



Teacher's Resources



PLOT SUMMARY

Josephine Eloise Thomas is in Paris receiving a huge reward for solving one of the world's greatest art heists. But she's not alone. Gabriel Barbier, the gorgeous French boy who helped her solve the crime is there too, along with their families and the ghost of Louis XVII, who is still Josephine's big secret, for now at least. Amid the celebrations the chilling news that Anastasia, the mastermind behind the crime, has escaped from custody sets everyone on edge.

Upon arriving home to the chateau, the search for information about Josephine's mother along with the hunt for Louis's long-lost love, Madeleine Aubert – both reveal more twists and turns than Josephine could ever have dreamed of.

Then, when Josephine's best friend Harriet arrives from Singapore, the discovery of a prehistoric underground cave network takes the girls, Gabriel and Louis on an adventure like no other . . . but at a dangerous cost.

Will Anastasia stay away or exact her revenge on the children who put her behind bars? Can Louis help save them this time or will things go horribly wrong? And will Josephine *EVER* get a kiss from Gabriel?

RECOMMENDED FOR (ages 9+; years 4 to 8)

CONTENTS

1. Plot summary 1
2. About the author 2
3. Author's inspiration 2
4. Pre-reading questions 3
5. Writing style 3
6. Key study topics 3-7
7. Worksheet – Mapping Your Town! 8
9. Further reading 9
10. Order form 10

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

• Learning areas: English, History, Geography, Arts and Languages • General capabilities: Literacy; Critical and creative thinking; Intercultural understanding; Personal and social capability

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

• This story is full of adventure, mystery and fun to keep readers engaged. • Celebrates writing, friendship and family.

THEMES

• Friendship and family • Identity • Historical fact vs. fiction • French culture

PUBLICATION DETAILS

ISBN: 9781761349416 (paperback); 9781760149758 (ebook); 9781761354083 (audio book).

These notes may be reproduced free of charge for use and study within schools, but they may not be reproduced (either in whole or in part) and offered for commercial sale.



Teacher's Resources

The Girl and the Ghost: Family Secrets

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jacqueline Harvey worked in schools for many years but has had a passion for storytelling since she was a child.

She is the author of the popular Alice-Miranda, Clementine Rose, Kensy and Max and Willa and Woof series, which have sold almost two million copies in Australia alone. In 2022, she released a picture book, *That Cat*, illustrated by one of her former students, Kate Isobel Scott. The pair has since gone on to publish *The Daring Tale of Gloria the Great* and the Kevin the Sheep series. Jacqueline's books have received numerous shortlistings and awards while her picture book *The Sound of the Sea* was a CBCA Honour Book.

Jacqueline speaks to thousands of young people at schools and festivals around the world and says the characters in her books are often made up of the best bits of children she's met over the years. While she is not a twin, like Kensy and Max she does have excellent powers of observation and has always thought she'd make a great spy.

She has narrated over thirty audio books.

Jacqueline lives between Sydney, Australia, and Queenstown, New Zealand, with her husband, Ian, and their beloved though somewhat demanding cat, Bally Puss. Her new middle grade series, *The Girl and the Ghost*, is out now.

AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

Jacqueline says:

The idea of writing about a ghost in a locket who turns out to be a prince was fuelled by an unlikely true story that happened to me when I was in Singapore in 2023. I was doing a signing at Kinokuniya bookshop on Orchard Road when my dear friend and fellow children's author, David Seow, pointed out that there was a prince in the store. I was reluctant to believe him at first, but given David is the best star spotter in the known universe, I soon realised that he wasn't pulling my leg. The

presence of at least six black-clad bodyguards confirmed it. David and the staff suggested that I should approach the prince and give him one of my books. That really didn't seem like a good idea at first – I mean, how embarrassing – but thinking about it for a few minutes, really what did I have to lose? Except perhaps my dignity and potentially my life if one of the bodyguards took exception to my approach.

After a few deep breaths, I decided that the risk might be worth the reward. I steeled myself and, Willa and Woof book in hand, walked up to the very good-looking young man who was standing on his own in front of one of the book displays. 'Excuse me, your royal highness,' I said and was swiftly surrounded by six bodyguards demanding to know what I wanted with the prince. I hastily explained and gave a sigh of relief when the prince waved them away. Hence, I met Prince Abdul Mateen, the tenth child and fourth son of the Sultan of Brunei (who was once the richest man in the world). Prince Mateen was charming and asked me to sign the book for him. I did – and it was awkward because when I shook his hand, I still had the pen clamped in my fingers. David very politely asked if we could take a photograph – the Prince agreed. My husband, Ian, took pictures of David taking the photos with the bodyguards in the background. I think my heart was pounding for hours afterwards!

From Singapore we ventured to France, where we stayed for the next five weeks. We travelled the length and breadth of the country but I particularly fell in love with the Périgord Region in the south west, notably Sarlat-la-Canéda, Saint-Geniès, Les Eyzies and Rocamadour. We visited a number of chateaus and I found myself wondering what it would be like to live in one of these grand old buildings. We also spent a few days in Versailles, exploring the palace and the town. I love history and yearned to know more about Marie Antoinette and her family.

So it was on this trip that the idea of *The Girl and the Ghost* was born. A chateau, a young Australian girl, a locket and a prince who just happens to be a ghost – what more could I want!



Teacher's Resources

Pre-reading Questions

1. Look at the cover of *The Girl and the Ghost: Family Secrets*. Based on the title and the illustrations, what do you think the book is about? What new characters can you identify, and where do they look like they may be?
2. Now, read the blurb and add to your ideas about what the story might be about and the concepts it might explore. What elements capture your interest?
3. Have a go at writing a paragraph about what you think will happen in the story. Then, once you have finished reading the book, re-read your paragraph and see if you were close. You might like to swap your answer with the person next to you and see what they thought would happen too. Which version do you like better?

her paranoia about Anastasia Ivanoff which builds through the narrative. By being a diary entry (with the first-person narration), we can better connect with Josephine's emotions than third-person narrative usually gives us access to.

2. Why do you think the author chose to write *The Girl and the Ghost* series in third-person narration rather than first-person narration? What are the differences between the two tenses and how does that change the impact on you as a reader? Can you identify another novel that is written in third person? Discuss your findings with the person next to you.

To help, you might like to read the diary entry, which is in first person, and see how it reads different to the rest of the story.

KEY STUDY TOPICS

Historical fact vs. fiction

Jacqueline says:

The Girl and the Ghost is a work of historical fiction mixed with a considerable amount of historical fact. I have thoroughly enjoyed entwining the history and geography of France.

Louis XVII (the Seventeenth) was the second son and third child of Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI. He was born Louis-Charles, Duke of Normandy, in Versailles, France. He became the Dauphin of France (king in waiting) following the deaths of his father, Louis XVI, and his older brother, Louis Joseph Xavier François, who died at the age of seven. Louis XVII had two sisters. Marie-Thérèse Charlotte lived until she was seventy-two – in exile outside of France following the revolution. Louis's younger sister, Sophie Hélène Béatrice, died when she was eleven months old – likely of tuberculosis, the same disease that is reported to have killed Louis and his older brother.

Louis XVII was imprisoned in the Temple in Paris during the revolution and separated from his mother. He was in the care of Antoine Simon, a cobbler, and his wife. During the period known as the Bourbon Restoration, many of the Temple records were destroyed; so, much of what is known about Louis appears to be speculation. Some believe that after the Simons left the Temple, Louis was put into a dark room and treated like an animal. His food was allegedly passed to him through the iron bars and he was left entirely on his own, to live in

Writing Style

In *The Girl and the Ghost* books, Jacqueline Harvey incorporates many different forms of writing to elevate the story. In addition to the third-person present tense prose, we see Josephine's diary entries and the emails between her and her best friend Harriet. A story in the form of written correspondence (diaries, letters, newspaper articles, etc.) is referred to as an **epistolary** novel. Some examples include *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley and *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* by Jeff Kinney. This narrative style helps create a more intimate and personal connection between the reader and the characters within the story. Its immersive quality also allows readers to gain better insight into the minds of characters.

Questions and activities

1. Select one of the diary or email entries. Read through your selected entry and write down all the ways it adds something to the story. Do you get to know more about the plot? Does it show us about the character's feelings? Does it give the reader a different viewpoint into one of the character relationships?

An example might be the diary entry on p. 123, where Josephine relays all that has happened since Versailles and how she feels about everything. It shows us Josephine's inner state – one aspect is



Teacher's Resources

filth. According to legend, no one entered the room for almost a year.

I have used this period of uncertainty to change Louis's story. The idea that someone helped him escape to the fictitious Chateau Du Lac in the Périgord region of France allowed me to give Louis some extra time. For the purposes of my story, Louis had to be older – so he and Josephine were contemporaries, and he wasn't just an annoying younger-brother figure.

According to history, Louis XVII died on 8 June 1795 at the age of ten. During the autopsy, the doctor was shocked to find the boy's body covered in scars, which points to earlier ill treatment and perhaps confirms the theory of his isolation and beatings by his captors. Following a tradition of preserving royal hearts, Louis's was removed and smuggled out of the autopsy by the doctor, Philippe-Jean Pelletan. Hence his heart wasn't buried with the rest of his body. For me, this action gave rise to the idea that Louis somehow became a ghost.

His love for Madeleine is completely fictitious. There was no such girl, although I would prefer to think that my version of events may have occurred, and Louis had some happiness in his short life.

Questions and activities

1. *The Girl and the Ghost: Family Secrets* blends fact and fiction. Can you identify other books/movies/shows that draw on a particular historical period and incorporates things that happened during this time into the fictional narrative?

An example might be *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* by John Boyne.

2. Drawing on the information provided about Louis XVII above, research this young prince and find out more facts about his short life. Share your findings with the class.
3. The French Revolution was a period of turbulence and uncertainty in France, resulting in a period of great political and social change. Research the conflict of this time period and jot down the main events. What were the defining features of this period?

This could be the main historical figures, the results of the war, etc.

4. What kind of fictionalised story about Louis XVII would you write about knowing the events of his life? Try writing a short story using Louis XVII as the main character. He doesn't have to be a ghost in this version. Use your imagination!
5. At the end of the book, the author also talks about other historical elements incorporated in this second story. These include: Madame Bertin and her *pandores*, more details about the newspaper *Journal des débats*, Victor Hugo and the cave Paintings of the Dordogne. Have a read of these and then have a go at the following questions and activities.
 - Madame Bertin was a renowned dressmaker, making dresses for Queen Mary Antoinette. Research some of the dresses she's made and make a collage. Are there any elements that you can see in today's fashion or fashion trends from another era? Which dress from the ones you've found is your favourite and why? See if you can find matching *pandores* too.
 - Pretend you are a fashion designer and make your own *pandore*! This can be just a drawing of a doll wearing something of your making or you can get creative and make an actual doll using materials at hand. Then, write a short paragraph explaining the fabrics you've used, the design you've gone for and why you've chosen your specific garments.
 - The French newspaper *Journal des débats* was widely circulated during the revolution. Can you identify other newspapers or forms of media that also existed? Share with the class.
 - Victor Hugo is Josephine's most-favourite French writer. She talks about *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* and *Les Misérables*. Harriet also mentions she's reading *The Queen's Necklace* by Alexandre Dumas. Look up a summary of all these stories. Based on your research about the French Revolution, what do these stories have to say about it and what it was like living during this period? You might like to work in small groups before sharing with the class.
 - **Intertextual allusion** is a literary device when a text directly references another text. Are there any mentioned in the story that are familiar to you? If not, Google what these books are about – do they interest you? Have you perhaps read a



Teacher's Resources

modern version of this work, or a similar story? If so, what were they? Can you identify other French writers in this time period too?

- Research the cave paintings of the Dordogne (including the Lascaux). Find a couple of the paintings. What do you think they are and what feelings/emotions do they evoke in you? Are they telling a story?
- The story of Marcel Ravidat is one of adventure and bravery. Write a short story about you and your friends – similar to Josephine, Harriet, Louis and Gabriel – going on a quest and making a huge discovery.

Friendship

Friendships form a big part of our lives. In this story, we get to see Josephine, Harriet, Gabriel and Louis all form closer bonds and connections. By the end of the story, they coin themselves 'The Four Musketeers' or 'The Fantastic Four.'

Questions and activities

Suddenly, things feel different between them. As if a distance has opened up and they're no longer exactly on the same page like they've been since the first day of kindergarten when they met. (p. 213)

Last night after everything that happened, it seemed like Harriet wanted to avoid any conversation about Louis. She didn't mention him again after dinner and excused herself to go to bed as soon as they finished eating. When Josephine tried to talk to her, she said that she just needed some space to think about things. Probably to think about how her best friend has completely lost the plot since moving to France. So, now, she's hardly seen Gabriel all week, and Harriet doesn't believe that Josephine can see ghosts. It's not exactly the start to the holidays that she was hoping for. (pp. 216–217)

1. When Josephine finally tells Gabriel about Louis, Gabriel is able to see him, but it doesn't work that way with Harriet. How does this strain Josephine and Harriet's friendship? And what does Josephine do to include Harriet and prove to her that Louis is real?
2. What famous story are the kids referencing when they call themselves 'The Four Musketeers?' How does it relate to their dynamic?

3. Make a chart that notes big moments of character connections in the story.

An example might be when telling Gabriel about Louis brings Josephine and Gabriel closer, or when Harriet gets to know Louis better by reading to him.

4. What does friendship mean to you and why is it important? List your favourite qualities about your friends. You might want to share this with them and ask them to do the same for you. Do you see any qualities in Josephine, Gabriel, Louis and Harriet that you see within your friends?

Family and identity

A core part of *The Girl and the Ghost: Family Secrets* is Josephine learning more about her birth mother, Aurelia, and her extended family.

Questions and activities

1. Josephine's ancestry gets complicated! Show your understanding by creating a family tree that shows all the links and connections in the Thomas family. You might like to take this even further by adding in other characters like Harriet, Louis, etc. and their links to Josephine. Don't forget to include Josephine's cousins!
2. Have a go at mapping your own family tree or a friend tree, jotting down all the overlaps. Use different colours and shapes to represent different people.
3. Now, choose someone that's had an impact on you and interview them about their ancestors, life and experiences. Are there any cultural aspects, an interesting place and time they lived? Write down what you uncover as a short story.
4. Bonus question: With her prize money, Josephine gifts Teddy Madame Salmon's pickup truck and also gives a portion to her parents for the renovations on the chateau. What would you do if you were awarded five hundred thousand euros (over eight hundred thousand Aussie dollars)? Would you also give some of it to your family and friends?

Josephine is an aspiring writer, with a deep love for literature. The practice of keeping a diary and journaling has multiple benefits. It can serve as an act of self-reflection, improve creativity and can also be cathartic, especially with everything that Josephine learns about



Teacher's Resources

her family and all the adventures she finds herself in this story! The act of journaling helps her unpack everything that is going on in her life and understand herself a bit more. Try and find specific examples of her journaling that supports this statement.

Questions and activities

1. Do you have a diary? If you do, how often do you write in it? How does it help you?
2. Writing is important for Josephine as it's what she wants to do when she grows up. Writing about finding her mother also helps Josephine feel connected to her. Why is the act of writing so powerful? Discuss with the class.

Tropes

The Girl and the Ghost series explores multiple genres. This includes – historical fiction, the supernatural, adventure, mystery and romance. Genres often come with their own tropes. These are recurring themes, motifs or plots that are common across many books in that genre.

Questions and activities

1. What is a trope? How can you explain it?
2. Can you identify other tropes from all the different genres that are explored in this story? You might like to research specific tropes online and then find examples within the text.

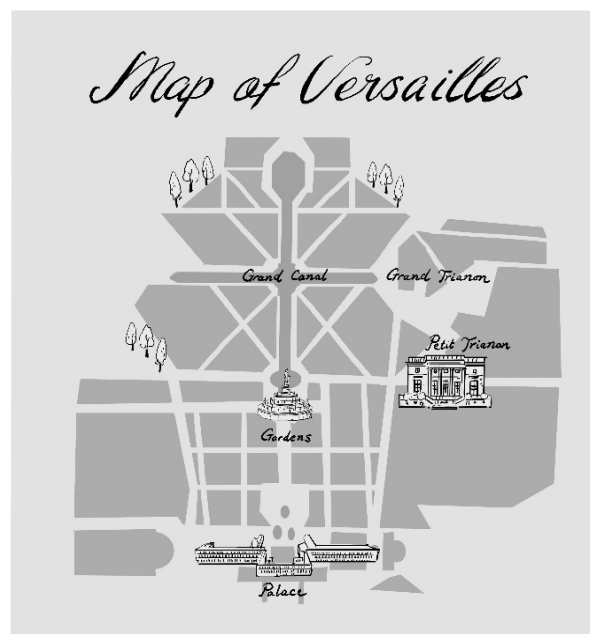
For instance, a ghost being part of the story is a typical trope featured in the supernatural genre and Josephine's feelings of paranoia to create suspense and tension are typical in the mystery genre.

3. Can you spot these tropes in other books you've read or movies you've watched? Do they play out the same as they do in *The Girl and the Ghost: Family Secrets*, or are they explored differently?
4. If you read other genres to those in this story, what other tropes or recurring plots have you spotted in those genres? For instance, fantasy novels might include tropes such as 'the chosen one' or a quest or an evil overlord; crime novels often include red herrings or a big reveal featuring all the suspects; horror stories might include a haunted house.

Setting

In *The Girl and Ghost: Family Secrets*, we get a real sense of setting. Set in rural France, we are exposed to the culture, food scene and weather of Saint-Geniès, Sarlat-la-Canéda, *La boulangeries* (the bakeries) and even the various chateaus. The author makes you feel like you're in sunny France, alongside Josephine.

1. What is setting, and why is it important?
2. Find a description of one of the locations within the text. What mood do you think the author is establishing? How is the author setting the scene? Think about descriptions of the food, weather and buildings that trigger the five senses – i.e. touch, sight, hearing, smell and taste. For instance, maybe the French treats being described trigger your taste sense and transport you to being in a *boulangerie*. Once you've thought about this, Google the location to find a picture. Does the description give an accurate representation of the real-life picture/photo you've found?
3. In this book, we also see the characters visiting Versailles.



- Print out this map and see if you can add to it, finding real photos of other landmarks and monuments within Versailles.
- Find some photos of the interior of the Petit Trianon. What rooms do you like and



Teacher's Resources

dislike? Why? Are they similar to what's described in the book?

4. Have you been to France or tried one of the French foods mentioned? What was your favourite part? If you haven't, is there a specific part of France you'd like to visit, or a food you'd like to try? Share your answers with the person next to you.

Language

Being set in France, we see a lot of French words spoken by the characters within *The Girl and the Ghost: Family Secrets*.

Questions and activities

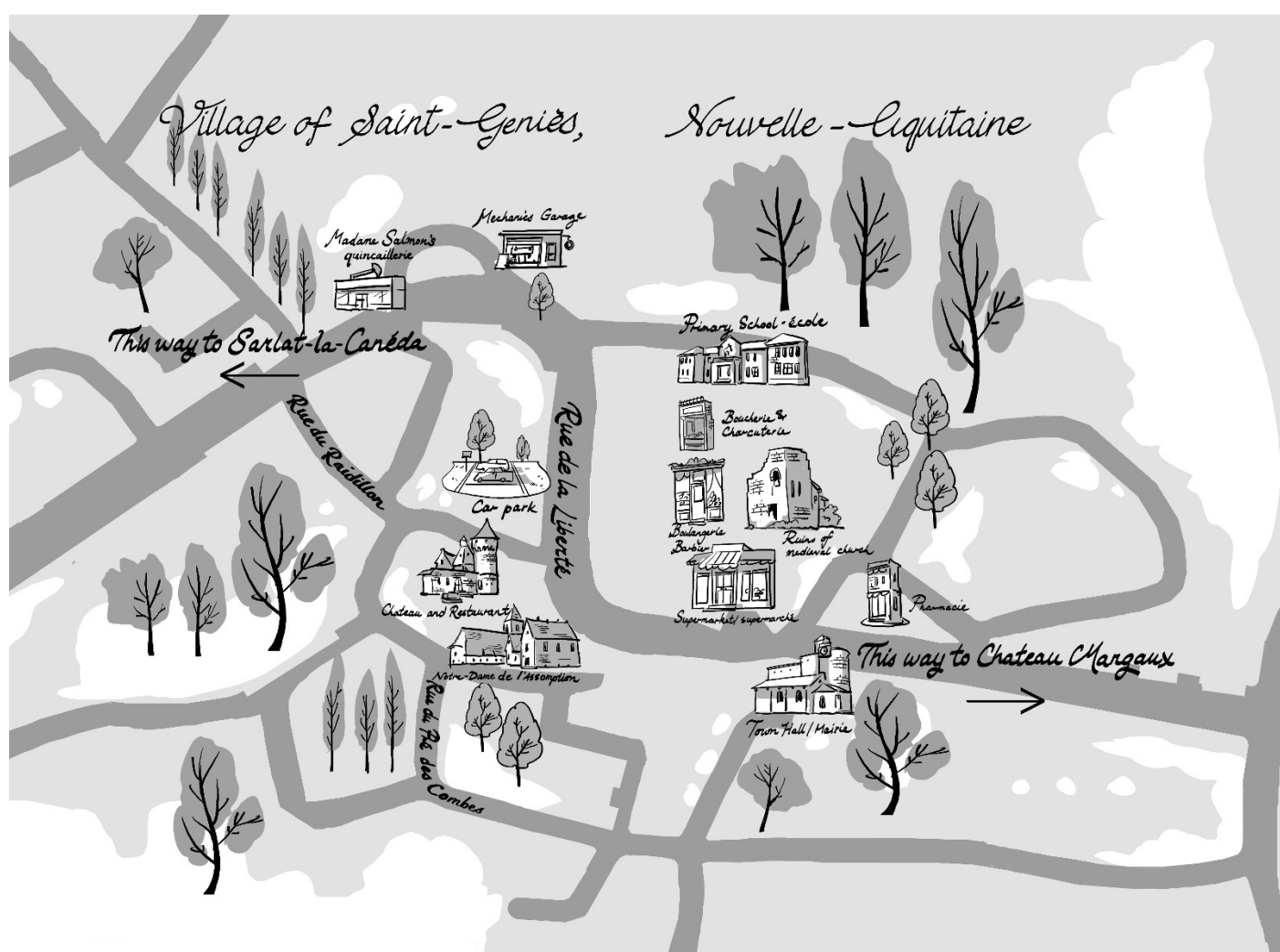
1. Have a look at the glossary at the front of the book. Record yourself saying the French words, practising with the person next to you.
2. Now, have a go at saying these words within some sentences. Try and include as many French words as you can within the same sentence or two. Which words are your favourite?



Teacher's Resources

WORKSHEET – Mapping Your Town!

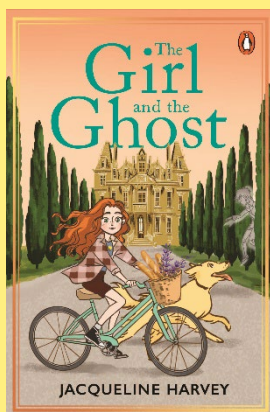
Have a look at the below map of Saint-Geniès. Using this village as a reference point, draw a map of your own town or neighbourhood. Remember to draw little icons of the various landmarks and name them! (This could include your home, school, local shopping centre, a sporting field, etc.) Once you're done with your map, swap it with someone else's and compare the two maps. What's similar? And what's different?





Teacher's Resources

Further reading from Penguin Random House



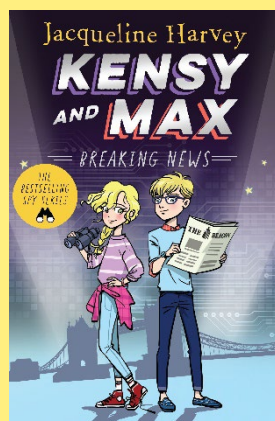
The Girl and the Ghost
by Jacqueline Harvey

When almost-thirteen-year-old Josephine Eloise Thomas moves from Sydney to a chateau in the southwest of France, she doesn't expect to find a beautiful gold locket with the ghost of Louis XVII trapped inside!

Then, there's Gabriel. The grandson of the local baker – French, beautiful, an artist and definitely not a ghost.

When Josephine and Gabriel venture to the shadowy Chateau Du Lac next door to her home, the secrets become more sinister. With Louis's help, can Josephine and Gabriel discover what her neighbours are really up to and solve the mystery of Louis and the locket too?

[Teachers' Resources available.](#)



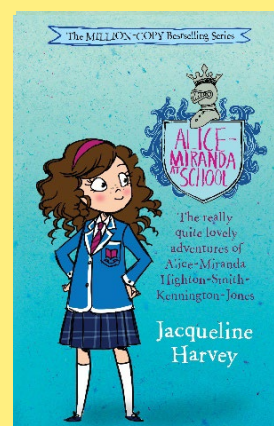
Kensy and Max 1: Breaking News
by Jacqueline Harvey

What would you do if you woke up in a strange place? If your whole life changed in the blink of an eye and you had no idea what was going on?

Twins Kensy and Max Grey's lives are turned upside down when they are whisked off to London, and discover their parents are missing. As the situation unfolds, so many things don't add up: their strange new school, the bizarre grannies on their street, the coded messages they keep finding and the feeling that, all around them, adults are keeping secrets . . .

Things can never go back to the way they were, but the twins are determined to uncover the truth!

[Teachers' Resources available.](#)



Alice Miranda At School
by Jacqueline Harvey

Can one tiny girl change a very big school? Alice-Miranda Highton-Smith-Kennington-Jones is waving goodbye to her weeping parents and starting her first day at boarding school. But something is wrong at Winchesterfield-Downsfordvale Academy for Proper Young Ladies.

The headmistress, Miss Grimm, hasn't been seen for ten years. The prize-winning flowers are gone. And a mysterious stranger is camping in the greenhouse. Alice-Miranda must complete a series of impossible tests. Can she really beat the meanest, most spoilt girl at school in a solo sailing mission?



Teacher's Resources

Order form

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
<i>The Girl and the Ghost: Family Secrets</i>	Jacqueline Harvey	9781761349416	9 – 12	\$16.99		
<i>The Girl and the Ghost</i>	Jacqueline Harvey	9781761349409	9 – 12	\$16.99		
<i>Kensy and Max 1: Breaking News</i>	Jacqueline Harvey	9781761343186	9 – 11	\$16.99		
<i>Alice Miranda At School</i>	Jacqueline Harvey	9781760890698	9 – 12	\$16.99		
TOTAL						

NAME: _____

SCHOOL: _____

ADDRESS: _____

STATE: _____

POSTCODE: _____

TEL: _____

EMAIL: _____

ACCOUNT NO.: _____

PURCHASE ORDER NO.: _____

PLEASE SEND ORDER FORMS
TO YOUR LOCAL EDUCATION
SUPPLIER.