



# Waer

## MEG CADDY

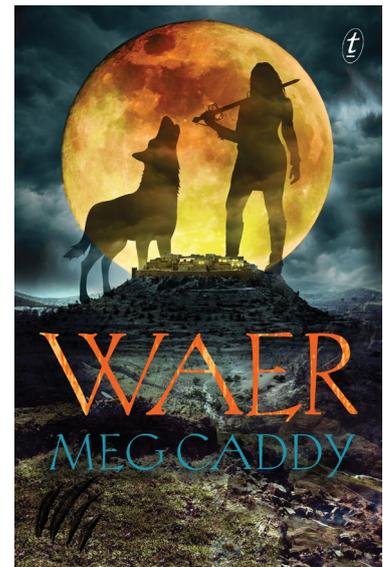
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### TEXT'S TEACHING NOTES FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

- ▶ Text's teaching notes are designed for teachers to explore the novel in line with the *Australian Curriculum: English*.
- ▶ Questions are divided into stages: from pre-reading to post-reading and include suggested tasks for assessment.
- ▶ Refer to the legend below and the accompanying [Australian Curriculum: English Scope and Sequence reference chart](#) to decipher these codes.
- ▶ An ACARA coding system connects each task to the *Australian Curriculum: English*. It includes links to strands, modes, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities.

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Strands</b>                     | LA – Language    LT – Literature    LY – Literacy   |
| <b>Modes</b>                       | W – Writing    L – Listening    R – Reading    S – Speaking   |
| <b>General capabilities</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Literacy</li> <li> Intercultural understanding</li> <li> Personal and social capability</li> <li> Information and communication technology</li> <li> Critical and creative thinking</li> <li> Numeracy</li> <li> Ethical behaviour</li> </ul> |
| <b>Cross-curriculum priorities</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Sustainability</li> <li> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures</li> <li> Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia</li> </ul>  |

### SYNOPSIS

'Simultaneously, I felt the call of the pack, and utter reprehension. My kind, and yet not my kind.' (p.118)

Much to her abhorrence, Lycea is a waer—part human and part wolf, who is running from her tumultuous past and towards an uncertain future. She is running from the tyrant Daeman Leldh, who has persecuted and tortured her, until one day she is rescued by Lowell Sencha, a fellow waer whose family resides deep in the mystical Gwydhan Valley. After the leader of the Kudhienns, Daeman Leldh, brutally destroys the Valley and those that reside within, Lycea and Lowell set out to defeat him and reclaim their rightful homes. Before reaching Leldh they must travel to Luthan in order to confront and join forces with people from Lycea's past. Under the guidance of Moth and Dodge Derry, Lycea and Lowell embark on this journey together and must overcome a series of obstacles along the way, both external and internal. *Waer* is a hero's quest, a story of conflict, love and loss. It is a deeply imaginative and fantastical tale that also explores universal human emotions and is ultimately a triumph of spirit and self-belief.



## BEFORE READING

- Explore students' understanding of 'The Hero's Journey.' Discuss the purpose and different stages of this narrative pattern (i.e. Call to Adventure, Ordeal, Transformation, Return, etc.). Brainstorm examples from other texts they have enjoyed. (ACELY1721) L S LY
- Create a concept map of the fantasy genre, including as many conventions/features as possible. (ACELT1629) W L S LT
- Explain to students that they will shortly begin studying a text about conflict and the struggle to restore balance between good and evil. Have them share examples from their own lives when they have felt conflicted within themselves and made a difficult decision for the greater good. (ACELY1804) L S LY
- Discuss the notion of 'Shifting.' If you could transform into another form what would you choose and why? What might be some of the implications for society if Shifting was widespread? (ACELY1719) L S LY
- Put a sign up at either end of the classroom, one that reads 'Agree' and the other 'Disagree.' Have students stand in the middle of the room and explain that you will read a series of statements that each relate to a theme/idea from *Waer*. They should move to the side of the room that best corresponds with their opinion of each statement. At the end of the activity, hold a discussion to reflect on what students have gained from the exercise. (ACELY1730) L S LY
  - Loyalty is the most important aspect in a relationship.
  - There cannot be good without evil.
  - Revenge is futile.
  - A leader is only as good as his people.
  - What you think of yourself is more important than what others think of you.
- Why does Lycea turn on Dodge and Lowell during their sword training? Consider the role that her wolf instincts play, as well as her feelings of resentment, guilt and anger. (ACELT1627) L R S LT
- 'I could not imagine being confined to the one shape.' (p.44) Why do the waers need to Shift? What does it bring them? (ACELT1622) L R S LT
- 'I turned to Lowell. There was bruised flesh around his eyes. He seemed old, and impossibly young.' (p.59) Compare and contrast Lowell's and Kaebha's first kills (including their motives for killing and feelings afterwards). (ACELT1621) W R LT
- Before dinner one evening, Moth and Derry tell the tale of the goat, Felen and Freybug. What purpose does this story serve? How might it reflect the wider plot of the text? (ACELT1637) L R S LT
- 'Anger ignited me. Hackles, teeth, the howl. I reined them back, but I could not rein back my human response.' (p.133) How is language used in this quotation to suggest similarities between human and wolf? (ACELT1628) W R LT
- What purpose does the Debajo serve in Luthan? (ACELT1803) L R S LT
- 'Perhaps I had not been so far from their minds as I had believed.' (p.138) What reception does Lycea get from the people of Luthan when she arrives home? (ACELY1723) R LY
- King Kirejo is described as 'a man who perpetuated the struggle of his people.' (p.155) Give examples from the text of his actions, or lack thereof, to support this statement. (ACELT1621) W R LT
- Reread pages 156–161 when Dodge, Lowell and Lycea visit King Kirejo and Queen Ela. What does this passage reveal about Lycea's character? How is irony used in this passage? Consider the role reversal that takes place between the King and the outcast. (ACELA1542) R LA
- 'Luthan may be a corrupt pit of depravity and immorality...But it is beautiful.' (p.169) Explain this statement. (ACELT1620) W R LT
- Why is Moth relieved to see Lycea finally fighting back in her battle against Hemanlok? What does this represent? (ACELY1722) R LY
- 'The woman I had come to care for, and yet did not know at all. Lycea. Kaebha. Daeman Leldh's torturer.' (p.206) Discuss students' reactions upon learning that Lycea is Kaebha. Do they feel surprised, confused, disappointed, etc? (ACELT1627) L R S LT
- How is Lowell finally able to trust Lycea? (ACELT1620) L R S LT
- Reread pages 234–244. When Lowell and Lycea are captured, even 'the trees ached with the tragedies they had seen.' (p.243) What literary devices are used in this passage to describe the horror inflicted upon the Valley? (ACELY1721) W R LY

## WHILE READING

- Reflect on the first chapter of the novel, entitled 'Kaebha.' What are your initial impressions of the novel? Who do you think the characters are? Why might the prisoner be on the run? What do you suspect happens to her at the end of the chapter? (ACELT1621) L R S LT
- How does the author pique the reader's interest and create suspense in this initial chapter? Comment on the use of literary devices, the description of the setting and varied sentence structure. (ACELA1545) L R S LA
- When the reader is first introduced to the Sencha family what do you notice about the dynamics between them? What is Lowell's role? What do we learn about the father, Ioan Sencha? (ACELT1620) L R S LT



18. As Lycea prepares to kill Leldh, Hemanlok declares 'now it's time to take everything back.' (pp.278-279) What is he referring to here? (ACELT1620) R LT

## AFTER READING

### CHARACTER

- Construct a map of the major characters in the novel. Be sure to group characters according to families/clans so that the relationships between them are clear. Include the Senchas, Derrys, Watchers, Waers, Kudhienn, etc. (ACELY1723) W R LY
- After finding Lycea, Lowell reflects that 'her life had been put into our hands. It was our duty to ensure we treated it like the treasure it was.' (p.14) What does this sentiment demonstrate about Lowell's character? (ACELT1621) R LT
- Although Lycea refuses to Shift she displays some wolf-like qualities. What examples can you find from the text? (ACELT1621) R LT
- 'I had not escaped Caerwyn to just lie down and die.' (p.41) What does this quote illustrate about Lycea's character? (ACELT1620) R LT
- How does Lowell feel upon learning that Lycea is also Kaebha? Use evidence from the text to support your answer. Do you understand his reaction and reservations towards her? Why or why not? (ACELT1807) W R LT
- At what point in the novel does the reader begin to feel pathos for Kaebha?
- 'I was no longer the child who had blindly followed the sightless Hemanlok into danger.' (p.129) How does Lycea change and mature throughout the novel? What is responsible for this growth? (ACELT1627) W R LT
- 'He was a man who knew exactly the impression he made on other people. He had spent years creating and maintaining the face he showed the world.' (p.130) Is Hemanlok a likeable character? Use evidence from the text to support your response. (ACELY1734) W L R S LY
- 'Three people with impossible powers who guard the balance between good and evil.' (p.105) In your own words, outline the roles of Moth, Hemanlok and Melana. In your opinion, is it a blessing or a curse to be a Watcher? (ACELY1723) W R LY
- 'Of the Three, Moth was the most human. She tied herself to people and their places. She suffered when they did.' (pp.102 - 103) According to this quote, what are the defining characteristics of humans? Despite being a Healer, does Moth have any flaws? (ACELY1733) R LY
- 'Even as they clearly repelled one another, there was something binding them together.' (p.43) Explain the complicated relationship between Lycea and Moth Derry. Why is there so much tension and

resentment? How does this relationship change?

(ACELT1627) L R S LT

- 'A good man, Dodge Derry. He had to be.' (p.83) What does Lycea mean by this comment? (ACELT1621) R LT
- Make a list of quotes that represent Daeman Leldh's character. How is language used to portray him as a villain? (ACELT1621) W R LT
- Write an additional chapter from Leldh's perspective so that the reader can gain some insight into his motives, fears, values, etc. (ACELT1632) W R LY

### STYLE AND STRUCTURE

- The chapters in the novel are written from different character's perspectives. How does this shape the reader's understanding of the unfolding storyline? (ACELA1553) R LA
- Every chapter is written in the first person, other than Kaebha's. Why? How might this influence the reader's interpretation of the characters, as well as their allegiances? (ACELA1553) R LA
- Comment on the use of italics in the novel. (ACELA1556) L R S LA
- Create a map detailing the different settings of the novel (Gwydhan Valley and Sencha Land, Caerwyn, Luthan, Tadgh, etc). Plot Lowell and Lycea's quest along the map to show their journey. (ACELT1622) W R LT
- Define the term *binary* and discuss how contrast is used in the novel. Make a list of examples of binaries from the text, (for example the humans and wolves, and the Primero and the Ultimo). (ACELY1733) W L S R LY

### THEMES

#### Conflict vs. Peace

- 'We're waer. To them, we're not people.' (p.249) What does Lowell mean by this statement? Why is it necessary to dehumanise the enemy in times of war? (ACELT1807) L R S LT
- Despite being a waer herself, Lycea initially rejects her animal instincts and refuses to call Lowell anything other than 'wolf.' What does this reveal about her internal struggle? (ACELT1621) R LT
- 'Part of me wanted to bridge the gap, to take her hand and bring her comfort. How could I, after all she had done?' (p.230) How does learning of Lycea's former identity present an internal conflict for Lowell? (ACELT1620) L R S LT
- 'We were silent, finding our way back slowly to the world.' (p.302) How do Lycea and Lowell find peace in the novel? Is it solely in the death of Daeman Leldh? (ACELY1723) R LY



### Loyalty vs. Betrayal

1. 'Shame and agony sealed Kaebha's loyalty. She was unflinching, unyielding.' (p.181) Why is Kaebha so loyal to Daeman Leldh? (ACELT1620) R LT
2. How is loyalty used as a tool of manipulation in the novel? (ACELT1627) L R S LT
3. 'Hemanlok still withheld his support, and his forgiveness.' (p.184) Are Hemanlok and the people of Own justified in their anger and resentment of Lycea? (ACELT1771) L R S LT
4. Describe Melana as a mother to Lycea. In what ways has she betrayed her daughter? Does she redeem herself at all in the eyes of the reader by the end of the novel? (ACELT1627) L R S LT

### Shame vs. Self belief

1. What are the effects of Leldh's torture of Lycea? Consider both the physical and emotional repercussions, including Lycea's feelings of guilt, shame and loss of self. (ACELT1620) L R S LT
2. 'His mad, desperate hatred, displaced in Lowell and Lycea's bond, struggled to break free.' (p.300) How is Lycea able to finally defeat Leldh? (ACELT1627) L R S LT
3. To whom does Lycea want to prove that she is no longer Kaebha? (ACELT1771) R LT
4. 'Not everything you touch ends in disaster, lass.' (p.91) Why are these words of encouragement from Dodge so significant for Lycea? (ACELT1621) R LT

### Loss vs. Love

1. 'The grief would hit him in waves, seemingly endless, until he was smothered by them and could be worn no more.' (p.52) How is language used in this quote to describe Lowell's sorrow after losing his family? (ACELY1721) R LY
2. After the brutal murder of his family, Lowell is grateful to the Derrys and 'the gentler melancholy that comes with shared grief.' (p.88) What role does Moth and Dodge play in Lowell's life? (ACELT1621) L R S LT
3. Describe the relationship between Moth and Dodge Derry. Although 'they were not waer and could not have a soul-bond' (p.25) their love plays an important role in the novel. Why? (ACELT1771) L R S LT
4. 'She was not malicious, as I had first suspected. Rather, I think she struggled to forgive the world around her for the cruelty she had been dealt.' (p.111) What brings Lycea and Lowell together? How are they able to reach a shared understanding? What are the impacts of their soul-bond? (ACELT1803) R LT
5. 'He had stripped me of my defences as surely and painfully as Daeman had. I was vulnerable

now.' (p.261) What effect has Lowell had on Lycea? (ACELT1627) L R S LT

### Control vs. Faith

1. 'The wolf inside me was pacing. It would tear me apart if it had the chance. I would not allow it.' (p.77) What does this quote demonstrate about Lycea's character? (ACELT1621) R LT
2. From where/whom does Lowell draw hope during his darkest times? (ACELY1734) R LY
3. What is the role of the gods in the novel? (Freybug, Hollow, Felon, etc.) (ACELT1803) L R S LT

### RESPONSE

1. Who is the real protagonist/hero in *Waer*? Justify your answer with evidence from the text. (ACELT1771) W R LT
2. 'I sat down and stared at the world ahead. I had known it was much bigger than the Valley, but having it before me was a different matter.' (p.89) How does *Waer* demonstrate the importance of the journey and stepping outside of one's comfort zone? (ACELT1807) W R LT
3. Relieved to miss the Dawn Worships in the Valley, Lowell reflects that 'it always troubled me that in that place of reflection and healing I felt hemmed in, short of breath.' (p.15) The voyage to Caerwyn was as necessary a journey for Lowell as it was for Lycea. Discuss. (ACELT1771) W R LT
4. The internal struggles that the characters have to overcome in *Waer* are as great as the external conflicts. To what extent do you agree with this statement? (ACELT1771) W R LT
5. 'In every community, someone loses out. There is always someone who goes hungry, unloved, unwanted' (p.45). How does Meg Caddy's *Waer* demonstrate the effects of social inequality? (ACELT1628) W R LT
6. Write the next chapter of Lowell's, Lycea's and Kemp's journey together. Decide from whose perspective you will write and consider his/her personality, fears and experiences in order to capture the essence of your chosen character. (ACELT1632) W R LY
7. *Waer* is primarily a fantasy text. What conventions of the genre does the novel adhere to? What other genres does the novel draw upon? (ACELT1772) W R LT
8. With a partner create a 'Choose Your Own Adventure' story for *Waer*. In order to plan your story, record the major events in the novel and the dilemmas that Lycea and Lowell face. You may wish to present this as a digital story using Powerpoint with hyperlinks that direct the reader to different pages, according to the decisions that they make for the characters. (ACELY1736) W R LY



9. What is the significance of the final stage of The Hero's Journey? Discuss in relation to *Waer* and consider why both Lycea and Lowell must return home at the end of the novel. (ACELY1732)     
W R LY
10. 'We can never restore what was taken from us, but we can remember it, and pay honour to those we lost.' (p.307) What do Lowell and Lycea learn from their travels in the novel and how do they grow? (ACELT1771)    W R LT