

Fire in the Sea

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Fiction, B paperback

Recommended for Secondary School

Resource Kit Contains

- Synopsis
- Author information
- Themes
- Language
- Reading questions
- Reading, writing, history and art-related activities



Praise

'Sixteen-year-old Sadie is growing tired of spending her summer days lounging on the beach with her tedious cousins and her wants-to-be-more-than-a-friend Tom. She can't wait to bid farewell to her grandparents (her parents are dead) and the dull life of her hometown Perth, and embrace the excitement and purpose that obviously comes with being an adult. Fortunately, Sadie doesn't have to wait too long.

After doing her best to save an eccentrically dressed old man from being beaten to death by some very strange looking assailants, Sadie finds herself the sole heir (conditions apply) to a huge old beachside house and its delightfully mysterious contents. From here the action really kicks off, with a storyline that involves rotting ancient sea monsters, minotaurs, gods, cults, end-of-the-world situations and an enigmatic and attractive bare-chested boy.

What I enjoyed most about this book, however, was how refreshingly realistic the character of Sadie was. She wasn't instantly an expert fighter, and right up to the end, she kept that innocent selfishness that all teenagers possess.

Fire in the Sea is a magnificent tale, which young adults aged 13 and up (in particular, fans of Skulduggery Pleasant and Percy Jackson) will enjoy reading'

– *Bookseller + Publisher* magazine

Synopsis

Sadie is sixteen and bored with life in Perth. Lazing around on the beach with her twin cousins and best friend Tom has become the monotonous routine of her summer holidays. When two menacing figures emerge from the sea and attack an old man, Sadie's attempt to save him leads to a mysterious inheritance.

Sadie wracks her brain to make sense of the strange occurrences that are taking place. Did the creature in her backyard really have horns? Is she being followed, or is she just paranoid? Sadie goes in search for answers, despite her grandfather's disapproval. She meets a young man named Jake, who seems oddly out of place, and is persuaded to help him. After an unexplained murder and a near-death experience, Sadie finds herself caught up in an ancient conflict.

Sadie and her friends must help to prevent the final battle that threatens to destroy the city and those she loves. An ancient relic holds the key, but will Sadie and Jake find it before it's too late?

This thrilling story will engage students with its fast-paced adventure. They will enjoy the mythical storyline taking place in an everyday Australian city, which could be their own. This novel provides a platform to discuss the elements that make up suspense and adventure narratives and the opportunity for students to undertake their own writing activities.

The protagonist is brave and isn't afraid to fight for what is right, providing students with a strong female lead character. Sadie's tragic past and the violence and conflicts she faces in the present allow the opportunity to discuss the major themes of death and loss.

Fire in the Sea is an award-winning text that will appeal to all students, especially boys.

About the Author

Myke Bartlett was born in Perth. He is a journalist and a film reviewer. He currently lives in Melbourne with his wife and a Boston Terrier called Moxy.

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Themes

- Death
- Grief
- Loss
- Trust
- Friendship
- Loyalty
- Ambition
- Mythology
- Courage
- Sacrifice

Language

Fire in the Sea references many mystic and mythological concepts that everyone may not be familiar with. Research these terms and create your own definitions.

- Dalai Lama
- Demon
- Gypsies
- Minotaur
- Ouija board
- Priestess
- Reincarnation
- Relic
- Ritual
- Sickle
- Tai Chi
- Talisman
- Tarot

Pre-reading Questions

The title of the novel, *Fire in the Sea*, is an oxymoron. Two opposite or contradictory words have been combined to create impact to make you think about its meaning. Examples: big baby, clever fool, jumbo shrimp, old news.

- Is it possible for fire to exist in the sea?
- What could the author be suggesting by using the word 'fire'?
- With a partner, make a list of as many oxymorons as you can think of.

In the novel, the characters have access to a powerful device that has the power to grant them one wish.

- Write down one wish that you would want to be granted.

Some wishes could affect others in a positive or negative way. For example, wishing you didn't have to go to school anymore may sound desirable, but would have a negative effect on your education and future.

- Discuss the consequences of your wish with the class.

Reading Questions

Something in the Water

- Describe Sadie's relationships with her cousins and Tom. Why is she bored?
- List some synonyms for the word 'lithe'. Use a thesaurus if necessary.

Mr Freeman

- Would you have reacted the same way as Sadie by jumping in the ambulance and waiting at the hospital? Why do you think she did that?

- What do we learn from the dying man's final words?

Some Great Reward

- Why do you think Sadie's grandfather reacts the way he does to the inheritance?
- Do you think the reward fits the deed? Suggest an alternative reward.

Ocean Street

- Sadie notices the many artefacts, weapons and portraits in the old house. What weird, useless things do you or your family collect?
- Sadie describes the stranger in her yard as having legs 'thick as pylons'. Can you think of some other similes to describe people?

The Intruder

- From what you have read so far, describe Tom's relationship to Sadie. Do you think their relationship will change throughout the novel? Explain.
- What prompts Sadie to think the intruder is looking for drugs? Would you come to the same conclusion?

Death and the Dalai Lama

- Sadie tells Jake that his clothes look 'gay'. This is a term that people often use to refer to a variety of things; however, they don't literally mean 'gay'. Can you make a list of words that 'gay' could be replaced with from times you've heard it used?
- What modern scam is Sadie referring to when she mentions Nigerian princes?

Wet Shoes

- Similar to the *Twilight* saga, *Fire in the Sea* has a mythological world existing behind the scenes of everyday life. Why do you think Sadie eventually embraces this world?
- Do you think that the deaths Sadie is suddenly confronted with are making it easier or harder for her to deal with the loss of her parents? Explain.

Blood

- At the crime scene, Sadie finds herself in the wrong place at the wrong time. Why does she find it hard to prove her innocence.
- Sadie keeps secrets from the police and her family. We have been taught that it's not acceptable to lie. Do you agree or disagree that it is ok for Sadie to keep her secrets in this situation, and why?

The Quiet Life

- What is your opinion of Tom's reaction when Sadie explains the mysterious situation to him?
- Why do you think Tom associates the strange creature with the devil?

Strange Currents

- Why does Jake refer to 'here' as the end of the world?
- Why does Sadie find it difficult to accept Jake.

The Hunter

- What could make you think that Sadie has feelings for Tom too?
- What is symbolic about Tom sitting between Sadie and Jake?

Lost Treasures Found

- If Sadie gets her hands on the relic, do you think she would use it to bring her parents back? Justify your answer with examples of her previous behaviour and thoughts.
- Why would Jake be recognised as someone named Sam? Can you guess how Jake got his new body?

Reading Activities

Dangers

'Watch out for what?' she asked.

'F-f-for m-m-men w-with w-w-wet sh-shoes.' (p. 11)

The dangers that Sadie faces in this novel are not your everyday threats. However, her grandparents, family and friends are there to provide her with safety, help and advice.

- Why do you think her grandfather is so against her inheriting the house?
- What are the top three dangers in your everyday life?
- Think about the advice you have received from your parents and grandparents. Write down one saying that has stuck with you, no matter how serious or simple. Share with the class.

First Aid

Remembering her first aid classes, she rolled the old man on his side and checked his pulse. (p. 12)

During the novel, Sadie finds herself in more than one emergency where she is required to use first aid.

- Write about an instance where you witnessed or were involved in an emergency and how first aid was used to help the situation.
- What personality traits does Sadie possess that are useful in an emergency? Make a full list with the class.

Stereotypes

'Okay, the thing is, you just can't. Not around here. People can be a bit, well, limited? Judgemental.' (p. 53)

- Girls are often seen as scared and cowardly in dangerous situations. Find examples in the novel of how Sadie breaks this stereotype.

- Based on the way Kimberley acts and speaks what do we assume about her?

Sadie not only judges the way Jake dresses, but also the man outside the military shop. Unfortunately, people's actions, personalities and beliefs are often judged by the way they look.

- Using the table listed below, try to fill in the gaps and add to the list to create as many stereotypes as you can.

STEREOTYPE	PHYSICAL FEATURES
Homeless	
Rich	
Unemployed	
Bikie	
Cheerleader	
Tourist	

Hero vs. Villain

'I've killed,' Jake said. (p. 93)

We have particular criteria for heroism, for what makes a hero. Jake can be considered a hero with flaws, as he confides in Sadie that he has killed before.

- With a partner, decide which character traits must exist to be considered a hero and discuss how Jake and Sadie fit into these criteria.
- As a class, make a list of multiple heroes from movies and texts and compare to the novel's characters.

- Form three arguments for or against why you think Jake is or isn't a hero, justifying your opinion with examples from the text. Use the arguments to create a class debate.

Immortality

'When you live forever you don't get to grow old, not really.' (p. 97)

Jake is eight thousand years old with the ability to live forever. For us mortals, this is a difficult idea to wrap our heads around.

- As a class, make a timeline of the major historical events that he has lived through in his extended lifetime.
- Make a list of the pros and cons of immortality. Think about Lysandra's predicament.
- What are some of the challenges of the modern world that Jake faces in the novel?

Writing Activities

Letter Writing

- As Sadie, write a letter to Jake after the lawyer has been killed explaining why you don't want any more to do with him.

Monologue

- Write a monologue as a minor character showing their perspective on some aspect of the novel. For example, as Tom discussing his feelings for Sadie, as Kimberley after she is saved from the Drowners, as Vincent explaining his alliance with Lysandra, or choose your own.

Newspaper Article

- Write a short news article that describes the horrific incident in the hospital. Use the explanation given on the radio in chapter 25.

Poetic devices

- The author makes use of poetic devices including simile, metaphor and personification. Rewrite any descriptive scene of the novel, from memory, using many of your own poetic devices. Perhaps the storm or the blistering heat could be your topics.

Adventure Sequel

- Choose one plot point that could be extended to create a sequel to *Fire in the Sea*. Write one chapter using the adventure writing style.

Suspense Structure

- As a class, brainstorm the structure and features of an adventure story and discuss how the structure is used to create suspense.

- Make note of how each chapter ends and see if the author has used a pattern to create suspense.

- Chart the narrative structure (from exposition to resolution).

- Take a class vote to see which chapter was the most action-packed and suspenseful. Refer to the narrative structure when discussing why this was so.

History Activities

Ancient Greeks

A number of portraits were of the ancient Greeks, and there were busts of heroes and gods and monsters on the mantelpiece. Sadie recognised Zeus, Kronus, Poseidon. (p. 30)

There are several references to Greek Gods in this novel.

- Research heroes, Gods and monsters and deliver a two-minute speech to the class on your favourite one.

Softly Serenading

It was music, Sadie was sure, but she'd never heard such sweet sounds before. (p. 64)

Sadie is mesmerised by the music of the Drowners during chapter 7.

- Which Greek mythological idea has the author used as inspiration for this scene?
- How does this idea link to the theme of death?

Art Activities

The Minotaur is on the loose in Perth and is attacking innocent bystanders. Use the descriptions of the beast on pages 36 and 107 to complete the following activities.

- Create a poster with illustration warning residents of the dangerous beast that is wreaking havoc in their town.
- Create a comic strip that depicts the action of the Minotaur attacking either Tom or someone from the hospital.

Drama Activities

- In pairs, improvise two roles. One person interviews a member from Sadie's cousin's family after the incident on the yachts.
- Act out Sadie's confrontation with Jake, in chapter 17, when Sadie comes up with a plan for the relic. End with a strong tableau showing both characters emotions when Jake says he's lost on page 191.