



Garden of the Purple Dragon

by Carole Wilkinson

The second book in the award-winning Dragonkeeper trilogy

Teacher Notes
prepared by Joy
Lawn, Children's
Literature Consultant

Readership: Mature mid
primary – mid secondary

Appropriate for class novel
study and literature circles, as
well as independent reading

Genre: Historical fantasy

Setting: Ancient China in the
Han Dynasty.

Awards

Winner WA Young Readers Book Award; Shortlisted 2006 Qld Premier's Literary Awards; Shortlisted 2006 COOL Award; Shortlisted 2006 Kids Own Literature Awards (KOALA); Shortlisted 2006 YABBA

Rationale

These teacher notes have been written to send students back to the text and other sources, actively engage in learning and provide a creative learning experience, where possible.

How to use

The learning activities in one Key Learning Area may also be applicable to other subject areas.

Suggested answers and page references are included where appropriate.

These teacher notes can also be used in conjunction with the notes on Dragon Moon.

About Garden of the Purple Dragon

Ping is rearing Kai, the purple dragon at Black Dragon Pool in the mountains. She feels responsible and alone as she keeps him safe from hunters and necromancers, collects insects for him to eat and tries to develop his speech. As Kai grows he learns to shape-change, and he saves Ping from the Necromancer by pushing her down a well. When Ping is arrested by the imperial guards, Kai is in the shape of a soup ladle. Ping feeds him her blood until he is discovered and becomes a favourite of the Emperor, Liu Che. Ping instigates a search for the Dragonkeeper families which seems to find her successor but leaves her injured and abandoned. Her second-sight leads her to her mother but she returns to Ming Yang Lodge for Kai, whose blood is being used as an elixir of immortality. The number five features in the story and the 'power of five' friends helps Ping defeat the Necromancer.

*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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ENGLISH

SOSE/HISE

Table of Contents Before reading the novel, write an imagined plot outline using the chapter headings. Then select one heading to focus on and predict and write a plot outline in depth of that chapter.

Character Profile At the start, Ping is weighed down by her responsibilities and loneliness. She doesn't think she is a good dragonkeeper but then realises, 'Caring for him wasn't a burden. It was a pleasure, a privilege,' page 71. Write a character profile of Ping, including her feelings and actions.

Dragons in Literature and Mythology Find examples of dragons in literature and mythology. Chart the different attributes of dragons, including

- Physical descriptions
- Abilities, such as fire-breathing, flying
- Personalities
- Relationships with humans

SCIENCE

Then make up your own dragon, using some of these attributes, plus other attributes of your invention.

Significant Numbers

1. How are numbers used and important in the story? How is the number five important? Think of some other significant sets of five.
2. Read page 156, then make up a poem or clues leading to a prediction based around numbers.

(Teacher tip: One is for the universe, two is for the forces known as yin and yang – equal and opposite, they hold the universe together ... page 156. Five is for five elements and for five friends, pages 316, 321, the five-coloured thread, page 130, and the earth of five colours, page 190.)

Speech Ping sounds like a youngster. Find examples. What do you think about Kai using the word, 'okay', pages 212, 304, 349. Does it suit him? Is it appropriate? Choose another word he could use instead and explain why it may be preferable.

Symbols As individuals or in groups, select three symbols from the book, such as dragons, fire, garden, friendship, colours, blood, immortality ... Respond to the symbols and represent each using a different medium. One of these must be the medium of writing. Others could include movement such as drama or dance; or art, such as collage.

CREATIVE ARTS

Han Dynasty Research the Han Dynasty and present findings. Compare and contrast with other ancient Chinese Dynasties. See also the author's notes at the end of the novel, and her website www.carolewilkinson.com.au

Chinese Writing Chinese characters for reading and writing are described on pages 139-141. Try writing some of these. See if a guest knowledgeable in this area can visit the classroom and demonstrate these and others. Otherwise, research what they look like and see how your attempts match the written description.

The author uses the following website: <http://www.mandarintools.com>

Tower of Babel Read the report of the tower falling on pages 176 - 177. This scene may be inspired by the Biblical Tower of Babel. Find out what this was and what happened to the people who built it. Compare and contrast with what happened in the book.

Silkworms

1. Read pages 216-217, 221-2, describing silkworms.
2. Read the poem The Silkworms by Douglas Stewart.
3. Show the lifecycle of the silkworm in pictorial form.
4. Create flow charts showing the process of making silk and silk products.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Carole Wilkinson is an award-winning author of books for children. She has a longstanding fascination with dragons and is interested in the history of everything. Carole is a meticulous researcher who finds it difficult to stop researching and begin writing. She once searched for weeks to find out whether there were daffodils in Han Dynasty China. Carole is married, has a daughter, and lives in inner-city Melbourne.