

TEACHERS' NOTES

MARLEE JANE WARD ORPHANCORP

TITLES: 1. WELCOME TO ORPHANCORP 2. PSYNODE 3. PRISONCORP

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KEY CURRICULUM AREAS: English; Humanities and Social Sciences
(Civics and Citizenship; Economics and Business)

VALUES: Kindness, Tolerance for others, Self-Determination, Selflessness
Notes by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

WORKSHEETS RECOMMENDED FOR AGES 13-17 YRS

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

PLOT SUMMARY

Mirii's journey from Orphancorp to Psynode to Prisoncorp is a story of struggle and resistance; a conflict between a lack of love and her innate desire for it. It is a story about being institutionalised and a desperate search for family. This dystopian work consists of three novellas, previously published separately.

1. Welcome To Orphancorp

'Small victories are all you get in an Orphancorp.' (p 3)

Miriiyanan (Mirii) Mahoney has grown up tough in Orphancorp, and as the novella opens is being transported to Verity House in Sydney, from another Orphancorp facility. In each such 'home' the kids are administered by 'Uncles' and 'Aunties' with little compassion, and Mirii (whose name means 'shooting star' in Gamilaraay language) now has no time for younger children: 'Kids. Shiz. Way to make my blood run cold. They cry and cough and tug my pants, seeking comfort I've got no idea how to give them. It's not their fault, those poor dumb jerks. I did the same when I was their age.' (p 6) Her brief fling with Blondie, her conflict with the violent Freya Ferguson, her protective impulses towards young Cam, and her intense attraction to Adeline Vu make her arrival at Verity House, an emotional time. She is due for age release when she turns eighteen in a week's time, but her smart mouth gets her into trouble and she knows that her future might hold a month's detention or – the worse case scenario – being sent to Prisoncorp: 'Once you're in there, it's pretty much the end of it.' (p 13) But all this reaches a climax, when Vu is transferred to an unknown location, and Mirii is released. When the story ends Mirii is facing an uncertain future on the outside, as she has spent her whole life in Orphancorp.

2. Psynode

Since her release from Orphancorp, Mirii has been staying in a boarding house 'Mrs Poluski's Single Women's Dormitory' but when she is accepted as a trainee in Resource Location and Transport in the Logistics Division of Allnode, she decamps briefly to another boarding house run by a Ms Wong. She sometimes helps Elton, her tech whiz friend, to fix tablets and ipads, and when Cam and Sticks turn up having broken out of Verity House, Mirii begs Elton to hide them in return for some work. Her new job proves to be diabolical and her new friend Rowe helps her to survive her first days. Then she's captured by Lacey, an underground protester against capitalism, and discovers that she's been 'highlit' for another purpose. Desperate to break into Psynode to rescue Vu, who has been taken and captured there, she risks her life and those of her new-found friends to infiltrate the facility. Just before their capture, she glimpses Vu escaping, and in a horrifying climax Mirii is consigned to Prisoncorp.

3. Prisoncorp

Mirii finds herself (after a harrowing month sharing a cell in PISR with her old nemesis Freya Ferguson), released into the general prison area of Prisoncorp, where inmates live in tents. Happily, Rowe and Lacey have saved some space for her in theirs, but space is at a premium and it is none too comfortable. Food is distributed in primitive style with inmates having to fight for food thrown haphazardly to the ground from the rear of visiting trucks. The work details are also grim, and Mirii finds herself cleaning latrines and occasionally collecting dead bodies for disposal. A new intake of refugees challenges the available space to breaking point, and things look hopeless until Mirii discovers that Vu has obtained a false ID and infiltrated Prisoncorp as a guard named Tran. But when a riot breaks loose in the nearby men's camp Mirii and her friends realise that they have only this one chance to escape from Prisoncorp and to start a new life. Can they escape and what will be their future?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marlee Jane Ward is a writer, reader and weirdo living in Melbourne. She grew up on the Central Coast of New South Wales and studied Creative Writing at the University of Wollongong. In 2014 she attended the Clarion West Writers Workshop in Seattle, Washington. She likes dreaming of the future, cats, and making a spectacle of herself. Her work can be found in Terraform, Apex, Interfictions, Aurealis, Overland, Scum Mag, Meanjin, Kill Your Darlings, and more. Her novella *Welcome to Orphancorp* won the 2015 Seizure Viva La Novella Prize and the 2016 Victorian Premier's Literary Award for Young Adult Fiction. Its sequel, *Psynode*, was published in 2017,

while the final instalment, *Prisoncorp*, was published in 2019. The series is in early development for the screen. Website: marleejaneward.com

See also:

'Marlee Jane Ward on the Writer's Life' *Writerful Books*

<https://writerfulbooks.com/marlee-jane-ward-interview/>

Ward, Marlee Jane 'Writing one book is one thing, writing a second is another' *Kill your Darlings* 8 June 2016

<https://www.killyourdarlings.com.au/2016/06/writing-one-book-is-one-thing-writing-a-second-is-another/>

Ward, Marlee Jane 'Memoir: Big Dad Energy' *Kill your Darlings* 10 September 2020

<https://www.killyourdarlings.com.au/article/big-dad-energy/>

WRITING STYLE

Title and Blurb

The titles and covers of the books in this trilogy might lead your students to form some perceptions of what each novella is likely to be about.



Activity: Discuss the perceptions they formed before, and then how they changed after reading the novellas. Then design a new cover and write a blurb for any of the three books.

Genre: Dystopian Fiction



Discussion Point: This series has been defined as 'Dystopian/sci-fi punk YA'. Investigate the tropes of dystopian fiction and discuss in relation to these three titles. Do they contain the main features which are evident in other such works in this genre?



Discussion Point: Read classic works of dystopian fiction [eg Aldoux Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), George Orwell's *1984* (1949) and *Animal Farm* (1945), Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), William Golding's *The Lord of the Flies* (1954), Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* (1962), J.G. Ballard's *The Drowned World* (1962), Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged* (1957), Angela Carter's *Heroes and Villains* (1969), Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), Octavia E. Butler's *Parable of the Sower* (1993), Lois Lowry's *The Giver* (1993) as well as contemporary works.] [See Further Reading]. Discuss and compare these novels to the *OrphanCorp* series.



Discussion Point: 'Detail' in fantasy or science fiction helps to build a credible world. For example, Mirii says in Book 1: 'I slam a flash bead into the Systower.' (p 29) The reader then interprets what a flash bead is from the context. In Book 2, she refers to 'an implanter, despite how much I wish I could afford an optic implant or even just a palm.' (p 104) In Book 3, the unreal scene at Assembly is set with a concise description: 'A woman appears at the rail from the watch level two floors up, loud-speaker in hand. She's done up in a white pantsuit, and she shines from the balcony, clean and sparkling. Her blonde hair is scraped back into a severe bun and her face has the puffed up linelessness of someone who hasn't just had some work done, but is entirely work.' (p 268) What other details made this world real for you?

Novellas



Discussion Point: The novella is a piece of prose which is far shorter than a novel and longer than a short story. Research and discuss the conventions of writing in this format.



Discussion Point: This series of three novellas were originally published separately, before being published as a ‘bind-up’ in this edition. Discuss how they work as independent works.



Discussion Point: Read and discuss other examples of novellas. [See Further Reading.]



Activity: Invite students to write their own dystopian novella. Begin by discussing possible plot points and writing a synopsis.

Point of View and Narrative Perspective

This series of three novellas is written in first person, present tense, from the narrator’s perspective. Each is narrated by Miriiyanan (Mirii) Mahoney.



Discussion Point: How might this narrative have differed if it had been written from a third person perspective?

Descriptions of Landscape



Discussion Point: Description includes internal and external landscapes. Book 1: ‘The hallway’s the usual concrete slapped over with pastel paint, gone all grimy. What’s with that weird pinky-peach chalky colour? Everything’s slicked with it – they’ve gotta buy it by the tonne.’ (p 7) Book 2: ‘Town Hall is a grand old stack of sandstone hunkering down amidst the soaring towers. It’s lit from below and the stone glows yellow as the early evening turns a darker blue. The place is surrounded on all sides by shanty-shacks and refugees huddled over little thermo-chip cookstoves, boiling rice rations. Rent-a-guards keep the steps pretty clear, though. I’m here because I told her I would be.’ (p 111) Book 3: ‘outside is like leaf-litter drying, a forest not burnt for years, just waiting for a stray spark to ignite.’ (p 316) Locate other descriptions of landscape and how language is used to create an evocative scene.

Similes, Metaphors and Other Literary Devices



Activity: The writer makes use of poetic literary devices, for example:

‘It’s like those old-timey nature docos with that ancient British dude, ya know, whatshisname? I can almost hear his smooth accent narrating over the grunting and screaming.

What have I gotten myself into?

The warehouse stretches on forever, rows and rows of metal shelving reaching to the ceiling, with grubby white conveyor belts threading their way through the rows, all lit harsh by giant spotlights in the ceiling, burning bright and faraway like suns. The rows of shelves are framed with the same scaffoldy frame of thin runners, ladders, and rails alongside.

And crawling over this like termites on a humungous mound are hundreds, maybe thousands, of babes and brus, threading through the bars and shimmying up and down the ladders at speeds that are simultaneously amazing and terrifying.’ (p 131)

Analyse this passage and then read the three novellas carefully and take note of, and analyse other examples of such usage of literary devices.



Discussion Point: Stars are referred to symbolically and literally when Mirii describes them to Cam and are also referred to in her name which means ‘shooting star’. What do stars represent in these novellas?



Activity: List-making is an effective strategy for telling a story, as well, for example, see Book 2 (p 204). Make a list of the things which Mirii likes, as a spoken word poem.

Humour



Discussion Point: Discuss the various humorous strategies available to a writer such as satire, irony, sarcasm, exaggeration, bathos, and black humour. Choose passages in the trilogy which demonstrate any of these strategies.

Conflict and Suspense



Discussion Point: What forms of conflict feature in these novellas?



Discussion Point: What contributes to suspense in this trilogy?

Characterisation

Main Characters: 1. Miriiyanan (Mirii) Mahoney; Adeline Vu; Freya Ferguson. 2. Rowena Hamilton-Singh (Rowe); Lacey; Cam; Sticks. 3. Lacey; Rowe, Tran (Vu); Freya Ferguson; Cam; Sticks.



Discussion Point: 'Even in the Corp, I took a weird, pervo pleasure from getting good at things, stupid things that didn't matter. Maybe it's a control thing, ya know?' (p 160) What does this quote tell you about Mirii?



Discussion Point: Apart from Mirii, which of the main characters was most vividly drawn in your opinion?



Discussion Point: 'It's weird, I didn't ever think of Freya having feelings. Or a family. I thought she musta hatched from a soft egg in some snake den or sprung full-formed and maniacal from a swamp somewhere. I try to think of her as a bub, cradled in her mum's arms, and then I get the flash of the Mum and the Dad that I get sometimes, just soft eyes and fire-lit hair, holding me and keeping me safe. I look at Freya and she looks at me and we're both tearstained and mortified, but then something passes between us, an unspoken thing. Like we both feel the ache of all the things we've lost and that hurt careens between us for a quick second.' (p 350) Freya appears in Books 1 and 3, and is a pivotal character. How would you describe her character?

Minor Characters include: 1. Uncle; Auntie Beverly (Aunt Bev); Ben (Blondie); South Asian guy; 'Ratty'; Ara Jadhav; Nerida; Uncle Jeff; Kelly Karmine; Uncle Dereck; Auntie Carol; Warden Kyle (Vile); Costa Berry; Ade; Gregor; Sticksy (Sticks); Tangles; Costa Berry; Uncle Rick. 2. Mrs Gupta; Ildi and Una, the Pierce twins; Xue Xiang, a pregnant tenant; Elton, a tech whiz; 'Mrs Poluski's Single Women's Dormitory; Bandis, a recruiter; Ms Wong, her new landlady; Jools, another renter there who grew up in Kidsco; Cam; Sticks; Vikke Wrangle; Dr James Singh, Rowe's father; Tane, the tattooist; Lacey; Tat. 3. Arrow; Clayton; Elton; San; Ava, Chief Operations Officer; Mohammad; Zoe; Flattop; Nabeeha; Cady; Tarni.



Discussion Point: Which of the minor characters most intrigued you? Which character would you like to have read more about? (Elton, for example, was an intriguing figure.)

KEY STUDY TOPICS AND THEMES

Dystopian Futures



'They say you leave little bits of yourself behind in the Time Out cells. It's another kind of ghost story the kids tell each other in blanket-gatherings late at night. They say that every day you spend here grates another piece off you that seeps into the walls.' (p 74)



Discussion Point: Dystopian worlds imagine a future based on what they observe in current social and economic life. Although the events described in these novellas seem extreme, one doesn't need to look far to discover similarly extreme treatment of children and teenagers in our society. [See Global Business Logistics and Ethics below.] What aspects of today's society do you see reflected in this 'imagined' future? [See also Writing Style Genre: Dystopian Fiction above.]



Discussion Point: Make a list of the features which define the worlds of Orphancorp and Prisoncorp and then compare to our current society. For example, Nabeeha is a refugee whose life has been blighted by this society's regulations, just as such illegal immigrants have experienced similar issues in our own society.



Discussion Point: Climate is another aspect of this world which is startlingly contemporary. The heat is mentioned constantly and the difficulty of surviving in Prisoncorp is due not only to poor rations, but to overwork in extreme heat and a lack of water. How important is the theme of climate change in this trilogy?



Discussion Point: Homelessness and poverty are further aspects of this imagined future which mirror many lives lived in cities and rural areas today.

Institutional Care, Home and Family



'In their hurry to manufacture heartless functionality, they've made me a home.' (p 3)



Discussion Point: 'And too, I feel a spike of jealousy at his Mumma and his family biz that I instantly feel bad about. I just feel so. . . untethered. With no family, sometimes I feel like I could just float up and off the world and no one would notice.' (p 164) Is this trilogy about a search for family?



Discussion Point: Mirii has no family but by the end of the three novellas she has made herself one. Discuss the ties which bind family members and how we sometimes create our own families despite a lack of biological ties.



Discussion Point: In some senses these novellas imply that the children of Orphancorp suffer from 'Stockholm Syndrome'. These kids have never known anything else so they have no sense of what the words 'family', 'home' or 'freedom' really mean. Most of them don't envisage escaping (Freya is an exception and Mirii's rebelliousness is as well). In Book 2, Mirii thinks: 'They did my flexcuffs up too tight. It's weird how familiar it feels to be restrained like this. Is that institutionalisation? That the dig of cuffs is kinda like an old friend? Like I always knew I'd end up here, hands behind my back and nothing left to run to. And I feel too, like I deserved this. All the things I've done and people I've hurt trying to get my way, trying to get her back. This is the debt of that, and I deserve to pay it.' (p 231) Discuss the various incidents in which Mirii seems to invite pain or punishment.



Discussion Point: Nature or nurture? These children and teenagers have never known love or care; but still evince care for each other. How do children learn caring behaviours in such institutions? Are we all innately prone to loving, despite a lack of love?

Sexuality



'If someone says something's cool and another thing's not, you gotta respect that, 'cause everyone is different, you know.' (p 57)



Discussion Point: Non-binary gender and a variety of forms of sexuality are canvassed in these novellas. Non-binary people do not identify as either male or female but both. They prefer 'they' as a personal pronoun rather than 'he' or 'she'. Mirii forms a romantic/sexual attachment to Vu, but also sleeps with Ben (Blondie). What does the trilogy suggest about gender?



Discussion Point: 'Cuddle parties' are a form of sexual abandonment (which Freya finds distasteful) but are they also an expression of a child's yearning for comfort and connection?



Discussion Point: Mirii's upbringing has taught her nothing about sexuality, and she has become routinely polyamorous. And yet by the end of the trilogy she seems to have entered a monogamous relationship with Vu. What causes her to adapt to a more traditional sexual relationship?

First Nations Spiritual Beliefs



'They'd make the patterns in the sky to guide their way home. I liked the idea of being able to find my way around.'

But how?'

'I guess they'd just look up and search for the patterns, yeah? Then follow them. Like, the first people who lived here, way back thousands of years ago.' (p 24)



Discussion Point: 'Are you an indigenous? Your skin is pretty brown.' 'I think so. My name, Miriiyanan, means shooting star in an Aboriginal language. Gamilaraay. I looked it up.' (p 25) Although she has had little parenting or family life Mirii identifies herself as Indigenous to Cam. She also tells stories derived from Indigenous culture, eg.. 'And it's weird but back in the day, the Indigenous people saw the Milky Way as this big, like, Emu in the sky.' (p 42) What does this trilogy imply or convey about Indigenous culture?



Discussion Point: Mirii hasn't grown up with her Indigenous family but seems to understand the culture innately. What aspects of Indigenous culture does she most convey in her interactions with her friends?

Love



'That's why I'm here. Not to build a cosy little life for myself, but to find Vu and make sure she gets the chance to try and build one for herself. 'Cause any life I could make would be hollow if I knew that my friend didn't get to have hers.' (p 127)



Discussion Point: Mirii has not been offered love as a child but this story is all about her search for love.

'I feel free enough to love a lot of people fiercely now. I never knew that tying myself to people would make me feel more free. I love them all, fiercely.' (p 357) What does Mirii discover about love?



Discussion Point: What other examples of love are demonstrated in this novel?

Global Business Logistics and Ethics



'Allnode Logistics division employment works on a pointsbased system. Everyone begins at zero. Meet your targets by the end of the day, you're on plus one. Fail to, minus one. Failure to meet location estimates deducts from your rating by fractions of points relative to time percentages. At minus ten, you will be dismissed. Late arrival is instant dismissal. Coming back late from break is instant dismissal.' (p 129)



Discussion Point: Allnode's system and treatment of workers is very reminiscent of some global corporations today. Amazon, for example, has attracted criticism for its work practices. Discuss the modern industrialised workplace and how it treats workers.



Discussion Point: 'There's heaps of us. The Collective. Punks, crusties, activists, anarchists, ya know? Like, anti-caps?' 'Anti-caps?' 'Anti-capitalists. Pro-human.' (p 169) Lacey introduces Mirii to her underground movement. Research any such movements and how successful they have been.

Refugees



'I feel about as hopeless as they do. I wonder where they're all from, how they thought their new life in Australia might go. Did they expect to be rounded up and put into this dusty camp, to waste away on starvation rations? Weren't they seeking something better, and is this better, or is it more of the same? All this way for same shit, different country. Or is it worse? I feel a hot, sinking sorrow for them, and a deep shame, that this is the best we can give. A spot in the yard, and labour in the camp. It shouldn't be this way.' (p 289)



Discussion Point: Nabeeha is angry with Mirii for being involved in a riot, for she is desperately trying to follow the rules in the belief that she will eventually achieve permanent residency. Compare her responses to Mirii to the plight of refugees in Australia on Temporary Protection Visas.

Personal Ethics



'I'd always known that I'd turn tail and run if I could. Selfish, selfish, my brain chants. And even as I berate myself, I'm feeling the wind on my face and it feels like free air. It feels good and I hate myself all the more. Bloody hell, I can't even enjoy escaping from prison, I'm such a killjoy. I keep watching so I don't forget what I've done.' (pp 352–3)



Discussion Point: Mirii is constantly criticizing herself for the failings in assisting others and yet she rescues Cam and Sticks and risks her life for her friends in Prisoncorp. What values does Mirii evince via her actions in the trilogy? Choose examples to demonstrate the points you make.



Discussion Point: Rowe has had a privileged upbringing and yet she throws her lot in with Lacey and Mirii, despite the dangers they face. What makes her act as she does?

KEY QUOTES

Choose one of the following quotes and discuss in relation to the themes which have been outlined above. Then write an essay on how this quote relates to the overall themes in these novellas.

1. 'I worked extra duties for ten months to get the implant in my arm and it was worth the grind and then some. I can't imagine adding a kid to this mess. I'd never forgive myself.' (p 8)
2. 'It helps to know that somewhere, sometime, a couple of folks loved me, even if it was only for a little while.' (p 16)
3. 'Sometimes here the hurt and the good feelings get all mixed up. Sometimes they become the same thing. And sometimes you gotta feel your way out of the pain in your brain. There are lots of ways to do it. This is one.' (p 36)
4. 'Some of the kids are hopeless on daycare duty, but some of them are good at giving out the love and stuff. Not me, though. I did it once for a few months and it sucked the life right out of me. Kids are such little balls of need, aren't they?' (p 40)
5. 'In an Orphancorp, there's not a lot of physical contact, and the touches we do get usually hurt. Without each other, maybe we'd go through life thinking that hands are just slaps and fists, not for grasping or stroking.' (p 50)
6. 'If I was just a regular old babe without an agenda and a half-cocked plan. I could spend my twenties slogging through the bluecollar deets, maybe score a sweet supervisor gig when I hit my thirties, get my own room. Work my life away for a pass into norm-ville, if my body holds out that long. Pretend to myself that it was enough of a life.' (p 122)
7. 'It's hard to do the right thing sometimes. But sometimes, it's the only thing you can do. Does that make me awesome, or a total sucker? I don't even know.' (p 127)
8. 'Not now. We only have fifty-five minutes of training left.' She brightens, her voice going high and whimsical again. 'You can use your breaks to look it over!' (p 129)
9. 'If the training bay was a single tree, then the warehouse is a jungle.' (p 130)
10. 'She taps the side of her head. 'Neural networks. Human storage. A zillion kerjiggergigs in a human noggin. Cheaper than servers, far more powerful. More applications. They can harvest your experiences and use 'em for sims, sell 'em for a few bucks a pop. Turn you into a giant DNA data storage unit.' 'That's totally diabolical.' 'Do you believe me?' 'Of course. I actually thought it would be worse.' (p 171)
11. 'Using someone isn't so bad if you also like them as a friend, right? And hey, if I keep telling myself that, maybe it will be true. It doesn't matter anyway.' (p 180)
12. 'I've always felt like a bit of a product, as much as I've tried to fight it. Like a thing and not a person, maybe a cog or wheel that keeps something turning inside something else. A part, easily replaced when I'm worn out. Everyone is just a little superfluous bit of a bigger machine, and whatever it is we're churning out isn't for us, doesn't benefit any of the parts. I mean, I don't feel this way in myself. Not to my friends, all the other cogs and wheels. But to the ones in charge, their faces always changing but who always stay the same, I know that's all I am to them. And this room. This room is what happens when that notion, that a person is just a product or the sum of their labour or whatever, reaches its supermax conclusion. This is the pinnacle of that process. This room. This is what happens when people aren't people no more, when they're just cogs. But these poor babes aren't even cogs. They're less still. They're things. They're expendable. They're stock.' (p 215)
13. 'I can see what they mean about solitary breaking you down. I didn't realise how unlike a person I felt with everything stripped away; not until I got some back.' (pp 246-7)
14. 'Then, feeling selfish, I think of myself, and how lucky I am that I've got a thread of hope through me that can't get beaten down. That at my core, I believe life is good and meant to be lived, even though I don't know why 'cause it's not as if I've seen much evidence of it.' (p 287)
15. 'Like, if I let myself feel even a bit bad for Cady, then 306 MARLEE JANE WARD all the horrible things

and sad stories going on in this joint will loom, and my feelings will spiral outwards, picking up on every one until my heart just stops or something. I can feel myself icing over a little already. Not even the heatwave afternoon can touch that kinda cold.’ (pp 305–6)

16. ‘There are a lot of us in here, from all nations. ‘Cause it’s a crime to be Koori in our own bloody country!’ She laughs a bitter ‘Ha!’ that twists her features hard and cold.’ (p 318)
17. ‘Where does the line fall between fighting to live and living to fight?’ (p 325)
18. ‘It’s this or the inevitable bloodbath, and even though I’m racked with guilt and sorrow, there’s something in me that wants to live, or try. Or at least die trying.’ (p 348)

FURTHER READING

Picture Books & Graphic Novels

Some picture books and graphic novels may be used with older readers as a catalyst for discussion on issues raised in this series of novellas, for example:

- Colfer, Eoin and Donkin, Andrew *Illegal Art* by Giovanni Ritano. Lettering by Chris Dickey. Hodder, 2017.
- Estela, Lucy *Suri’s Wall* Ill. by Matt Ottley. Penguin Random House, 2015.
- Ewing, Chana Ginelle *An ABC of Equality* Ill. by Paulina Morgan. Frances Lincoln Children’s Books, 2019.
- Greder, Armin *Diamonds* Allen & Unwin, 2020.
- Greder, Armin *The Inheritance* Allen & Unwin, 2021.
- Greder, Armin *The Mediterranean* Allen & Unwin, 2018.
- Kobald, Irena *My Two Blankets* Ill. by Freya Blackwood. Little Hare, 2014.
- Marsden, John *Home and Away* Ill. by Matt Ottley. Hachette, 2008.
- Tan, Shaun *Cicada* Hachette, 2018.
- Tan, Shaun *The Arrival* Hachette, 2006.

Dystopian Fiction For Older Readers

- Andersen, M.T. *Feed* Candlewick Press, 2002.
- Atwood, Margaret *The Handmaid’s Tale* Jonathan Cape, 2019, 1985.
- Atwood, Margaret *Oryx and Crake (MaddAddam #1)* Anchor Books, 2004, 2003.
- Atwood, Margaret *The Year of the Flood (MaddAddam #2)* Nan A. Taleese, Doubleday, 2009.
- Atwood, Margaret *MaddAddam (MaddAddam #3)* Nan A. Taleese, Doubleday, 2013.
- Bradley, James *The Silent Invasion (The Change Trilogy #1)* Pan Macmillan, 2017.
- Bradley, James *The Buried Ark (The Change Trilogy #2)* Pan Macmillan, 2018.
- Bradley, James *Clade*, Hamish Hamilton, 2017, 2015.
- Butler, Octavia E. *Parable of the Sower (Earthseed #1)* 2019, 1993.
- Carmody, Isobelle *Scatterlings* Scholastic, 1991.
- Carter, Angela *Heroes and Villains* Penguin Books, 1993, 1969.
- Collins, Suzanne *The Hunger Games (4 Book Collection)* Scholastic Press, 2020, Book #1 first published 2008.
- Ishiguro, Kazuo *Never Let Me Go* Vintage, 2005.
- James, P. D *The Children of Men* Vintage 2006, 1992.
- Leeson, Robert *Brother in the Land* Puffin, 1984.
- Lowry, Lois *The Giver (The Giver #1)* Ember, 1993.
- McCarthy, Cormac *The Road* Alfred A. Knopf, 2006.
- Murray, Kirsty *Vulture’s Gate* Allen & Unwin, 2009.
- Ness, Patrick *The Knife of Never Letting Go (Chaos Walking #1)* Candlewick Press, 2014, 2008.
- Oates, Joyce Carol *Hazards of Time Travel* Echo, 2018.
- Westerfeld, Scott *Uglies and Impostors (Series)* Simon & Schuster.
- Smith, Mark *The Road to Winter (Winter #1)* Text Publishing, 2016.
- Smith, Mark *Wilder Country (Winter #2)* Text Publishing, 2017.
- Smith, Mark *Land of Fences (Winter #3)* Text Publishing, 2019.
- Zorn, Claire *The Sky So Heavy (The Sky So Heavy Book 1)* UQP, 2013.
- Zorn, Claire *When We Are Invisible (The Sky So Heavy Book 2)* UQP, 2021.

Novellas

- Bradley, James *Beauty's Sister* Penguin, 2013.
- Byatt, A.S. *Angels and Insects: Two Novellas* Vintage, 1994.
- De Saint-Exupéry, Antoine *The Little Prince* Harcourt Inc., 2000, 1943.
- Earls, Nick *The Wisdom Tree* (5 linked novellas) Inkerman & Blunt Publishers, 2016, 2015.
- Gaiman, Neil *Coraline* Ill. by Dave McKean. HarperCollins, 2012, 2002.
- Hemingway, Ernest *The Old Man and the Sea* Scribner, 1996, 1952.
- James, Henry *The Turn of the Screw* Penguin Popular Classics, 1994, 1898.
- Joyce, James *The Dead* Penguin Random House 2004, 1914; or included in *The Dubliners* Vintage Classics, Penguin Random House, 2022.
- Kafka, Franz *The Metamorphosis* Bantam Classics, 1972, 1915.
- Larsen, Nella *Passing* Oshun Publishing Company Incorporated, 2013, 1929.
- Mann, Thomas *Death in Venice* Dover Publications 1995, 1912.
- Sagan, Françoise *Bonjour Tristesse* Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008, 1954.
- Steinbeck, John *Of Mice and Men* Penguin Books, 2002, 1937.
- Svendsen, Mark *To Die For* Vintage Classics, 2012, 2011.
- Wharton, Edith *Ethan Frome* Penguin Classics, 2005, 1911.
- White, Corey J. *The Voidwitch Saga* Macmillan.
- See also: 'World's Greatest Novellas' *Goodreads*
https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/1236.World_s_Greatest_Novellas

Anthologies

- Begin, End, Begin A #Love Oz YA Anthology* edited by Danielle Binks. HarperCollins Publishers, 2017.
- Griffith Review 70: Generosities of Spirit -- The Novella Project VIII*
<https://app.secure.griffith.edu.au/griffithpay/Griffith-Review-The-Novella-Project-VIII-competition.html>
[Note: The annual winners of this competition have been published in eight anthologies to date.]

FURTHER RESOURCES FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Non-Fiction On Writing

- King, Stephen *On Writing A Memoir of the Craft* Scribner Anniversary Edition, 2010.
- Marsden, John *Everything I Know About Writing* Pan Macmillan Australia, 1998. (ebook)
- '34 of the Best Books on Writing' by Farrah Daniel *The Write Life* January 25, 2021
<https://thewritelife.com/best-books-on-writing/>

Internet Resources

- 'How to Write a Novella: Step-by-Step Guide' *MasterClass* September 2, 2021
<https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-write-a-novella>
- McEwan, Ian 'Some Notes on the Novella' *The New Yorker* October 29, 2012
<https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/some-notes-on-the-novella>
- 'Short Fiction Forms: Novella, Novelette, Short Story and Flash Fiction Defined' *Author Learning Center*
<https://www.authorlearningcenter.com/writing/fiction/w/identifying-your-genre/7125/short-fiction-forms-novella-novelette-short-story-and-flash-fiction-defined>
- 'The Novella Project' *Griffith Review*
<https://www.griffithreview.com/editions/the-novella-project/>
- '31 Dystopian Novels By and About Women' by Emily Temple *Literary Hub* November 16, 2017
<https://lithub.com/30-dystopian-novels-by-and-about-women/>
- 'What is Dystopian Fiction? Learn About the 5 Characteristics of Dystopian Fiction With Examples' *MasterClass* September 9, 2021
<https://www.masterclass.com/articles/what-is-dystopian-fiction-learn-about-the-5-characteristics-of-dystopian-fiction-with-examples>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright AM operates justified text writing and publishing consultancy services, and is widely published on children's literature, publishing history and Australian fiction. She is President of IBBY Australia and Deputy-Chair of the Australian Children's Laureate Foundation. In 2011 she was the recipient of the CBCA (Qld Branch) Dame Annabelle Rankin Award, in 2012 the CBCA Nan Chauncy Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Australia, and in 2014, the QWC's Johnno Award. In 2021 she was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia.

WORKSHEETS

WORKSHEET – COMPREHENSION

Ask students to answer the following ten questions:

1. Mirii is good at repairing technical equipment. What other skill does she have?
2. Mirii's name, Miriiyanan, means 'shooting star' in what Aboriginal language?
3. What is Mirii's nickname for Ben?
4. Ara has the word Raaya tattooed on her arm. Why?
5. How has Mirii gained any education?
6. What tattoo does Mirri have on her forearm and what does it mean?
7. Who takes in Cam and Sticks while Mirii is at Allnode?
8. Who is in charge at Psynode?
9. What area of study has Rowe embarked upon before being sent to Prisoncorp?
10. What role does Ava play in Prisoncorp?
11. Who began the riot at Prisoncorp?
12. Who drives the manual vehicle in which they escape from Prisoncorp?

Answers: 1. Tattooing. 2. Gamilaraay (p 25). 3. Blondie. 4. It is her younger sister's name; a sister who was transferred from Verity House and has 'disappeared' from the system. 5. She downloads the Free Public Education Program. 6. Carina, the constellation, the name of which means the boat or the keel of a ship. (p 141) 7. Elton. 8. Rowe's father, Dr James Singh. 9. Medicine. 10. She is the CEO. 11. The men in the neighbouring facility. 12. Freya Ferguson.

WORKSHEET – FURTHER ACTIVITIES & QUESTIONS

Read some of Marlee Jane Ward's short stories. Investigate information about, and reviews of her work online.

What other dystopian works have you read? [Use the Further Reading list above as a start in compiling a reading list.]

How would you describe Rowe's character?

Investigate the work practices of any major global company and how it treats their workers.

Encourage students to respond creatively to the topics raised in this novel, eg. Create a comic panel version of one of the incidents in the novellas; write a poem about Mirii's feelings; create a poster criticising Allnode's work.

What was the most harrowing aspect of this narrative for you, and why?

Create a book trailer promoting this series.

What might have become of Lacey now that she is alone in the world without Rowe?

Do you imagine that Ava's experiences as a captive might have changed her way of viewing her role as a CEO at Prisoncorp? And would she actually have been accepted as a CEO again in this punitive society?

What might lie ahead in Mirii and Vu's future?