



TEACHERS' NOTES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Upper primary, Ages 8+, years 4–6

CONTENTS

1. Plot summary	1
2. About the author	1
3. About the illustrator	2
4. Author's inspiration	2
5. Pre-reading questions	2
6. Visual literacy	2
7. Key study topics	3–6
8. Colouring sheet	7
9. Further reading	8
10. Order form	9

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English, HSIE, Science
- **General capabilities:** Creative and critical thinking, Ethical understanding, Literacy, Personal and social capabilities and Intercultural understanding
- **Cross-curriculum priorities:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures, Sustainability

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- With a diverse group of characters, this series provides a fresh understanding of friendship and overall relationships.
- It represents an exciting blend of fantasy and adventure that young readers are looking for in fiction.
- Analyses how deep Indigenous history and Cultures can evoke rich storytelling, especially when it encourages using your own imagination.
- At its heart, this story incorporates critical values of belonging, friendship and morality.

THEMES

- Self-discovery and identity
- Indigenous Cultures and Country
- Friendship and family
- Adventure and fantasy
- Truth-telling

PREPARED BY

Penguin Random House Australia

PUBLICATION DETAILS

ISBN: 9781761345227 (book 1);
9781761345241 (book 2);
9781761345265 (book 3)
Ebook and audiobook editions available

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Yarn Quest

Brooke Scobie, Jade Goodwin

PLOT SUMMARY

A breathtaking fantasy-adventure trilogy. Do you dare step into the Realm? A magical journey awaits . . .

Long ago (or maybe it was yesterday?) in the depths of the cool dark bush, under fallen trees and lime green moss, lived an ancient magic. A magic that, despite what you might imagine, did not belong there at all. It especially didn't belong at a 10-year-old's house.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Brooke Scobie is a queer, auDHD, First Nations mum, author and poet that lives on Darkinjung land. Ever since she was very little, Brooke has loved books and stories. Which, of course, makes sense since she grew up with a mum whose favourite thing was her overflowing bookcase and reading before bed.

Brooke is most passionate about creating stories and worlds where weird, wonderful kids and adults of all shapes and sizes can see themselves in magical places, on extraordinary adventures! She hopes that one day every child who reads her stories will know they can be a storyteller too.

Brooke has brown hair most of the time, though it's also been pink, blue, green and purple. She loves swimming in the ocean, big bags of chips and fart jokes.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Jade Goodwin is a First Nations illustrator from Australia with curly brown hair and a big imagination. When she was a little girl, she loved spending time in her grandparents' screen-printing studio, creating all sorts of fun things with the studio supplies.

Since her first book was published in 2022, Jade has illustrated a bunch more,

and now loves working from home, drawing almost every day alongside her three furry assistants – a.k.a cats.

Her sweet and bright illustrations bring imagination to life, and she hopes to inspire both children and adults alike. Jade loves finding magic in everyday moments, dreaming up new worlds and drawing way past her bedtime.

AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

Brooke says:

Yarn Quest started as a podcast. The concept was dreamed up by illustrator Jade Goodwin, who was looking for a way to celebrate First Nations kids on National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day in 2021. The podcast included stories written by kids and by the Yarn Quest team. Some stories were even voiced by the kids themselves. It was great fun to make. Jade and I loved Yarn Quest so much we had big dreams, and as I am a writer and Jade an illustrator we decided to collaborate and come up with a book series (and a whole universe) that kids could see themselves in.

I wrote this book for the little kid in me who loved – and still loves – fantasy and adventure stories and longed to see more weirdos like me in them. Every child deserves to experience magic, no matter who they are.

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. What do you think the series name 'Yarn Quest' might mean? Discuss as a class what you think the overarching narrative is.
2. Now, study the cover of each of the books. After looking at the illustrations and thinking about your initial ideas about the series title, what do you think the stories will be about?
3. What do the covers tell you about the characters in the book? Are there other things you can learn about the story from just looking at the cover? (For

instance, P being in the middle and bigger on the second cover indicates that P is the focus character of this book.)

4. Read the blurb on the back. Why do you think short, simple sentences were used to tell people about the story? Can you pinpoint what genre the book might be?

VISUAL LITERACY

The illustrator of the story, Jade Goodwin, has taken great care to create images that enhance our understanding of what the world of Yarn Quest is like. Through the illustrations, we see all different sides of Sibyl, Tane and P, meet different characters and creatures and see different parts of the Australian bush and the Story Realm. The illustrations and the text work together, showing us emotion, humour and adding extra information that isn't present in the words alone. Additionally, they work to help readers visualise descriptions and aspects of the author's experiences of Cultures and Country that are explored in the text.

Questions and activities

1. When creating the book, Jade Goodwin drew illustrations based on a draft of Brooke Scobie's story. Then Brooke revised the story to make sure the text and illustrations worked together perfectly. Do you think they've achieved this? What would reading the book without the illustrations be like? Does it better guide you to visualise the overarching narrative?
2. Pick a scene from the book to illustrate. It could be a particularly funny idea (like the Under the Sea dance party), a character portrait (like those of the kids or the Aunties) or a full scene (like the enormous, rotting white factory from *The Great River Rescue*). If this scene already has illustrations, try a different approach to what's already in the book!
3. Look at the illustrations in the books. Do you have a favourite? Try and describe it to a classmate. Was it harder than you expected to try and describe an image with words? Were there things in the illustration that you couldn't describe?
4. Draw your own pictures of Sibyl, Tane and P. Try drawing them with different facial expressions, or with different poses than what you see in the books.
5. Put yourself in the book and imagine how you might look. Do you prefer cartoon-like features, or a more realistic style? Draw yourself and note



down certain traits about yourself that could be magical.

KEY STUDY TOPICS

Fantasy-adventure genre

Different fiction genres often come with their own tropes – recurring themes, motifs or plots that are common across many books in that genre. For instance, the Yarn Quest books can be classified as fantasy as they include elements of a quest, magic, a different universe (the Realm), magical creatures, etc. They also fall into the adventure genre as our characters undertake high-stake journeys full of danger and excitement.

Questions and activities

1. What other fantasy and adventure tropes can you identify in the story?
2. Identify other novels/movies/stories you have come across that explore the tropes listed above. (For instance, the Chronicles of Narnia has the fantasy elements of magic, quests and good triumphing over evil. It also has adventure elements of chase scenes, plot twists and strong, courageous characters who grow as a result of their adventure.) Once you have done this, have a look at how these tropes play out in the Yarn Quest books. Consider similarities and differences.

Diversity and representation

Brooke says:

The characters are real children who are First Nations, neurodivergent, and/or gender non-conforming. These stories aren't about their identities; they are about fantasy and adventure. By positioning these children as the heroes, the books make their experiences a normal part of life. It's not portrayed as special or difficult—it's just normal. The focus isn't on what makes them different from the dominant Cultures, but on their adventures. This is how I wish the world was, and it's what all children deserve.

Questions and activities

1. How does the author represent diversity as a normal part of the Yarn Quest world? For instance, we learn that P is a gender non-confirming character in the second book but that is a small part of who they are. How is this addressed in the story? Can you identify other instances in the story that represent all sorts of types of human diversity?

2. Are there any other movies you've watched or books you've read that showcase diversity? Or where you feel like you can identify with the characters, story or the world?
3. Why is representation and inclusivity important? What consequences do you think could possibly arise from being marginalised as a result of one's differences?
4. Identify an initiative in your school that celebrates diversity. An example might be the celebration of Multicultural Day. Why is it important to learn about different sorts of Cultures, traditions, identities and values?
5. Get into groups and create a mind map of how you'd create your own initiative that celebrates diversity. Consider a particular group that you'd like to celebrate, how you'd like to celebrate it, time of day, if there'll be food, activities etc. You can use drawings or words to capture your group's big idea.

Cultures and Country

An integral part of the Yarn Quest series is the yarning of First Nations stories and voices. Vital to Australian history, these Indigenous elements highlight ideas about the passing down of knowledge and the relationship between all living things. The bond between the Yarn Quest characters and nature shows the significance of the author's experiences of Cultures and Country.

Questions and activities

1. Are the plants and animals you found in the books native (endemic) to your local area? If the flora and fauna are very different from where you live and Yarn Quest was based where you are, what plants do you think would be included in the story instead? Can you guess where the books are based with the information you've learned about the flora and fauna?
2. Write down any terminology that you don't understand and research online what they are. See if you can use them in a sentence or if you've come across them but you just referred to them differently! For instance, have you heard of the term *yarning*? You might have spoken about this word in the pre-reading section!
3. Caring for Country is an important part of the author's experience of First Nations Cultures and traditions, and Country is a character in its own right in the series. How does Country manifest in different ways and as different characters within the story? What attributes do the characters – like the River Spirit – share? And why is caring for our environment important?



- Find out what Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Country you are currently on. See if you can find out some interesting facts about your area. Is there anywhere you might have heard the name of said Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Country? Maybe it's in your school assemblies.
- What are some things you can do to care for Country? It could be little things, like actively separating your rubbish for recycling or simply doing some gardening at home to expand the vegetation.
- First Nations Cultures are vast and rich. The author uses worldbuilding to communicate some of their lived experiences of Cultures in both the characters' real words and within the magical Story Realm. What's an interesting fact, or your most favourite thing you've learned about different sorts of First Nations Cultures in the series?
- Pick and research a community group in the area you live in. Consider the different activities they put on, when they meet, who meets and where. What is the main thing that they value/are trying to achieve? How do these things align with the 'community' present in the Yarn Quest books?

Truth-telling

Hey, Mum,' Tane called out. 'What's the difference between a lie and a story?'

'Well, bub, a lie is when you try to make someone believe something that's not true, kind of like tricking them. A story might be made up, but everyone knows it's just for fun,' Aunty Tully replied. 'The difference is lies can hurt people and break trust, while stories are about sharing and connection. Pretty simple, right?'

Truth-telling plays a major role in the first book, *The Search for the Story Realm*. It is only by being truthful and telling the true story of how Sibyl and Tane find Fable that they can return Fable back to their parents.

Friendship and community

The bond Sibyl, Tane and P share is something special. They respect each other and enjoy each other's company, even though they are very different people! Additionally, the characters support and learn from each other throughout the series. The main trio are also friendly with all the magical beings and creatures they encounter in and out of the Story Realm, showing that friendship is an important part of community. By working together, they're able to save the Story Realm and each other multiple times and strengthen their bond.

Questions and activities

- What do you like about your friends? What is it about your friendship with them that makes them special? Share with your table if your friendships have through anything together that was exciting or that maybe you felt brought you closer together?
- Has there been anything troubling or hard about the friendships in your life as well? You don't have to share with your table if you don't want to, but maybe reflect on how these situations made you feel and how you overcame them.
- What characteristics do you think are important in a friend? For example, humour, honesty, kindness, loyalty. Make a mind map of all the qualities you would like in a friend.
- What do you think the word *community* means? Where might you have heard this word used before and what identifies a group of people as a community?

Questions and activities

- Why is it important to be honest and truthful? We learn that Tane hates lying – why? Do you agree with him? What might be some consequences when you lie?
- Pinpoint every time in the first book that the kids and Fable lie – does it help them get Fable home or does it makes things worse?
- Do you think stories are just 'lies', or do they hold some truth to them? Can you identify a fictional story that you've come across that has some element of truth or a lesson that you can apply to your own life?
- Do you agree with Aunty Tully that stories bring people together? Can you remember sharing, reading or watching stories with someone? Are there any movies or books that are important to you in this respect? Why?
- Write about a time in your life where you were honest. Why was it the right thing to do and how did the situation you were in benefit from your honesty?

Narration

The Yarn Quest series has multiple modes of storytelling. We have the third-person narration when we are reading the story from Sibyl's, Tane's and P's point of view, but the author also includes second-



person narration – this is where the narrator speaks directly to the reader.

Questions and activities

1. Can you find examples of where second-person narration happens in the series? (Hint: these are in a different font!) Who do we find out is this narrator?
2. Second-person narration is a device that addresses the reader and makes them feel like they are a character in the story as well. This helps the reader feel more connected to the story, the characters and the world. Why do you think the author chose to employ second-person narration along with third-person narration? What impact do you think this has on the story? How might it be different without it? Have you used it in your own writing?
3. Have a go at writing a short story that uses a mix of third-person and second-person narration. If it helps, try using different colours or fonts (like the author) to help show the different types of narration.
4. Can you identify any other books that employ second-person narration? An example might be *Glasshouse of Stars* by Shirley Marr, which uses this style throughout the entire book. Do you like this method of storytelling, or what might you find difficult about it?

Characters

Sibyl

Sibyl has a vivid imagination and is a ball of fun to be around. She loves dancing and drawing, and most of all, her sparkly pair of pink sneakers. Her spirit is connected to the trees, and as such, she has a responsibility to them.

1. Do you know anyone like Sibyl? See if you can identify more of Sibyl's characteristics and personality traits. Do they align with the person you have in mind?
2. Working with a partner, draw a graph that looks at how the author showcases Sibyl's growth throughout the series. An example might be how Sibyl doesn't mind that her sneakers are dirty by the end of *Search for the Story Realm* after her adventure. Or, how Sibyl starts off scared in *The Power of the Heart*, but becomes so brave she puts her life at risk to save the Realm and her friends.
3. Sibyl loves telling her friends facts about trees. Do your own research and see if you can find three

new facts. Is there a particular thing you enjoy telling your friends about as well?

Tane

Tane is Sibyl's cousin and is always telling silly jokes and doing funny things. He brings energy and laughter into every situation. But most of all, he is a loyal friend and a brilliant Storyteller.

1. Do you know anyone like Tane? See if you can identify more of Tane's characteristics and personality traits. Do they align with the person you have in mind?
2. Tane starts off having trouble with his words and is nervous about public speaking. How does he grow to become the confident Storyteller that narrates the books? Is it because of the support of his friends? Or perhaps through braving a new adventure?

P

P is Tane's older sibling. They're fierce, independent and smart, and would do anything to protect their brother Tane and cousin Sibyl. Like Sibyl with trees, P has a deep connection to water.

1. Do you know anyone like P? See if you can identify more of P's characteristics and personality traits. Do they align with the person you have in mind?
2. *The Great River Rescue* is P's story. Jot down instances of their bravery during their adventure to save the Great River.
3. Like Sibyl, P also knows everything there is about rivers. Research and find three more interesting facts and share them with the class.

Fable

Fable is a Story Spirit: a ghost-kid with a cheeky grin and swirling colours that looks like the whole universe is trapped inside them. They're a little bit naughty and loads of fun, but most of all, they love their family, and their home the Story Realm.

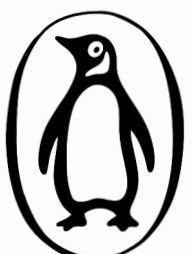
1. Fable is one of the many magical beings in the Yarn Quest series. Can you identify specific attributes about them that normal people can't do that make them magic?
2. List some of the other magical creatures you see throughout the series. Which one is your favourite and why? If they are illustrated, did you picture them similar or different to how the illustrator, Jade Goodwin, has drawn them?



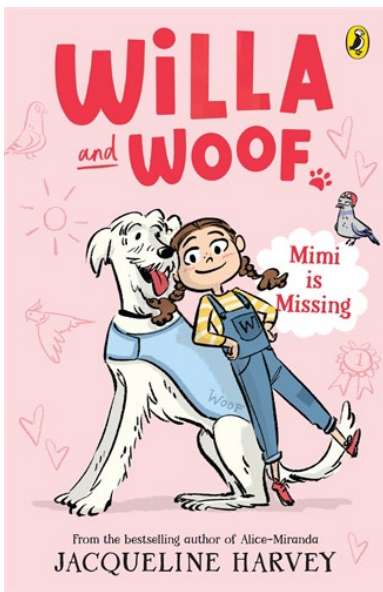
3. What is the definition of the world *Fable*, and what is their role in storytelling? Do you think it's intentional that the author named a Story Spirit Fable? How is this symbolic of who they are, and the role stories play in this series?



YARN QUEEN



FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA



Willa and Woof 1: Mimi is Missing
by Jacqueline Harvey

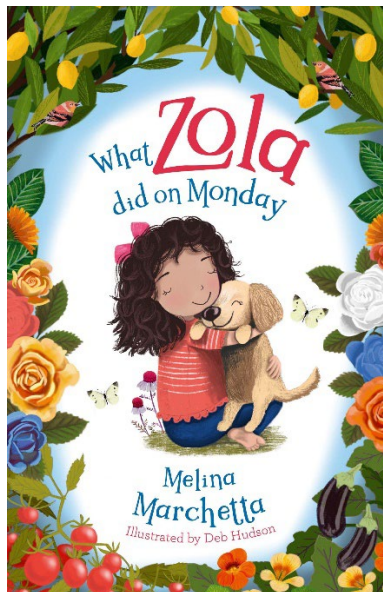
From the bestselling author of Alice-Miranda comes this humorous and heartfelt series about eight-year-old Willa and her best four-legged friend, Woof!

Willa's in trouble. Mimi – the famous racing pigeon owned by Frank, her neighbour and best old-aged friend – is missing. And Willa is pretty sure she's the one who left the cage door open . . .

She'll need her most creative ideas (along with the help of Tae, her best same-age friend, and her trusty sidekick Woof, the albino Irish Wolfhound) to track Mimi down before Frank finds out!

Can Willa find Mimi before it's too late?

Teachers' notes available.



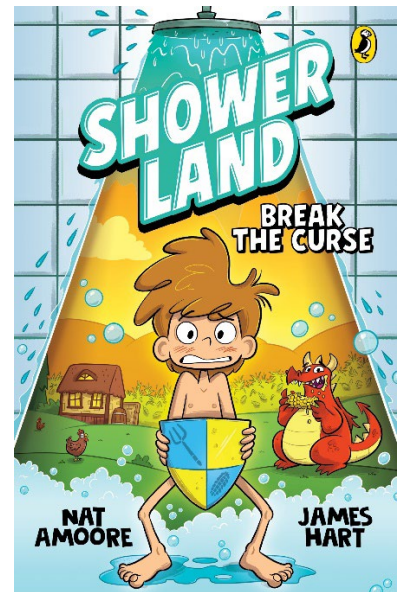
What Zola Did on Monday
by Melina Marchetta, Deb Hudson

From the author of *Looking for Alibrandi* comes this gorgeous series to engage and entertain newly independent young readers.

Zola loves living on Boomerang Street with her mum and her nonna. Every day of the week is an adventure. But Zola has a problem. No matter how much she tries, she can't keep out of trouble!

Seven stories in the series – one for every day of the week.

Teachers' notes available.



Shower Land 1: Break the Curse
by Nat Amooore, James Hart

A hilarious junior fiction series where getting in the shower might send you to another world!

Felix hates Mondays. Dad's yelling at him to get up. His little brother, Olly, is being super annoying. So when Felix shuts the bathroom door, he wishes he could get away. He turns on the shower and . . .

REEEEKKKKKK!

Felix finds himself standing in the middle of a field . . . naked . . . with an army of soldiers charging at him.

Step 1: Avoid flying pitchforks

Step 2: Find some PANTS.

Step 3: UM, IS THAT A DRAGON??!



ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
<i>Yarn Quest 1: The Search for the Story Realm</i>	Brooke Scobie, Jade Goodwin	9781761345227	4-6	\$12.99		
<i>Yarn Quest 2: The Great River Rescue</i>	Brooke Scobie, Jade Goodwin	9781761345241	4-6	\$12.99		
<i>Yarn Quest 3: The Power of the Heart</i>	Brooke Scobie, Jade Goodwin	9781761345265	4-6	\$12.99		
<i>Willa and Woof 1: Mimi is Missing</i>	Jacqueline Harvey	9781761043314	3-5	\$12.99		
<i>What Zola Did on Monday</i>	Melina Marchetta, Deb Hudson	9781760895150	1-3	\$12.99		
<i>Shower Land 1: Break the Curse</i>	Nat Amooore, James Hart	9781761342523	3-6	\$14.99		
TOTAL						

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