



Glimpse

JANE HIGGINS

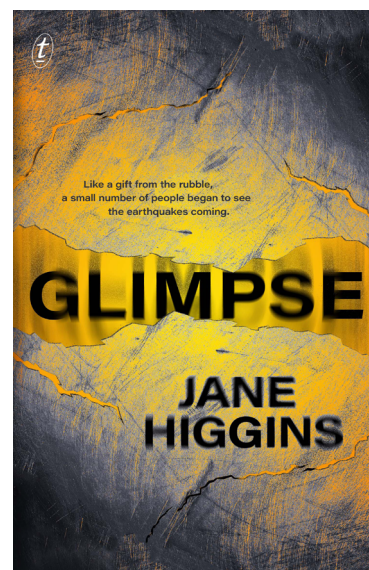
ISBN 9781922330598

RRP AU\$19.99

Fiction

RECOMMENDED READING AGE: 14+

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CURRICULUM GUIDE

The following teaching guide has been designed to embrace shared curriculum values. Students are encouraged to communicate their understanding of a text through speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing and representing.

The learning activities aim to encourage students to think critically, creatively and independently, to reflect on their learning, and connect it to audience, purpose and context. They aim to encompass a range of forms and include a focus on language, literature and literacy. Where appropriate, they include the integration of ICT and life skills.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Credit: Lara Macgregor



Jane Higgins won the 2010 Text Prize for her debut novel *The Bridge*. She lives in Christchurch, New Zealand. *Glimpse*, her third novel for young adults, draws on her experience of the 2010–12 earthquakes, which killed 185 people and caused major damage to the city.

SYNOPSIS

The D-Zone has been written off by the authorities since the first quakes destroyed the city. Rippled with aftershocks, it's still a dangerous place to live. Jonah has lived in the D-Zone his whole life. Back when it was still just Downtown, when his mother wasn't sick and his dad didn't have to go away to work. Since the quakes, everything has changed. Now they live with Jonah's girlfriend, Evie, her family, and his best friend, Bas, in the old church.

Jonah is a glimpseer, someone who has developed the ability to glimpse quakes before they hit. Unable to save anyone from the first quake, he can now sound an alert before quakes hit—and even a few minutes warning can save lives.

Glimpsing is a rare and coveted ability. GlimpseCorp, who runs the entertainment industry far from the danger of the D-Zone, sends scouts into the market to find glimpseers for its reality TV show. To GlimpseCorp, people like Jonah are just a way to make money. But when the sinister cult, People for a New Nation (PANN), threatens the already precarious peace of the D-Zone, Jonah is forced to consider GlimpseCorp a potential ally.

Jonah befriends Shikha, the local Glimpse Corp scout. Shikha is hopeful and ambitious with dreams of becoming a director for GlimpseCorp. When Jonah shares his secret with her and asks her to help him expose PANN, she sees the opportunity of a lifetime. But the more that Shikha, Jonah and Evie discover about PANN and its relationship to GlimpseCorp, the more hopeless it all seems. Even Bas, has been sucked in by PANN's promises. Soon there's not much of the city that isn't under PANN's control, and its violence towards dissenters is escalating. Jonah must race to gather evidence to expose the corruption crippling his community. Will he succeed before PANN's hidden explosives trigger a quake that destroys the city for good?

Glimpse is a thrilling provocative novel that draws inspiration from real-world natural disasters and explores questions of friendship, loyalty, and the cost of survival.



BEFORE READING

In September 2010, the New Zealand city of Darfield was rocked by a magnitude 7.1 earthquake felt across the South Island. In the months that followed, 9000 aftershocks rippled through the city and surrounding areas, and in February 2011, a magnitude 6.3 earthquake hit the city of Christchurch, causing widespread damage and killing 185 people. Jane Higgins draw inspiration for her novel from these events, and from the lasting impact of the quakes on the city and its community.

Use these websites as a basis for discussion about the New Zealand quakes:

<https://my.christchurchcitylibraries.com/canterbury-earthquake-2011-for-kids/>

<https://my.christchurchcitylibraries.com/christchurch-and-canterbury-earthquakes/>

1. Why do you think the author has chosen to use these events as the inspiration for *Glimpse*?
2. What kind of natural disasters occur where you live? How does your community manage them?
3. Discuss some of the impacts that natural disasters can have on the environment, our homes, our jobs and our lives.

WHILE READING

1. Who or what is PANN? Why doesn't Jonah trust those running PANN?
2. Phaedora warns Jonah to make sure he's on the 'right side' when the time comes. (p. 16) Which side does Phaedora mean? Which side does Jonah choose?
3. What makes someone classified as an illegal? What does this mean for their rights and lives?
4. What does Jonah see in the broken light of his glimpses? What do you think these visions mean?
5. What is significant about the holograms of people in the square? Who does Bas want to see?
6. Why is Shikha having a hard time finding glimpsers? Why does nobody trust her with their secrets?
7. What does Jonah see as his responsibility to the D-Zone? Why do you think he feels so responsible for everyone?
8. What does GlimpseCorp think is the reason for the fading glimpses? What makes Jonah so special?
9. Why are people drawn to PANN? Why do you think PANN is so desperate to control the D-Zone?
10. Where does the money that Alphonsine gives Jonah at the end of the book come from? Why does she give it to him?
11. Bas says that he wants to make the D-Zone 'safe for everyone'. (p. 295) What do you think this safety looks like? Who might help him achieve it?

AFTER READING

CHARACTER

1. How does Jonah first describe Evie? Compare this to the way that he describes Phaedora, and discuss how notions of 'good' and 'bad' are reflected in each description.
2. Shikha is 'fed up with her lowly job' (p. 70) and dreams of being a director. When Jonah tells her his story, she sees an opportunity to make a name for herself. Is this her only motivation in the story? How does it change as she gets to know Jonah and Evie? What is she willing to sacrifice to help them?
3. Jonah feels responsible for losing the money for his mother's treatment. Is he right to feel guilty? How does this guilt change the way he sees the world? Is he right to feel that he is responsible for the survival of the D-Zone?

STYLE & STRUCTURE

After the apocalypse

With its strong themes of survival and destruction, *Glimpse* has a lot in common with many post-apocalyptic stories.

Post-apocalyptic fiction (according to the Young Adult Library Services Association) is a sub-genre of science fiction that is set after the end of the world and characters are attempting to rebuild.

Find more information here:

<https://www.yalsa.ala.org/thehub/2014/10/21/genre-guide-post-apocalyptic-fiction-for-teens/>

1. Make a list of the key features of post-apocalyptic novels (think *The Hunger Games* or *Scythe*), and discuss them in relation to *Glimpse*.
2. Discuss the way that post-apocalyptic stories can be used as a way to explore the realities of natural disasters and climate change.

THEMES

Grief

1. *Bas's grief was a huge, complicated, unfathomable work in progress. Maybe finding them here would help, but maybe it would unravel all the work Bas had done so far. Jonah knew about grief work—everyone did. Knowing about it was one thing, but doing it—well, they called it work for a reason and people in the D-Zone had been hard at it for a long time now. Could years of grief work be undone in an hour?* (p. 42) What do you think 'grief work' involves? Do you agree that it can be undone so easily?



- How do Phaedra and Damon manipulate everyone's grief to take control of the D-Zone? What's so powerful about what they're offering?
- What is Jonah talking about when he uses the phrase a 'grief dream'? (p. 141) Who does he think will be blamed when everyone wakes up to the reality? Why does he think this?

Self-esteem

- Evie tells Jonah that she's worried because 'people don't trust us anymore' (p. 52). Why have people stopped trusting them? How might this loss of trust also lead to a loss of power?
- Jonah suspects that PANN wants people's glimpses to gain power and control. (p. 56) What kind of power would PANN have if it controlled glimpses? Why do you think Damon and Phaedra want power?
- In both novels and real life, teenagers are often powerless over many aspects of their lives. But survival stories disrupt hierarchies of power, and often these stories position teens as leaders. Discuss the ways that teenagers are powerful in the story – is this similar or different to the ways that you feel powerful in your own life?
- Ultimately, the quakes are the most powerful thing in the novel. Do you think humans have power over nature, or is it the other way around? Is it possible to find a balance? What does this look like? What is Jonah's attitude towards the natural power of the quakes?

Hope

Read the following section aloud: *'People are complaining that we, as in the choir, are not joining in with their message of hope.' Her fingers made air quotes around the word. 'I mean, I'm all for hope.' She lifted soup bowls out of a cupboard and put them on the table. 'I hope the BCB falls over its own bootlaces. I hope City Hall finds an unexpected pot of money in some corner or other that's tagged for the D-Zone to help us get back on our feet. You know, boring things. What I don't hope for is a fantasy future that we all just step into one day where our beloved dead are back with us as though they never left.' She blew out a breath and went to put her arms around Jonah, resting her head between his shoulder blades. 'What do you hope for?' (p. 51)*

- Why does Evie hope for 'boring things'?
- Do you think her hopes have changed since the quakes? What might she have hoped for before?
- Jonah doesn't respond to her question—why do you think this is? What do you think he hopes for?
- Does hope have to be attached to reality? Give reasons for your answer.

RESPONDING

- At the end of the book, Bas says that 'there's a few battles ahead'. (p. 295) What battles do you think he means? Write a scene set six months after the book finishes that shows one of the battles Jonah and Bas face as they rebuild.
- Jane Higgins includes a news report in the final chapters of the book. Why do you think she does this? How is the language in this extract different to the language in the rest of the book? Choose a key event from the book and rewrite it as a news article.
- Come up with your own post-apocalyptic scenario based on a real-world disaster. Choose a title for your book and write a blurb for it—you might want to read the blurb on the back of *Glimpse* to get an idea of the kind of information you'll need to include.
- Stage an in-class debate that explores the ethics of the holograms. Are they a way of offering people hope or a cruel reminder of what they've lost?
- Spend some time looking through the below website. Discuss the story that is taking place in the photos. Create your own photo essay to tell the story of the last twelve months of your life. Why do you think it's powerful sometimes to tell a story without words?

<https://canterburystories.nz/exhibitions/ground-shook>