idea of where Grace lived. This map or another could be enlarged and put on a smart board or chart.

#### Younger students

- Mark or highlight areas as they are mentioned in the story.
- The atmosphere of the city is evocatively created, such as on page 7 with descriptions of rubbish-filled streets, fish-mongers, noise. Act out the sounds of the street and record them.

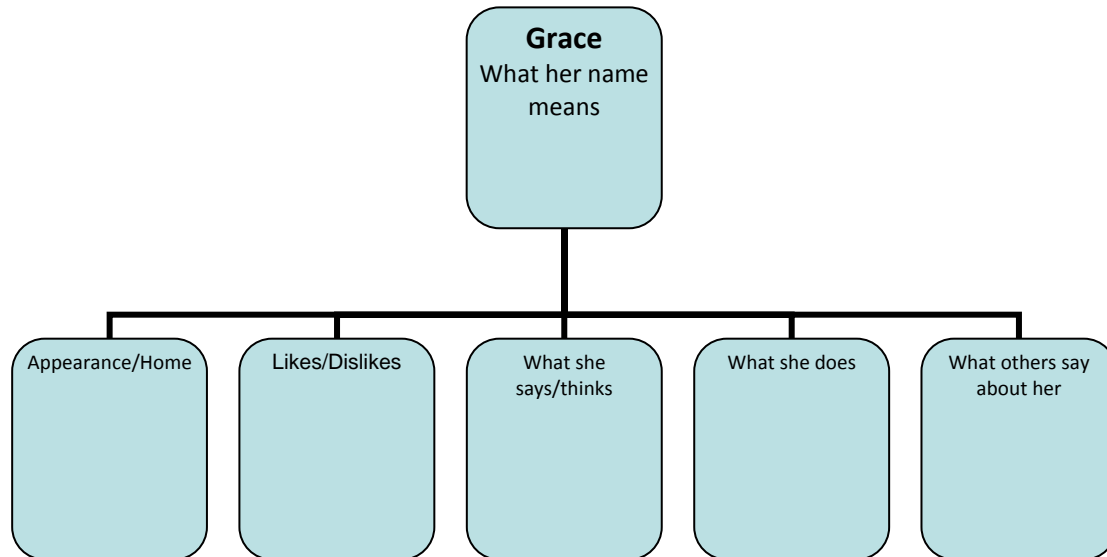
## Older Students

- There are many surprising things in this book that students might not have heard of before, such as the fact that children were hanged for stealing small things (p12).
- As they read have students put sticky notes in the pages to mark things they would like to discuss and/or to find out more about.
- Pp17 busy Fleet Street. These pages describe the well-to-do Londoners. See if students can find images on the web of 'Gentlemen wearing high hats and shiny boots and coats with brass buttons' and 'Ladies in bonnets' in their carriages.
- While this map of London during the times of Charles Dickens is later than 1808, much is the same as in Grace's time and certainly the circumstances of the poor inspired Dickens. Mark on the map places that are mentioned in the book and see if you can work out where Grace lives.
- Are the places mentioned in the book still in existence today? Find out.



## Character profile of Grace

The novel focuses on one character, so the following are suggestions about how students might build up a picture of Grace. It can be made simpler for younger students and more in-depth for older ones. It could be done graphically, such as



- Authors choose the names of their characters carefully. Find out what Grace means and discuss why the author might have chosen that name.
- The author doesn't tell us what Grace looks like, but she tells us what she likes and doesn't like. For instance she likes singing and the memory of her mother's warm arms around her (p8) and she loves horses (pp.17). Find out what else she likes and doesn't like.
- The author also tells us what Grace wears (*'a filthy pinafore...more like a rag than a dress'* p19) and what she likes to eat, such as cinnamon buns. You can create a character by showing what they eat, wear, do, say, without having to describe them directly. This can be helpful to students when they create characters in their own writing. Find other descriptions of Grace and what she likes to eat.
- Writers also use what characters think and say to show us what they are like. For example, on page 16, Grace thinks to herself that she would love to sell flowers from her own horse and cart. Have students

find other examples of what Grace thinks and says that give a picture of what she is like.

- Grace lives in a crowded street. Have students imagine their picture of the house. For instance, on page 26 we know there is a hearth for a fire, candles, and that she sleeps on a pile of sacks and rags. Find other descriptions and draw what you imagine the house looks like inside.
- Find examples of what other characters think of Grace. For instance, Uncle Ord calls her a thief and liar (p13). Is that true?
- Is Grace brave? Find examples of the choices she has made through the novel to provide evidence.
- What are Grace's strengths and weaknesses?
- Ask students if they would like her as a friend. Why or why not?
- Does Grace change during the story? Is she different at the end than at the beginning? How?

**Create a wordle for Grace at <http://www.wordle.net/>**

- Have students paste in the words they have used to describe her, and what others have said about her from the above profile.
- Choose a font that best suits her.
- What words appear the largest for Grace?
- Share wordles in the class.
- Discuss similarities and differences.
- Have students draw how they imagine Grace to look, giving her a clear facial expression. Are the images of Grace anything like the one on the cover image? Compare class images. Why do readers imagine such different portraits?

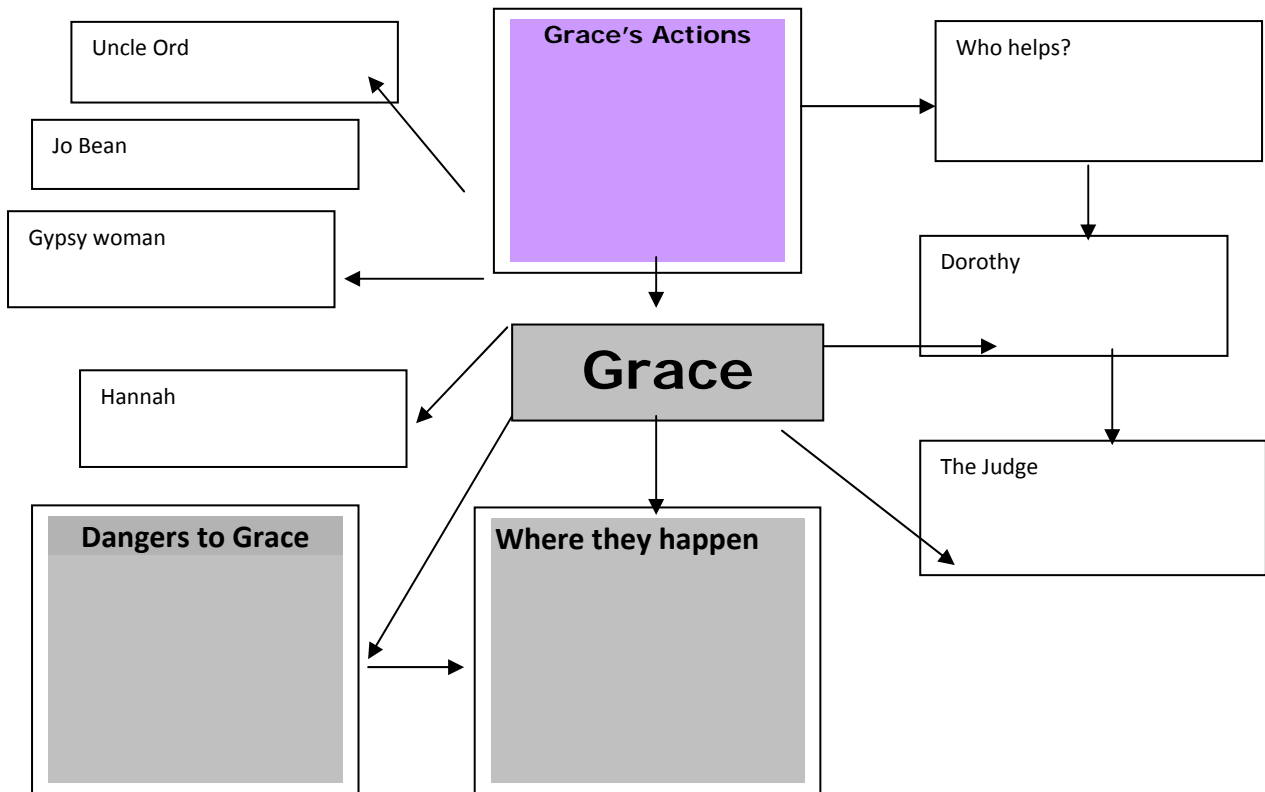
## Language

- [Students] *learn that changes in English are related to historical developments and the geographical influences of its users over the centuries, and that there are many differences in dialect and accent'* (ACARA, 2010, p2).
- Below are some examples of uses of language in the period. Invite students keep their own records of unusual words they find, and to suggest contemporary equivalents. This could be compiled on a chart or a wiki with new words added during the reading.
- Here are some unusual or old-fashioned words in the book. Write your own definition with a partner, suggest a word that would be used today, and then look up dictionary definitions.
  - Consumption (p9)
  - Alehouse (p.10)
  - Peppermint (p.18)
  - Costermongers
  - Rag shop man (p11)
  - Pie seller (p16)
  - Dealer (p36)
  - Dustman (p39)
  - Ragamuffin (p75)
  - Dirty mumper (p75)

## Narrative structure

Year 4: *'Discuss how authors and illustrators make stories exciting, moving and absorbing and hold readers' interest by using various techniques, for example, character development and plot tension'* (ACARA, 2010, p27).

- **Produce a story map of what happens to Grace** throughout the story. This could be added to for further instalments of the series. Again this can be made simpler or more complex as appropriate.



### Ideas to discuss

- Grace is a 'mudlark' hunting for scrap in the mudflats. Do you know whether children today still hunt through rubbish to make a living?

### Responding

The following are informed by the Australian Curriculum: English for Year 5: *'Students understand experiences, ideas and information beyond their immediate experience. They select relevant textual evidence to support opinions about texts, and recognise that narratives and experiences in texts are shaped by different viewpoints.'*

*Identify aspects of literary texts that convey details or information about particular social, cultural and historical contexts'* (ACARA, 2010, p29).

- Imagine that Grace can time travel and she comes to visit your class. Think of at least two questions you would like to ask her.

- In a small group take turns to *be* Grace. Use the questions above to interview her.
- Write a letter to Grace telling her what Sydney Cove will be like. You will need to do some research to do this. You might like to include images and maps.

### **Create**

- You have explored a lot of historical detail through this story and there is more information given at the end of the book. Grace's story is written in the first person so we see events only from her point of view.
- Write a story about how Hannah and her mother came to be on the *Indispensable* in the first person, as Hannah.

### **Research**

- This is a most interesting period in history – indications are given at the end of the book. A possibility is to offer readers further research, especially children who are interested in 'facts'– add to the list of events.

### **Related reading**

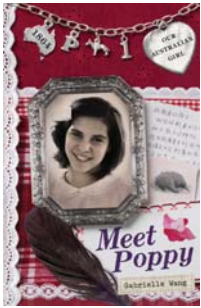
*Tom Appleby, Convict Boy* by Jackie French

*Come Danger, Come Darkness* by Ruth Park

Roman Polanski's film version of *Oliver Twist*. A trailer, which would make a good scene setter for the book, is available on YouTube

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xpYVXdpm6zg>





# *Meet Poppy*

*by Gabrielle Wang*

Poppy and her brother, Gus, live at the Bird Creek Mission near Echuca on the banks of the Murray River. Poppy's Aboriginal mother died just after she was born and she knows little about her Chinese father or where he is. Her real name is Kalinya, and her brother's name is Moyhu. They were given English names when they came to the Mission, and it is strictly forbidden to use their Aboriginal names. Poppy discovers that Gus is to be sent to another mission, so forewarned, he escapes, intent on getting to the gold fields, telling Poppy of his escape route. When she hears she is to be sent to Sydney to work as a servant, she escapes too, and this book follows the beginning of her adventure to find her brother – and maybe her father. She is in possession of a letter written in Chinese given to her by the Chinese peddler, Johnny.

This story is set during the gold rushes in Victoria, a heady time of quickly amassed wealth, and tales to match, such as horses being shod with gold, and miners eating five pound note sandwiches. The setting of the book is a rural Australia rich in wildlife and colourful characters, including the real life bushranger, Harry Power.

## **Indigenous people**

These notes will have **three focuses** which can be selected from according to the age of readers. The first is Indigenous people, connecting to the Australian Curriculum: *'English and its focus on helping students to engage imaginatively and critically with literature to expand the scope of their experience. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have contributed to*

*Australian society and to its contemporary literature and its literary heritage though their distinctive ways of representing and communicating knowledge, traditions and experience' (ACARA,2010, p1) .*

## **Indigenous people**

- Poppy is a brave and resourceful girl of the Bangerang people. She uses her knowledge of the land to survive.
- The tear jar (p14).
- Napu – mother in Bangerang (p16).
- Totems: Poppy's is the echidna; the Crow is totem for her people.
- Poppy uses the Southern Cross to guide her as she travels from Bird Creek to Echuca and then to Beechworth (p50). Her accumulated knowledge informs her route, such as following water birds – knowledge she has learned from Gus.
- Create a map of Victoria as a chart or on a smart board and trace Poppy's journey. Estimate how long her travels are; how much time it takes to get between places. Compare this to today. Research an old map from the early 1860s. What major towns that exist today along the Murray, didn't exist then.
- Make a visual representation of what she eats, such as wild raspberries, inner bark for chewing, honey-flavoured sap-sucking bugs (p27).

## **Language**

The second focus is on Language: For instance, for Year 5 the ACARA document says that students will *'understand, interpret and experiment with sound devices and imagery, including simile, metaphor and personification in narratives...'* (2010, p29).

The rural setting is evoked in vivid descriptions, which give readers a sense of how different the landscape was a century and half ago. Creating is part of the

Literature strand so students can be encouraged to look at how writers use language as models for their own writing.

- Similes: students can identify the similes they like and practise writing their own.
- P49 *'the moon shone like a beacon above, and it was if she [Poppy] fled over white silk between the tall trunks of the gums. On both sides they stood, like ghostly columns leading to a Pharaoh's tomb.'*
- P2 *'as nimble as a brushtail possum'*.
- P11 *'As warm as a splash of sunshine'*.
- P57 Poppy's description of the train – *'a big metal snake with a huge head'*.
- P73 *'...she saw a huge river red gum standing alone like a giant with its arms outstretched, welcoming her'* is an example of personification.

## Terms

A feature of the ACARA English curriculum is the development of *'unfamiliar technical vocabulary'* (2010, p29) and this story is rich in terms of the time and place. Students can compile a glossary of the terms, and for younger ones, an illustrated glossary might be useful and appealing. Below are some examples, but students can compile their own lists:

- Bullockies (p4)
- Harmonium (p5)
- Slate (p7)
- Inkwell, blotting pads wooden writing box (p25)
- Lucifer sticks (p45)
- Wagon drawn by bullocks (p53)
- Humpy (p67)
- Drover (p68)
- Frockcoats, tall hats, bonnets (p68)

## Ethical nature of literature

The third focus of these notes is *'the ethical dilemmas within real-world and fantasy settings'* (ACARA, 2010, p29) which are presented in *Meet Poppy* ready for exploration.

- Younger readers could put all the characters they encounter in the story into two categories of either good or bad. For some, this might be difficult (e.g. Harry Power) and stimulate rich discussion.
- Older readers could discuss Poppy's actions: she is defiant at the concert and steals coins. We know why she does this, so is the suggestion that wrong actions can be justified? Using evidence from the book the students could make a case for 'The ends justify the means'.
- P62 Poppy encounters racism – *'No Blacks Allowed'* the boys say to her. And they throw stones at her. How do readers feel here?
- P64 *'She wondered how people could grow to be so mean.'* Discuss.
- This attitude is reinforced by the adults on the paddle steamer who say about shooting the dog, Fisher, *'They kill the pastoralists' sheep, just like those damned natives'*. Discuss readers' reactions to this.

## Society

Aspects of life at the times will stimulate rich discussion, such as:

- Bushrangers, escaped convicts, gold diggers.
- *'No place for a girl'*. Would that be true today?
- Bartholomew is bitten by a black snake and dies. Would he survive today?
- Milking cows, collecting eggs, dusting the matron's house.
- The Chinese peddler and what he sells (p35).

## Adventure Story

*'Students learn how to explain and analyse the ways which stories, characters, settings and experiences are reflected in particular literary genres, and how to discuss the appeal of these genres'* (ACARA, 2010, p4).

This story belongs firmly in the adventure story genre and readers can be invited to identify the stages in the adventure – suspense, fear, excitement.

- Poppy prepares and plans her escape.
- She escapes and disguises herself as a boy and returns to her real name.
- She hides on the bullock dray and meets Frank O'Reilly.
- Stows away on a paddlesteamer.
- P70 She is in danger of being discovered and hides in the water.
- Climbs into a *'nest in a giant river gum'*.
- P75 A large, wild dog comes to her tree. She watches it catch a fish and names it Fisher.
- P84 She sees a bushranger, Harry Power, who invites her to eat the stew and bread he has stolen.
- Finds herself at Tocumwal, on the wrong side of the river.
- P93 She is arrested and chased by the policeman who assumes she was stealing.
- She is saved by Fisher.
- P 98 Finds the message carved on the tree from Gus in their code and Chinese symbols. This provides an excellent opportunity to predict what might be the next stage of her journey, and then again after reading the first chapter of the next installment. Have predictions changed?

### Follow on activities

- The idea of Poppy and Gus devising their own secret code is sure to appeal to some readers, and provides an opportunity to develop their own. Perhaps some will have already used Pig Latin.

## Related reading

- While they might struggle to read it themselves, students could be read (parts of) *We of the Never Never* (there was a film made in 1982 and three PG rated clips are available at <http://aso.gov.au/titles/features/we-never-never/clip/> ) Also *The Little Black Princess* by Mrs. Aeneas Gunn.
- *Who Am I?* Anita Heiss



# *Meet Letty*

by Alison Lloyd

It is 1841 in London, and Letty's older sister, Lavinia, is anxious to be free of her oppressive life in England and grasp opportunities she thinks will be in the new land of Australia. However, in a mix up, Letty finds herself on the ship as it draws away from the docks and it is too late to get off. She and Lavinia face three months at sea before they step on land again. Life on the *Duchess* is cramped and smelly with poor food. Jemima appears to be a friend to Letty, but when tough things happen, such as Lavinia becoming ill, it is another person who proves his worth as a friend.

## **Opening**

- This is a gripping invitation into the story and an opportunity to connect readers with Letty.
- Ask readers 'How would you feel finding yourself with only your bossy older sister on a ship/plane bound for another country?' (Gender of the siblings can be changed for rich discussion.)

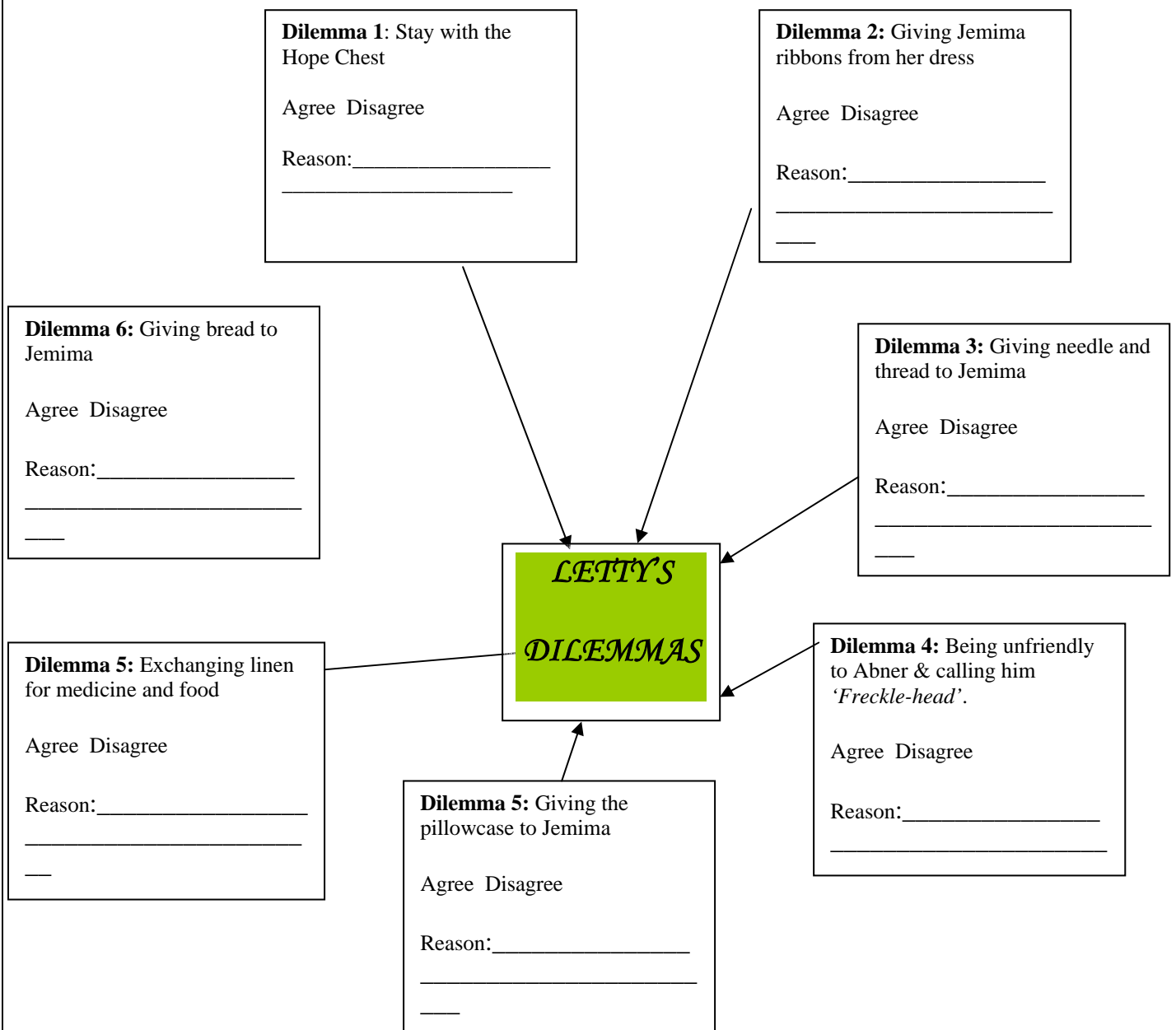
## **Imaginative Responses**

- This story is written in the third person, so there are opportunities for students to put themselves inside Letty's shoes and write how they think and feel in the first person, for example, when Letty sees her Papa fading into the distance.

## **Moral dilemmas**

- At the heart of this story is the growth of tentative, easily led Letty into a resourceful girl who copes with her sister's illness with spirit. Her development is couched revealingly in the decisions she makes and

why. On the next page is a diagram that maps some of her decisions with students being able to identify the ones they agree with or not, giving reasons. Hopefully, their opinions will change as Letty grows in strength of character. This reveals how carefully the author has woven the themes of her novel into the character of Letty.





## Problem solving

As the above chart reveals, Letty always thinks she is doing the right thing and yet often she is making a big mistake.

- Younger readers can be asked ‘Has that ever happened to you? What did you do and how did you feel?’
- Older readers can be prompted to look at the fairness of some of those outcomes. For instance, is it fair that Lavinia blames Letty for being on the ship?

## Characters

- Younger readers: Who do you like best? Why do you like them? Have your opinions about them changed during the story?
  - **Letty** is initially tentative, a worrier, and keeps making poor decisions.
  - However, when Lavinia is ill, Letty shows her strength and resourcefulness
- Older readers could map how she changes over the course of the story. On the following page is a diagrammatic way of doing this. This diagram could be repeated for Lavinia, Jemima and Abner.
  - **Lavinia** is not sympathetic to Letty in the beginning and sees her as a nuisance. But then she is supportive, if annoyed at some of Letty’s actions. She says her Papa didn’t want her because she was ‘*a handful*’. Discuss what students think she means. She is good at sewing and housekeeping, and is confident of her ability to make a new life.
  - **Jemima** is lively, and a contrast to Letty. She offers friendship but always at a price. She is also bossy and gets her own way.
  - **Abner** is Welsh and ran off to sea to avoid working in the coal mines. Despite the girls snubbing him, he keeps a look out for Letty and saves her on more than one occasion.



## **Life on the ship**

- We are given a few details about life on the ship - the girls have school lessons, play hopscotch, hide in the lifeboat, clean their mess and prepare food.
- Plan a day in the life of Letty on board ship, deciding what time she gets up and goes to sleep. How does she fill in the hours?
- Would you like to spend a day with Letty? What would you like to do on the ship?
- Jemima teaches Letty a clapping rhyme. Have you heard it before? What other ones could you teach Jemima and Letty?

## **Language**

- There is a lot of terminology specific to life on a ship. Keep a class glossary of the terms on a chart, smart board or wiki. Readers might like to find images to illustrate the term as well as, or instead of defining it in words. Here are some examples. There are plenty of images of sailing ships of the period on the web, so students could also identify parts of the ship on an image.

Poop deck (p12)

Disembark anchors, tow lines (p15)

Mainsail, First Mate (p16)

Hold (p19)

Mess (p 20)

Focsle (p 35)

Ships biscuit (p 45)

Salt mutton (p 48)

Mizzen (p 61)

Rigging (p 62)

## Other terms

- Lavinia gets '*Ship Fever*' – what is it? Does it still exist today? How is it treated?
- Hope Chest – do young women still have these today? What might be a modern equivalent?
- Bodice, undershift (p37), corset (p20). Find some images of what women wore in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, or you might like to draw Letty and Lavinia's clothes as you imagine them.

## The voyage

- Letty and Lavinia spent three months on board after leaving Gravesend bound for Sydney.
- Map this sea voyage as much as you can from clues given in the story, such as the warmer weather, The Doldrums (p44), the Trade Winds pushing them south.

## Friendship

- P40 '*It was the price of Jemima's friendship*'. Should friendship be paid for? Friendship is one of the major themes of the story and begs to be explored.
- Younger readers could be asked to say, write, draw or act out what they think a true friend is.
- Older students could conduct a debate around 'Friendship should be earned' or 'Friendship should be freely given'. They can use evidence from the novel.
- The moral dilemmas that are identified earlier could also be explored through the drama of '**Conscience Alley**'. A student as Letty, walks between two rows of students, one row whispering advice, for example, to be rude to Abner, while the other row whispers opposite advice. The whispers include reasons for the behaviour. Students then swap to the other side and take the opposing position. Discussion follows about they have learned or understood, including those students who take on the role of Letty.

## The Ship

- In the notes at the conclusion of the story, the author tells us that the ships were commonly 35 metres long and 10 metres wide, and accommodated several hundred people. Measure and mark the dimensions in the playground. Draw an outline and get as many people as possible stand in it.

## Follow on

- Arrange a visit to the Immigration Museum in Melbourne (if you are lucky enough to live in Victoria). It features a 17-metre replica ship where visitors can experience the changes in sea voyages to Australia over time.
- The 'Enterprize' at Williamstown and the 'James Craig' at the Rocks in Sydney, are both restored nineteenth century sailing vessels that allow people to get on board and explore.
- Or visit other Museums that explore the history of coming to Australia.
- There is also additional historical detail on Alison's website and more will be added as each of the books comes out:

[www.alisonlloyd.com.au](http://www.alisonlloyd.com.au).

## Related reading

All the stories in Our Australian girl series

*Soldier's Daughter* by Jackie French

*Daughter of the Regiment: Rotters and Squatters 1820-1850* by Jackie French



# *Meet Rose*

by Sherryl Clark

Rose, her older sister, Martha, and her older brother, Edward, live with their mother and father in a large, two storey house in Hawthorn, Melbourne, at the turn of the twentieth century. Her father owns and runs McCubbin's Emporium, a drapery store, which also sells clothes and household goods. From the opening, we know that Rose is not a conventional girl of her times, as on her eleventh birthday, she and Edward sneak out of the house at dawn to play cricket. Rose is a keen bowler with a tricky spin on the ball. Rose does not go to school like Edward, but has a humourless governess, Miss Parson, and a very strict mother with old-fashioned ideas about how girls should behave. Rose wants to be an explorer and travel the world. Her life is set to change when her father's sister, Aunt Alice, comes to stay and opens up possibilities and challenges.

## **Context**

*'Literature, with its emphasis on studying text from a range of historical and cultural context, helps students understand the perspectives and contributions of people from around the world and from both the past and present'* (ACARA, 2010, p14).

## **The times**

This story provides for a valuable exploration of the nature of the different lives of people depending on whether they were poor, or wealthy ('well-to-do')

like the McCubbin family. Students can be invited to identify these differences as they read.

- P4 Rose washes herself with water from a jug into a basin. Is there no running water?
- P6-7 Breakfast is served on the sideboard – *'kippers and porridge'*.
- P17 – Rose's clothes are made for her. She doesn't have much say in what she wears. It is only the working classes that wear *'ready-made'* clothes (p23).
- P12 Rose doesn't kiss her grandmother but curtsies. Why is this?
- P12 Uncle Charles has a *'fob watch'* and says *'Felicitations'*. What might he say today?
- P22 Cable tram – only for poor people, according to Rose's mother.
- Rose's family has a gardener, a cook, Sally, a housemaid, John, a general helper.
- Aunt Alice arrives wearing pantaloons and shocks Rose's mother. Discuss that clothes have always been contentious in terms of changing styles and values, such as mini skirts, torn jeans.
- Ask students to ask their parents or grandparents for memories of fashions that shocked the times. Are there family photos of some 'shocking' ones? Have a class photo gallery of changing fashions and what they say about a society.
- P40 Rose and Edward play hide and seek in the large grounds of the house. What might a contemporary brother and sister play?

### **Girls and women of the period**

- Girls studied different subjects under a governess (French, needlework, piano playing), from boys at school (maths, sciences, geography, Greek and Latin). Edward goes to school but Rose does not.
- Rose is not allowed to go to school although schools for girls had been going for years. Perhaps watch excerpts of *The Getting of Wisdom*. There is an excerpt on YouTube at (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ezi386e2ZOw>)

- Students could do research on when schools for girls became common. For some students, the histories of their own schools might be relevant here. At girls' schools, the subjects taught were more like those at boys' schools.
- P22 Ladies don't pat horses.
- P24 Rose wants pantaloons for her active life but gets a corset.
- P43 Ladies do not whistle.
- P44 '*...women are no good at learning because their brains are too small*'
- P45 Rose is not allowed to ride a bicycle.
- P60 '*Ladies do not drive cars*'.

## **Rose**

- Her household is very strict and Rose prefers to be outdoors climbing trees and digging in the garden than being indoors and sewing.
- P35 She is worried she will get into trouble for reading '*boys' adventure stories*'. Her mother controls what she reads.
- P44-45 Rose is '*overwhelmed by the warmth of the hug and feeling of loving arms around her*'. Discuss that despite their wealth and comfort, there is not much love in the McCubbin household between mother and daughter.
- P55 Rose embroiders her initials on handkerchiefs.
- Pp87 Rose is very afraid of her mother's anger but she cuts up her corset.
- P96 Rose's father says to her '*I can see you are set on a different path, one that might cause you trouble and heartache*'. Do you think this is foreshadowing by the author? Invite students to predict what this might mean for Rose.

## **Aunt Alice**

- Consider discussing that she represents new possibilities for women and that Rose's mother is indicative of old attitudes. Students could construct a chart that records different attitudes. They could then add a



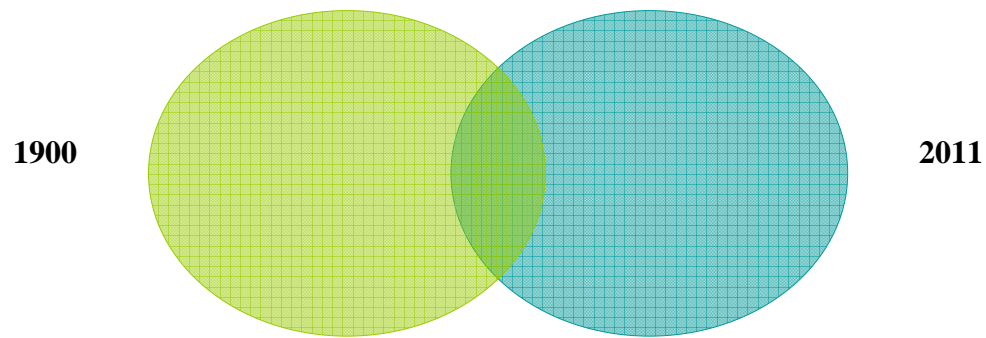
third element about lives of girls and women today. What has changed and what is still the same as 1900?

- P29 Alice is tanned and strong-looking, '*not delicate and ladylike at all*'.
- P29 description of Aunt Alice – create a picture of how you imagine her to look and what she is wearing.
- P31 She is politically active. When did women in Australia get the vote? Which State was the first to grant it?
- P33 Alice sits in the kitchen chatting to the staff. Why is Rose surprised by this and doesn't want to be caught by her mother?
- P35 Alice values the importance of books and reading.
- P46 She gives Rose a tiki a symbol '*of knowledge and strength*'. Find an image or bring one to class.
- P51 Alice has canoed, sailed and trekked.

### **The birthday**

- Complete the Venn diagram below to compare what happens on Rose's birthday and today. Are there any things that stay the same?
- P5 Compare her birthday celebrations with the class's celebrations today, such as there is no special food, her presents – gloves and a parasol, glace cherries, and a locket from Martha, a cricket ball from Edward and a magnifying glass from Uncle Charles.
- P8 relatives visit.

## BIRTHDAY



### Melbourne

- There are glimpses of parts of Melbourne in 1900 given in the story, such as Bourke Street, cable trams, Coles Arcade etc.

Below are some images, but students might like to search for their own.



**Swanston St viewed north from Flinders St**



**Melbourne showing cable trams**



### **Town Hall showing cable trams**

- There is discussion of the political views around Federation and the Boer War from reports in the newspaper, the *Argus*. Older students might like to find out more about these aspects of Australia's history.
- Pp71 Alice and Rose ride on a tram and watch the '*grip man*'.
- P74 Alice and Rose get off the tram in Collins Street (with Rose marvelling at buildings eight storeys high) and make their way to the McCubbin Emporium in Bourke Street.
- Pp76-77 Alice and Rose lunch at Parer's Crystal Palace. What do students think of the food that they can choose from? Perhaps they can find original menus on the web.
- P81 Alice suggests visiting the public library, the Botanical Gardens, Eastern Markets, Coles Arcade.

Coles Book Arcade 1900





### **Society in Melbourne at the times**

- P17 Rose's clothes – find pictures on the web of what well-to-do people wore.
- P19, p25 Rose at eleven is considered old enough to wear a corset. Why did women wear them? Are there equivalents today?
- P20/44 '*bluestocking*'.
- P20 '*the Bust*'.
- P21 Martha attends a '*finishing school*'. What is it and do they still exist today?
- P23 chemise and bloomers.
- P24 pantaloons.
- P24 bustles.

- P37 Suffragette.
- P42 a beau.
- P68 Rose's mother belongs to the Temperance Union.
- P73 Alice and Rose observe a poor family being evicted from their house.

## Language

There is original use of an analogy that could be identified and played with to help students with creating stories.

- P28 '*as welcome as a downpour in December*'. Students can be invited to think up some others and put them around the classroom. For example, '*as welcome as Collingwood (insert least favourite team) winning the 2011 Grand Final*'.

## Follow on activities

- Rose has a tin box that she keeps her '*special things*' in and hides from Miss Parson.
- Invite students to construct their special box – actual or virtual – and share what special things they would put in it.
- Visit historic homes in your city, such as Como and Ripponlea in Melbourne, Elizabeth Bay House in Sydney, Brickenden and Woolmers Estate in Tasmania to get a sense of the living conditions of the time.
- Chapter nine would make wonderful Readers' Theatre. A few props, such as a fan and something resembling a corset would add to the atmosphere.

## Further Reading

Read the books, or excerpts from those mentioned in the story.

*The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling (some students will have seen the animated movie)

*Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson

*Coles Funny Picture Book* by E W Cole (facsimiles are available)