



Don't Forget to Remember Me

Teachers' Notes

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Teachers' Notes by:
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Recommended for: Ages 13+

Genre: YA fiction/Rite of Passage

Themes: Identity, LGBTQIA+, childhood trauma, self-harm, kinship care, young carers, mental health

Curriculum Learning Areas:

English: Language, Literature and Literacy

Personal Social Capability

Ethical Understanding

Health and Physical Education

Plot Summary:

Starling lives with her grandfather, Roy, after years of an unstable home life with her mother. A new boy, Bronte, arrives at her high school and Star decides she'd like to be his friend. The school bully, Tremayne, also wants to be Bronte's friend... or maybe more... Meanwhile Roy's mental health is deteriorating. Star's job is to make sure that Roy takes his medicine, but Roy refuses to let her help him with it. His behaviour becomes increasingly erratic until one day he leaves the house and does not return. When welfare comes to check on Star, she, Tremayne and Bronte take a car and go on a road trip to escape authorities. They drive to Star's mother's house to confront her but she is not home. Star, Bronte and Tremayne return to Rocky Point, and with Roy safely in hospital, Star is hopeful about the future.

Before Reading:

This book contains references to self-harm and domestic violence. Students may need support discussing these topics sensitively. The following support services are available for teachers and students:

LIFELINE AUSTRALIA: 13 11 14; <https://www.lifeline.org.au/> (includes online chat facility)

BEYOND BLUE: 1300 22 4636; <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/> (includes online chat facility)

KIDS HELPLINE: 1800 55 1800; <https://kidshelpline.com.au/> (includes online chat facility)

BE YOU: Resources for educators – <https://beyou.edu.au/>

REACH OUT: Resources for young people, parents and schools – <https://au.reachout.com/>

Discussion Points

Looking at the cover image, what do you think the book will be about? AC9E8LY05

What were your initial impressions of the text? What did you think the book would be about? Were your initial impressions true? Compare these impressions with your final thoughts about text. AC9E8LY05

Starling references birds and their behaviours throughout the books. What significance do you think this could have to the story? Do you think the birds are a literary device? AC9E8LY05

Don't Forget to Remember Me is set in a small coastal town. How does this setting combine with the characters and events to contribute to the meaning in the text? AC9E8LY05

Narrative Structure

Don't Forget to Remember Me is written as a first person narrative, which means it is told from Star's perspective. Choose a chapter and write it from another character's perspective. AC9E8LE06

Literary devices

Poetry

*Crash of breaking waves
Eels prefer more still waters
They can teach us things* 67

*My old hi-vis heart
Torn and ripped apart by gulls
Tossed in the slipstream* 71

Star writes poetry as a way to express herself including several haikus. Haikus are poems of three lines, with the first line containing 5 syllables, the second line containing 7 syllables, and the last line containing 5 syllables. Create a haiku inspired by a character or event in the book. AC9E8LE06

Similes

What do you think is meant by the following similes? Draw some quick sketches to show the imagery in the similes, and then write the literal meaning of each simile. How do these similes contribute to the style, mood and tone of the book? AC9AMARoCor; AC9E9LAo8

He showed me lots of stuff when I first came here, but my favourite is still the see-through cicada shells stuck on the tree trunks, perfectly formed, like they are waiting for themselves to come back. P16

All these questions, it's like lifting old sheets of tin in a mice plague and watching the mice run out. P24

Bronte just keeps looking over at me, smiling, and the moments expand like when you throw a stone into the river and it ripples out and out and out. p196

Characters

Analyse a character based on the “STEAL” acronym: speech, thinks, effect, action, and looks. (see worksheet)

Create a digital character profile based on your analysis, including images that represent the character’s actions, appearance and/or interests.

Starling

Create a character arc based on Star’s development throughout the book. Give examples of dialogue and literary devices that influence the readers’ emotions and opinions of the character. AC9E7LE03

Bronte

Create a text exchange between Bronte and his parents, showing plot points in the story and Bronte’s character development. How do Bronte’s parents influence his identity? How does Ruth influence Bronte’s identity?

AC9HP10P01

Tremayne

Write a diary entry about running away from Tremayne’s perspective. How do you think he feels about Bronte and Star’s evolving relationship? What are his motivations to help Star avoid ‘welfare’? Give examples from the text to support your answers.

Star’s initial descriptions of Tremayne are quite negative. How does she feel about Tremayne at the end of the book? What events in the text changed her opinions of him? AC9E7LE05

Themes

Gender identity AC9HP8P05; AC9HP10P05

‘You just do you,’ says Bronte. ‘Thanks for telling me your stuff. I s’pose I have to ask, though, if you still wanna hang with a guy who wants to be a girl? And don’t say it – I’m not gay – I’ve been like this since primary school, wearing my mum’s make-up in secret. And a bunch of other stuff.’ p163

He’s looking at the drawing and there’s sadness in his face.

‘This is you, right? Like, two people in one?’

Bronte swipes the image away and pockets the phone. ‘Kind of,’ he says softly.

‘Like there’s Brenton, and there’s Bronte. I get it.’ p124

‘Okay, the whole name thing? When I can, I’m going to be who I really am. I’ll be a girl. And a dancer. I’m going to learn to dance.’ p212

Bronte's parents sent him to live with his aunt in Rocky Point until he "sorts himself out". They don't approve or understand his thoughts about gender identity. Bronte explains that living with Ruth "doesn't feel like punishment anymore because Ruth accepts who I am".

How does acceptance from other people help support people's sense of identity?

What can you do to support someone else's identity?

What risks are there if someone's identity is not accepted or valued?

Do you think Bronte is at risk?

What supports could Bronte access to help process these feelings?

Domestic abuse

I lie in the dark and wonder if I am a parasite for Roy. I was brought here by Welfare after my mum wouldn't give up Darren. He was her boyfriend and he gave her drugs and black eyes. p30

Not all the Darrens were bad. P132

Why does Star describe her mother's partners as "Darrens"? What statement do you think Star is making about these men through calling them all the same name? AC9HP10P03

Childhood trauma

Personal and Social Capability

Level 5 (Years 7-8)

evaluate how emotional responses influence behaviour and consider the consequences of these responses

Level 6 (Years 9-10)

reflect on their emotional responses to different situations

AC9HP10P01

When I lived with Mum I didn't really notice trees. I had other things to notice, like if we had enough food and if I had clean clothes for school, and if the washing machine had died again and I'd have to wash them in the bath. P202

Mum taught me to look over my shoulder, to tell lies, how to hide from Welfare and nick stuff from shops. 68

What insight does this give into Star's earlier life? How do you think this has impacted her behaviours once living with Roy?

How do you think Star's experience of an unpredictable home life with her mother impacts her relationships with her peers and Roy?

Authorities is what Nick said. And he's right. We're running from the authorities. And I'm guessing that this won't end well. These kinds of things never do. P193

Star responds to the welfare check on page 184 by climbing out the window and running away from her house. Why do you think she responded this way? Do you think this was an appropriate response? What alternative consequences could have happened from this event?

Young carers

Ethical Understanding

Level 5 (Years 7-8)

describe the relationship between the role of individual and community values, rights and responsibilities, and ethical norms when responding to ethical issues

My Pop has a condition. He calls it getting sick, but it's not like the flu, it's a mental thing in his head. He takes tablets, three different types, and if he takes them like he's meant to and doesn't drink too much he's fine. Checking on him is part of my job. My mum told me that if I was going to live with Roy I had to look after him. He laughed at this. Like she looked after you? That's pretty rich, coming from Dolly. 93

'How would I know? I found packets in his room and we haven't been to the chemist for a while.'

'Star, I thought you monitored this.'

Welfare's voice is all gentle and kind and I let the tears come, it's almost kind of a relief that she's here.

'Why should it be my job? Things have been going so great, please don't send me back to Mum's and please don't make me go to some other house.' p185-186

Throughout the book, Star mentions how she is to monitor Roy's medication use and his mental health. Do you think this is fair? How should Star be supported through this? How can the community and health system support Roy and Star in managing this situation so that Star does not bear all the responsibility?

Vocabulary

“So this is where incredulity sneaks in – like *no-one* ever stands up to Tremayne. Not that Nose Stud actually did, he kind of ignored him. Actually, he seemed pretty incredulated by Tremayne. This is another thing me and Roy do, we take a word and we make up a new one from it. Like excitifiable and permanented. We don’t have a telly or wi-fi (don’t get me started), so after tea, if I don’t have homework, we search the dictionary for interesting words and make up new ones.” p8

Find the definition of the following words. For words invented by Starling or Roy, identify and use the morphographs to write a definition. AC9E7LYo8

Word	Definition	Invented by Starling and Roy?
sultry		
incredulated		
incredulous		
euphoric		
excitifiable		
permanented		
cacophony		
phenomenon		
nutritionalistic		
bravado		
supercilious		
pompous		
confusionment		
ovoviviparous		

Resources:

<https://youngcarersnetwork.com.au/>

<https://www.carersaustralia.com.au/about-carers/young-carers/>

<https://www.anglicare.com.au/services/youth-family/young-carers/>

<https://www.carergateway.gov.au/your-life-carer/your-life-around-caring/experiences-backgrounds/support-young-carers>

<https://www.minus18.org.au/>

<https://www.queerspace.org.au/>

<https://twenty10.org.au/>

<https://headspace.org.au/explore-topics/for-young-people/self-harm/>

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/teens/mental-health-physical-health/mental-health-disorders-concerns/self-harm>

<https://www.barnardos.org.au/foster-care/types-of-foster-care/kinship-care/>

STEAL Character Analysis

Character's name: _____

	Example from text	Analysis
Speech 		
Thoughts 		
Emotions 		
Actions 		
Looks 		