

The Glass Horse of Venice

ARNOLD ZABLE AND ANITA LESTER

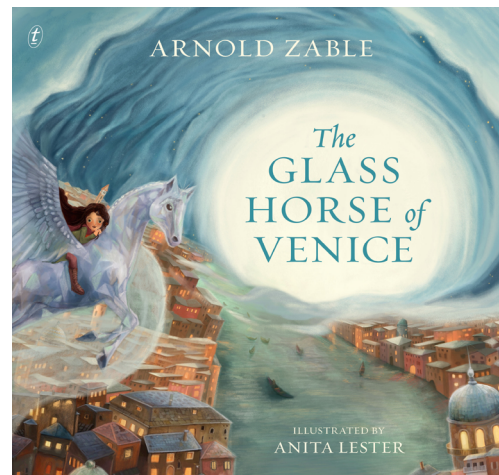
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RECOMMENDED READING AGE: Preschool and up

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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

Arnold Zable is a highly acclaimed novelist, storyteller and human rights advocate. His works include *Cafe Scheherazade*, *Scraps of Heaven*, and *The Fighter*, which was shortlisted for a Victorian Premier's Literary Award and a New South Wales Premier's Literary Award.

Anita Lester is a Melbourne artist, musician and filmmaker.

SYNOPSIS

Claudia lives in Venice with her mum and dad. She loves her life in Venice surrounded by canals, shops and cafes that are always busy with activity.

Each morning on her way to school Claudia passes a glassblower's workshop and admires the animals in the window, especially the winged horses. One day the glassblower calls Claudia inside and gives her a glass horse with broken wings. She places it in her window where it glows in the sunlight. But Claudia doesn't notice the beauty of the horse. She only sees the broken wings, and she longs for a perfect winged horse instead.

One night, a terrible flood damages Claudia's home, and she and her family must leave. The glass horse is packed away with the rest of her belongings, all but forgotten. Claudia misses her home. But one evening she remembers her glass



Claudia climbs onto its back.

The horse beats its wings and alights from the windowsill. It carries Claudia into the night.

horse and digs it out of her old suitcase. When she holds it to the light, the glass horse comes to life, and takes Claudia flying through the night sky, back to her beloved Venice.

The Glass Horse of Venice is a tale of the power of imagination and the importance of home. The story was inspired by a glassblower in Venice who would give imperfect glass animals to children.

BEFORE READING

1. Look at the cover. What do you think this story is about? What do you notice about the horse? How do you think the girl is feeling?
2. Have you heard of a place called Venice? What is it famous for? Talk about the canals and bridges of Venice. What is a gondola? Why do people use gondolas and vaporettos to travel around in Venice instead of cars?
3. Do you know what a glassblower does? Google some pictures of glassblowing in Venice. How do glassblowers shape the glass? Talk about heating up and melting glass so that it can be made into different shapes. Did you know Venice is famous for its glassblowers?
4. What can you see in the sky at night? Have you ever seen patterns in the stars?
5. Talk about constellations and people imagining seeing animals in the patterns of the stars.

WHILE READING

1. Read the first page. Can you see Claudia? Who else can you see in the picture? Find a bridge and a water taxi.
2. Talk about the word *campo*, an Italian word for town square. What are people doing in the campo in the picture?
3. At the glassblower's workshop, what does Claudia see in the window? Name some of the animals. Which one is your favourite?
4. Look at the next picture of Venice and find all the animals. Where do you think they have come from?
5. What does Claudia think about the horse that the glassblower gives her? What kind of glass creature would she rather have?
6. Why do Claudia and her parents have to leave their home? How do you think Claudia feels about moving far away?
7. What happens when Claudia remembers her glass horse and holds it to the light?
8. Where do you think the glass horse will take Claudia? What can she see as she flies through the night? How does she feel as she rides the horse?
9. Look at the last page. What do you notice about the horse as it sits on the windowsill. Do you think it will take Claudia flying again?



AFTER READING

THEMES

Home

1. Claudia moves to a town far away from Venice. Look at the picture of her in her new house. How is it different from her old home in Venice? Where is your home? What can you see from your bedroom window? What are your favourite places and things to do at/near your home?
2. Have you ever moved to a new home? How did you feel? What did you miss about your old home? What did you like about your new home? Imagine you had a winged horse to take you home. What places would you visit? What would you do?

Imagination

1. *The Glass Horse of Venice* is a magical story. What are some of the magical things that happen? Can you imagine glass animals coming to life? What might they be doing?
2. When the glassblower gives Claudia the glass horse he says, 'Its wings are broken, but if you take care of it, one day you will discover its secret.' What do you think its secret is? Do you think Claudia finds out?

Disappointment

1. Claudia she puts the horse with the broken wings on her windowsill. Why doesn't she notice that it is glowing with the light from the campo? Why is she disappointed with her gift from the glassblower?
2. Sometimes things happen that we're not happy with. How does Claudia feel when she and her family have to move to a new town? How do you know? What do the pictures tell you? How does the glass horse help Claudia?

RESPONDING

1. Look at the picture of the winged horse Pegasus in the night sky. Draw a picture of the night sky with your own animal in the stars.
2. If you could choose one of your toys to come to life, which would it be? What do you think your toy would do, and what would you do together?

