

## TO THE LIGHTHOUSE

Author: Cristy Burne

Illustrator: Amanda Burnett

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Year level: Y3–6

Cross-curriculum priority: Sustainability; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Isaac arrives on Rottneest Island hoping for an awesome holiday adventure, but his mum would rather he stayed inside where it's safe. Then Isaac meets Emmy. She's allowed to do whatever she wants – and she wants to have fun!

With Emmy daring him on, Isaac's life gets more and more exciting. But when things go horribly wrong on their secret midnight adventure, they both wonder whether this time they've gone too far...

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cristy Burne grew up climbing trees, jumping drains, chasing cows and inventing stories. She has a passion for learning through doing and loves to inspire creativity, daring and resilience in her readers. Cristy is a children's author and science writer with degrees in biotechnology and science communication. She has also worked as a science circus performer, garbage analyst, Santa's pixie and atom-smashing reporter.

### THEMES

- Family
- Friendship
- Adventure
- Honesty
- Forgiveness

### AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Y3–6 English

Y3–6 History/Geography

Y3-6 Biological Science

### USEFUL WEBSITES

- Author's website: [www.cristyburne.com](http://www.cristyburne.com)
- Illustrator's website: <https://amandaburnettillustration.wordpress.com/>

### CLASSROOM IDEAS

#### Discussion questions

1. Isaac is excited to be spending his winter break on Rottneest Island. Have you ever visited the island? What was it like? Locate Rottneest on a map of Australia and view some images of the landscape online. (Link: <http://www.rottneestisland.com/the-island/about-the-island/essential-guide>)
2. How would you describe Isaac's mum's personality? Do you think she is overprotective? Why might this be?
3. *Mum could worry about anything, even nodding. It wasn't really her fault. It was just that Isaac was all Mum had left.* (p. 16) What do you think Isaac means by, 'all she had left'? What might the author be inferring (hinting at) here?
  - a. What things do you worry about?
  - b. What are some of the negative health effects of stress?



- c. What strategies help you relax when you are feeling anxious? (e.g. reading; writing; meditation; drawing; listening to music; watching TV; visiting friends; exercising, etc.)
4. Compare and contrast the characters of Isaac and Emmy using a Venn Diagram model. How are they similar/different? Why do you think their friendship works so well?
5. How would you describe Emmy's relationship with her dad? How does it compare to Isaac and his mum?
6. Isaac and Emmy love to play 'dares'. Have you ever played this game? What happened? Do you think people should be careful when playing this game?
7. Why do you think Emmy doesn't like having her picture taken? Do you think she is really playing hide and seek with her dad?
8. Why do you think Emmy's mum is not with the rest of her family on Rottneest Island?
9. Do you think Isaac's mum would have said yes to the night stalk if he had only asked her? If you were Isaac, would you have gone to the salt lakes at night?
10. Emmy claims that she's not scared of anything, while Isaac sometimes admits to feeling fear. What things are you most afraid of and why? Turn to a partner and share.
11. Emmy tells Isaac that her dad has grounded her because he's mean. However, Isaac thinks that it's because he is worried about her. What do you think?
12. Why do you think Isaac and Emmy dared each other to tell the truth at the end of the story? Would you have done the same? (Have you ever lied to someone you loved? How did this make you feel? Did you tell them the truth in the end?)
13. How are each of the following themes explored in this story – what message/s did you personally take away from the book? (Provide quotes and examples to support your claims).
  - a. Friendship; family; honesty; forgiveness; adventure.

### *Creative writing*

14. Write a short story on the theme 'dares'. What will your characters dare each other to do? Will something go wrong? Or will they successfully complete the challenge/s?
15. What is the most exciting school holiday adventure you have ever had? Write a recount of this experience. Alternatively, write a short story about an imagined school holiday adventure like that of Isaac and Emmy! Where will this adventure be set? (e.g. a camp; a beach; overseas, etc.) What exciting or dangerous activities will your lead protagonist/s undertake?
16. Where would you most like to spend your school holidays if you could choose any place in the world? Why? What kinds of activities would you do there? Write a persuasive article aimed at convincing your parents and peers to go there.
17. *Emmy grinned down at him from the jetty... 'How good is that?' she asked, face lit up like sunrise.* (p. 38) What are similes? How do they help enhance imagery? What does the simile in this excerpt make you think of?
  - a. Create some similes of your own to add to descriptions of characters/settings in your own short stories above!
  - b. What other similes can you find throughout the book?
18. Continue the story – how will Isaac and Emmy's holiday end? Will they still be able to have adventures now that Emmy is grounded? Will they simply bring her siblings along? Will Isaac's Mum and Emmy's dad become friends? Will Isaac's mum give him a little more freedom? Will Isaac and Emmy stay friends once they are back on the mainland? Write the next three chapters!

### *History and Geography*

19. *'The creators of this book recognise the cultural significance and sad history that Wadjemup (Rottneest Island) holds for Aboriginal people and acknowledge the Whadjuk Noongar people as Wadjemup's traditional custodians.'* (p. 2) What is the sad history that the above quote refers to? (Link: <http://www.rottneestisland.com/the-island/about-the-island/our-history>)
  - a. What were the beliefs, laws, foods, shelters, rituals and ways of life for the Whadjuk Noongar people on Rottneest before colonisation?
  - b. When/why was the name of the island changed?
  - c. Who lives on the island today?

20. Students may like to practice their map reading skills by exploring a map of Rottnest Island online – can they find the Settlement? The two lighthouses? The main jetty? The salt lakes? Can they trace the route Isaac and Emmy take on their bikes to the Wadjemup Lighthouse tour? (Link: <http://www.rottnestisland.com/accommodation/accommodation-maps>)
21. What is the purpose of a lighthouse? How many shipwrecks are estimated to surround Rottnest Island? Choose a single wreck and then research the history of the vessel. In what year did it sink? What caused it to sink? From whence did it come? What was its cargo? How many passengers were on board? Were there any survivors?

## Biological science

22. Isaac and Emmy have plenty of encounters with quokkas on Rottnest. Create a fact sheet about this animal with the following information: name; physical characteristics; habitat; diet; life cycle; interesting facts; labelled diagram; endangered or not? Ensure to include a reference list of all items used in your research. (Link: <http://www.rottnestisland.com/quokka>)
23. Visit the *Rottnest Island Wildlife* website for schools: <http://wildlife.rottnestisland.com/> List some of the flora and fauna found on this island. Are any of the species endangered? If so, what are the primary causes for this?
24. What kinds of flora and fauna are found in the island's marine reserve? (Link: <http://www.rottnestisland.com/the-island/about-the-island/quokkas-and-wildlife/marine-life>)
  - a. Choose a marine species from this list on the website above and create a fact sheet about your animal with the following information: name; physical characteristics; habitat; diet; life cycle; interesting facts; labelled diagram; endangered or not? Ensure to include a reference list of all items used in your research.
  - b. How do staff at the *Rottnest Island Marine Reserve* implement conservation efforts to protect the marine environment?
25. What can people personally do to protect wildlife if they visit Rottnest Island? (i.e. why is it bad to feed the quokkas? What is the fine for doing so?) Link: <http://www.rottnestisland.com/the-island/about-the-island/quokkas-and-wildlife/protect-wildlife>
23. The Island has six major habitats: coastal, salt lakes, brackish swamps, woodlands, heath and settled areas. Compare and contrast the ecosystems in each of these habitats.
24. Visit the sustainability link for Rottnest Island: <http://www.rottnestisland.com/the-island/about-the-island/sustainability>. Which sustainability strategies are currently being used and why are they important?
25. Isaac and Emmy are disappointed when they visit the pink lake at night and disturb the water, only to find that it doesn't glow. What causes the lake's pink colour? What does the term 'bioluminescence' mean? Why didn't the lake glow? Where in the world can you travel to see bioluminescence in the water? (Link: <http://www.mnn.com/lifestyle/eco-tourism/stories/5-incredible-places-where-the-ocean-glows>)

## Visual Art

26. What do you like about the style of the illustrations in this book? What do they add to the story?
27. Illustrate your favourite scene from the story on A3 paper using any medium of your choice (water colour paints; acrylic paint; oil pastels; pencils etc.) Display around the classroom.



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