



The Finder

KATE HENDRICK

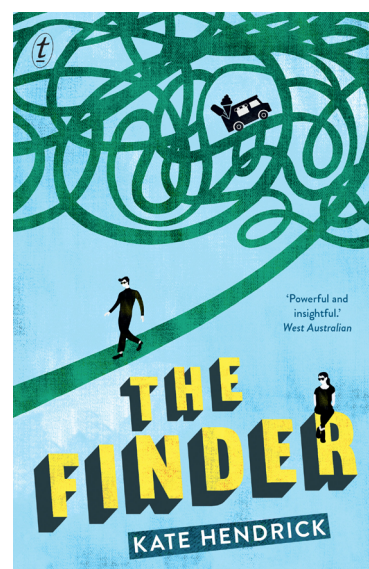
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Fiction

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 the text through speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing and representing.

The learning activities aim to encourage students to think critically, creatively and independently; 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.

SYNOPSIS

Lindsay is good at finding things. So good that people are willing to pay for her services as a Finder.

After Lindsay makes headlines by finding missing eleven-year-old Vogue Fontainebleau, she is approached by popular girl Jazmin Sargeant, who asks for her help to find another missing person. Jazmin's friend Elias is searching for his birth mother, with nothing but a name and an old address to go on. He's like no-one Lindsay's met before. Tall and lanky, with hair that looks like a homage to Elvis, he's earnest, chatty and enthusiastic. Elias isn't someone Lindsay wants to spend time with. But she can't resist the promise of being paid to search for his birth mother – good money, even if she doesn't find her. Lindsay could use the cash, and the distraction from her family, who are noisy all the time, but stay silent on the one thing Lindsay wants to talk about. More than anything, Lindsay wants to find her lost twin Frankie, but where can she even start, in a family that's pretending she never existed?

Lindsay finds more than she anticipated in Elias, and her friendship with him opens her eyes to what she's been looking for all along.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kate Hendrick is a high school Visual Arts and Photography teacher whose first novel *The Accident* was published by Text in 2013. She lives in Sydney with her husband and two children.

BEFORE READING

1. Think of a time you've lost something that was important to you. Write a scene that explores your fondest memory of this thing. In class, reflect on your memory of what you've lost, and talk about what having this thing meant to you, and the impact that losing it had on your life.
2. Some people don't want to be found. Make a list of reasons people might have for wanting to lose themselves. What are the ethics of looking for someone if they don't want to be found?
3. 'I'm an annoying puzzle piece that doesn't fit anywhere.' (87) Where do you feel most comfortable? Write a description of the place you feel most able to be yourself – it can be a physical place, or with a person, or in specific memory.

WHILE READING

1. One of the first things Lindsay notices about Vogue is that she looks like 'the sort of kid who'd run away because Daddy wouldn't buy her a pony.' (2) What first impression does this give you of Vogue? What does it tell you about Lindsay?
2. Why might somebody want to disappear? Have you ever wanted to disappear? How were you feeling at the time?
3. 'Nobody expects you to be perfect, Mum.' (5). What do we expect of our mums? Think of a time your mum got something wrong. Write this as a scene



from your mum's perspective – does this make you learn anything new about her?

- Lindsay's family is made up of her parents, Lindsay, Grace, Elijah, Micah, Evie and Josiah. Who is Frankie? Make a list of moments in the text where Lindsay mentions Frankie. (e.g. "Like when people openly accuse me of killing my sister." "I kept it casual." (53)). What do you learn about Frankie in each of these moments?
- What time of year is the book set? How do you know? What effect does this have on the pace of the book? Find some examples where the physical climate is used to show something about the way a character is feeling.
- What was the first thing Lindsay found? What qualities does she have that make her good at finding things? Can you think of instances where these qualities make life difficult for her as well?
- "Why do all non-conformists non-conform in the exact same way?" I asked bluntly." (55) Who is Lindsay referring to? What does she mean by this?
- Why does Lindsay feel nervous when she is confronted with Vogue for a second time (90)? Does Lindsay seem like a confident person? Where do you think confidence comes from?
- 'I mean, my parents aren't going to suddenly stop being my parents if I find her.' (105) What does it mean to be a parent? What kinds of parents do you see in the book? How is each different? How are they the same?

AFTER READING

CHARACTER

- 'Everything about her was irritating' (29). Why does Lindsay dislike Vogue? Do you like Vogue? What makes unlikeable characters so interesting?
- Why do you think Lindsay keeps a distance between herself and other people? Find examples that tell us how Lindsay feels about herself. E.g. 'I wouldn't say I'm hated, necessarily, but I have a reputation as a bit of a bitch.' (33) How is she described by others? (E.g. "You totally shut Aurora down. It was kinda rude." (102). Keep a log of examples you find, recording who is speaking and what their relationship is with Lindsay. What do you think people want from her?
- Lindsay's mum never used to care about swearing, but now she's 'uptight' about it (16) and, later, Yvonne tells Lindsay about the two times each year when her dad's mood shifts at work. What event marks the shift in their behaviour? What other evidence can you find of the change this has caused in them?

STYLE AND STRUCTURE

- A lot of the book is built around characters that are lost or absent (Frankie and Elias' mum). How are

these absent characters described? What imprint does their loss leave on the characters we see? How are they made present in the story? How would the story change if we left them out altogether?

- The Finder* has a mystery at its core – it is the journey that Lindsay and Elias take to find his mother together that progresses the narrative. Does the book end when he finds his mother? Is the scene where Elias discovers who his mother is satisfying? Why/ why not? For who? Although the narrative follows Elias' mystery, it focuses, through the use of first person, on Lindsay. What is her journey? Where does it finish?
- The book is written in first person. How does this shape the way you read the story? Who do you most relate to? Do you believe one character more than the other? Rewrite a scene from the book using either second or third person. How does this change the way you view the scene or the people in it?

THEMES

Family and friendship

- There are a number of different family dynamics explored in the book. Using either Lindsay, Elias or Vogue as a starting point, draw a family tree that explores the family dynamic of one character. Who is in their family? What relationships do they have with each other? What do they want from each other? What secrets are they keeping?
- 'I reckon she'd give up all of them to get Frankie back. Wake up from this nightmare and get her perfect life back? She'd do it in a heartbeat.' (78) Do you think Lindsay's mum would describe her life as a nightmare? Choose a scene where Lindsay interacts with her mum, and rewrite it from her mum's perspective.
- 'I say I hate my family, but that doesn't mean that I'd literally never want to see them again.' (95). What motivations might you have to leave your family? What stigmas do runaways face? Do you think this is fair? How might your life be different without your family?

Lost and found

- 'He was going to want to find her, and he was going to expect me to know how.' (76). Lindsay takes a lot of responsibility on when she agrees to help Elias. Is he expecting too much of her? Is she doing anything he couldn't have done alone? Why might he really need Lindsay's help?
- 'I desperately, desperately wanted my sister back. And just as desperately, I wanted her gone for good.' (118). Is it possible to want something to be lost and found at the same time? It is obvious why Lindsay would want Frankie back in her life, but why do you think she might want her gone for good? What do you think she means by this?



3. 'Wasn't that the exact same thing Elias was doing — romanticising the idea of his lost mother like I romanticised the idea of my lost sister?' (125). Is it true that we romanticise what we've lost? Go back to your earlier memory of losing something. Discuss it with someone else who was around at the time — do they remember it in the same way? Discuss how memory can be subjective. Why do you think we remember things in their best light?

Identity and belonging

1. Lindsay describes Jazmin as one of the 'alphas' of her grade (33). What are the social 'rules' at your school? (Without picking on individuals) what makes someone popular or not? Are there clearly defined lines around friendship groups? Write about a time you've misjudged someone because of the group they fit into at school.
 2. As a twin, losing Frankie has had a significant impact on Lindsay's life, and by not being allowed to talk about her, Lindsay has been forced to deny a part of herself. How did Lindsay find comfort after Frankie disappeared? How has not being allowed to talk about Frankie changed her? Is Lindsay to blame for Frankie's disappearance?
 3. 'They say you shouldn't judge a book by its cover, but maybe that's because a book doesn't get to choose its own cover. A person does get to choose what they look like.' (39) Is Lindsay right to judge Elias by the way he looks? As you get to know Elias, what parts of his identity do you see come through in the way he dresses? Look for examples of the way Lindsay dresses, or Vogue. What does this tell you about who they are? Lindsay describes her outfit as a uniform at one point. What does the word 'uniform' tell you? What if we changed it to 'costume'? Are the outfits of these characters showing us who they really are, or who they would like us to think they are?
3. Elias documents his search for his mother through photography and his blog. There are lots of different ways to use photographs and images to tell a story. A photo-essay is a series of photographs designed to tell a story and to evoke an emotion in the viewer. Choose a topic that's important to you and create a photo-essay that explores your feelings on this topic. Try to think about the story you're telling, and the feeling you want other people to get when they look at the images. Share your work on a school blog.
 4. Choose something (a person, place, tradition or object) that is important to you and try to find out more about them/it. Where do you start? What do you already know? What would you like to learn? Why does it matter to you? Document your journey through this process. What medium will you use? What parts of the journey are significant to you? Why?
 5. 'This is why I don't make friends—I don't want people to have that power. If they can make you feel good...well, it cuts both ways, doesn't it?' (117). Friendships give other people power over you. Discuss.

RESPONDING

1. Write a short paragraph describing yourself using the following prompts. Pair up with a friend, and respond to the prompts a second time, but answering as your friend. Swap your responses and see how they differ. Discuss in light of the way we see ourselves versus the way we are seen by others. Does this exercise help you see yourself in a more positive light? Does it help you recognise things about yourself that you could work on?

Prompts:

- I am...
 - The most important thing to me is...
 - The thing I find most annoying is...
 - My best quality is...
 - I am too...
2. How would you go about finding someone who is missing? Where would you start? What if they didn't want to be found? Lindsay talks about 'standard'