

## *The Shop at Hoopers Bend*

By Emily Rodda

### Book Summary:

There is something magical about the shop at Hoopers Bend though, and once it casts its spell on Quil and Bailey they are drawn together in an unlikely friendship and their fight to save the shop from developers. From one of Australia's most renowned children's authors, this is a story about coming home when you didn't even know that was where you belonged.

### Key Learning Outcomes:

English, Arts, Design and Technologies

### Themes

Trust, Honesty, Belonging, Loneliness

### Australian Curriculum

#### English

ACELT1603, ACELT1605, ACELT1612, ACELT1798  
ACELT1616, ACELT1617, ACELT1618, ACELT1800

#### The Arts (Drama; Visual Arts)

ACADRM031, ACADRM033; ACAVAM111  
ACADRM037; ACAVAM115

#### Technologies (Design and Technologies)

ACTDEP015, ACTDEP028

ISBN: 9781460753668 RRP 16.99

EBook: 9781460706695

Notes by: Christina Wheeler

Recommended Age 8+

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### Book Summary

Eleven-year-old Jonquil (known as Quil) Medway is a girl with more than an unusual name. Quil's parents died in a car accident when she was a baby and she now goes to boarding school, but spends her holidays with an aunt - or at camp, which is where Quil is heading when she decides to get off early at a train stop called Hoopers Bend.

It is there that Quil meets Pirate, a chunky little white dog with black spots who immediately adopts her and Bailey, a crabby older lady who has gone to Hoopers Bend to check out the shop that has been left to her by an uncle.

There is something magical about the shop at Hoopers Bend though, and once it casts its spell on Quil and Bailey they are drawn together in an unlikely friendship and their fight to save the shop from developers.

### About the Author

Emily Rodda's real name is Jennifer Rowe. She was born in Sydney and completed an MA (Hons) in English Literature at Sydney University in 1973. She worked in publishing for many years, as an editor and then a publisher at Angus & Robertson, before becoming the editor of the *Australian Women's Weekly* magazine in 1988.

Always a keen reader and writer, Emily began writing children's stories in her spare time to entertain her young daughter Kate. She submitted her first manuscript to Angus & Robertson using a pseudonym – her grandmother's name, Emily Rodda – to make sure that she got an honest opinion of her work from her colleagues. *Something Special*, won the Children's Book Council of Australia Book

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of the Year Award (Younger Readers), as did four other of her books in subsequent years: *Pigs Might Fly*, *The Best-Kept Secret*, *Finders Keepers*, and *Rowan of Rin*. Emily has been a constant presence in these and other Australian children's book awards including the NSW Premier's Literary Awards and the Aurealis Awards for fantasy writing.

A full-time writer since 1992, Emily Rodda has published over ninety books. In recent times she is best known for the popular *Deltora Quest* fantasy series, which has sold more than any other Australian series, has been made into a successful animated TV series in Japan, and is published in over thirty countries around the world. Her latest books include the much-awarded *Rondo Trilogy: The Key to Rondo*, *The Wizard of Rondo*, both of which were shortlisted for the Children's Book Council of Australia Book of the Year Award (Younger Readers) and *The Battle for Rondo*.

In 1995 Emily Rodda won the prestigious Dromkeen Medal. The judges of the award said of her that she 'maintains a prolific writing schedule, continues to provide a role model in promoting children's literature, and still spends many hours sharing her love of books with children and educators'. She has also won many different kids' choice awards across Australia. *The Key to Rondo* and *The Battle for Rondo* won the Older Readers category in the NSW Koala Awards, and in 2010 Emily Rodda achieved Legend status in these awards.

Emily has also written seven murder mysteries for adults under her real name, Jennifer Rowe. Her favourite hobbies are reading and writing stories. She has four children and lives in the Blue Mountains with her husband.

For further information, please consult Emily Rodda's online biography at [www.emilyrodda.com](http://www.emilyrodda.com)

## Questions for reading and discussion

Examine the front cover of *The Shop at Hoopers Bend*. What do you notice about the shop? What clues are we given about the text from this illustration?

Discuss the language features of the opening paragraph of *The Shop at Hoopers Bend*, in which the author uses imagery and figurative language to introduce readers to Quil and her situation. Why is this passage so effective?

Quil invents Stardust as a way of understanding why people are so different from one another.

**Discuss** the importance of acknowledging different personality types, and understanding that the way in which you are treated by others is often more of a reflection of them, not you.

Why is Quil happier alone on the train than with Maggie Koch? What does this tell readers about her?

Reread the ending paragraph on p7 in which the worlds of Quil, Bailey, Pirate and the shop start to align.

**Discuss** the way in which Emily Rodda has cleverly foreshadowed the storyline and drawn the reader into the text by using this technique.

How does Quil's name – Jonquil – reflect her personality (see p13)?

In what ways does the shop become almost like another character in the story? How important is setting to narrative?

**Discuss** famous settings from other well-known texts and the impact these settings have on the overall success of these stories.

In terms of structure, *The Shop at Hoopers Bend* has a 'planned for' ending that weaves various story threads together in a way that is satisfying for the reader.

**Construct** a story graph of *The Shop at Hoopers Bend*, working backwards from the ending.

**Discuss** the importance of knowing the end of your stories before you begin writing.

Why does Quil fall instantly in love with the shop?

Why does Quil keep telling fibs to Bailey? How do you feel when she keeps lying? How do you feel once Quil tells Bailey the truth? Why does Quil say that 'it was like a little chip of ice in her heart had melted and turned into the tears that filled her eyes' when she finally tells Bailey the truth (p139)?

Why do Bailey and Quil spend time on the back veranda in the evenings looking at the stars? Why does Bailey comment that 'the stars are there during the day – we just can't see them' (p52)? How does this reflect the themes in *The Shop at Hoopers Bend*?

What does Quil mean when she says that people like Mrs Brittle-Pyke give 'people needle jabs' by making them feel small and insignificant? In what ways do Bailey and Quil take risks in order to find happiness?

**Discuss** Zac's comment that 'some things are more important than money' (p145)?

Why does it give Quil comfort knowing that her parents were making a living doing what they loved?

## Activities

In her *Stardust* game, Quil reasons that we are all made of stars and that our soulmates come from the same stardust. In small groups, discover different stardust types describe them and name them.

Turn your classroom into the shop at Hoopers Bend.

Design and create 'props' and signs to establish your very own pop-up, second-hand bookshop. As a class, advertise and collect donations of books to sell, promoting the project on assembly and with around the school and in the school newsletter. Invite other classes and members of the school community to shop at your pop-up store. Decide on a worthy charity for your fundraising.

Using the description on p53, draw a sketch of Mr Xero Folly.

Dramatise the scene of Mr Folly's Fancy Dress Costume sale, including the act between the gorilla and Pirate.

Write your own letter to Bailey in the role of Uncle Frank.

Model to students the following drama strategies found at the Drama Toolkit website <http://www.dramatoolkit.co.uk/drama-strategies> :

- Hot Seating
- Meeting
- Tableau
- Thought Tap

Either run the activities of each QR code below as a whole-class, or use the QR codes to engage students in drama-based rotations based on these strategies. In order for these activities to run smoothly, with smaller groups, hold practice sessions for each strategy and discuss the role of 'leader' as follows:

- For each QR Code rotation, choose a different 'group leader'. This person is responsible for:
  - Ensuring everyone understands the requirements of the station
  - Timing any preparation activities as required (eg Hot Seating → asking questions)
  - Timing each participants' turn if applicable (eg Hot Seating)
  - Following the given agenda (eg Meeting)
  - Keeping the group's noise manageable
  - Keeping group members on task

## QR Codes – Role Play

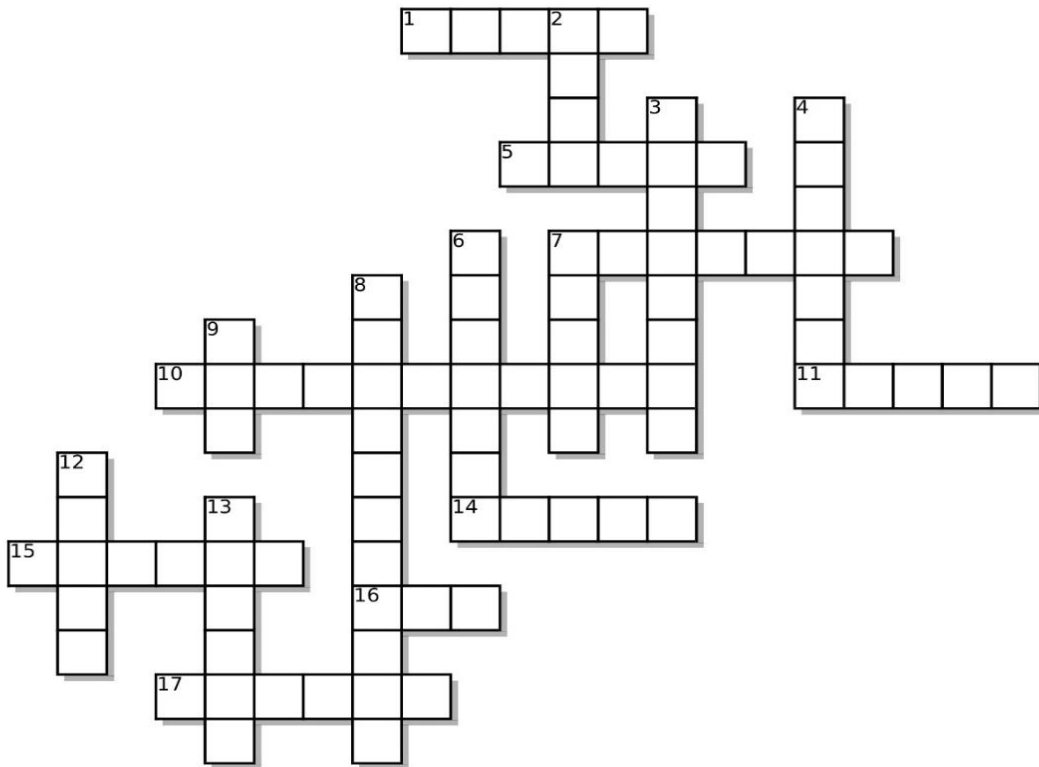
Either as a whole class or in small groups of 5-6 students, scan one of the following drama-based QR codes, following the instructions given.

<b>Activity 1</b> <b>Hot Seating</b>	<b>Activity 2</b> <b>Meeting</b>
<b>Activity 3</b> <b>Tableau</b>	<b>Activity 4</b> <b>Thought Tap</b>

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# The Shop at Hoopers Bend



## ACROSS

- 1 Bailey's uncle who leaves her the shop in his will
- 5 Quil's mother
- 7 The flower after which Quil is named after
- 10 This type of business is blamed for 'killing' the corner shop at Hooper's Bend
- 11 Bailey's childhood girlfriend from Hooper's Bend
- 14 Quil's father
- 15 The name of the rocking horse Quil buys at Mrs Dove's sale
- 16 Quil's auntie
- 17 The name of the dog that befriends Quil

## DOWN

- 2 The name of Zac's mother whose house is robbed by Mrs Dove
- 3 The Real Estate agent who tries to sell the shop
- 4 This dress-up costume is kept by Xero Folly
- 6 The Stardust sign of Quil and Bailey
- 7 The grumpy old man who is owed money
- 8 A lucky chance
- 9 The object that Quil buys at the markets that leads her to Hooper's Bend
- 12 Mrs Twelvetrees and her committee is selling these in the pop-up shop
- 13 The sign that Quil assigns to Mrs Brittle-Pyke

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## Bibliography

- <http://www.dramatoolkit.co.uk/drama-strategies/hot-seating>

### About the author of the notes

Christina Wheeler is a Brisbane-based Teacher Librarian who works with primary and lower-secondary students. One of her favourite aspects of her job is listening to students' insights and experiences of texts. She also loves sharing her passion of for reading and bringing non-readers to books.