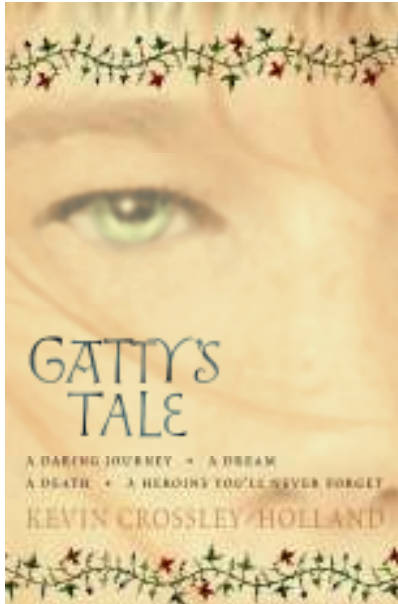


CILIP CARNEGIE SHORTLIST TALKING POINTS

Use these questions as starting points to discuss the merits of the shortlisted books



Gatty's Tale

by Kevin Crossley-Holland

1) When Lady Helen first tells Gatty about the proposed pilgrimage, what is Gatty's reaction? Why is she so keen to go to Jerusalem?

2) All the close members of Gatty's families are dead – her mother, her father and her brother Dusty. What does this tell us about life – and life expectancy – in the thirteenth century? In what way has this affected Gatty?

3) Why is the pilgrimage so important to Lady Gwyneth? What is it, if anything, that she and Gatty have in common? Why do you think she has selected Gatty to join the pilgrimage, and what are her concerns?

4) Lady Gwyneth describes their pilgrimage as 'an unfinished story'.

What does she mean by that? Will there be an end to their story, and when will it be completed? Is Gatty's Tale just about the pilgrimage, or is there more to it?

5) Why is singing so important to Gatty? Who does it remind her of? What kind of voice does she have? Is she encouraged by her fellow pilgrims?

6) When Gatty overhears Lady Gwyneth talking to Nakin about her, what is her reaction? Were they really talking about Gatty? If not, then who were they discussing?

7) When Austin tells Gatty 'a great deal depend on you' to what is he referring? Why is Gatty such a key figure in the group? Does she realise the role she has to play?

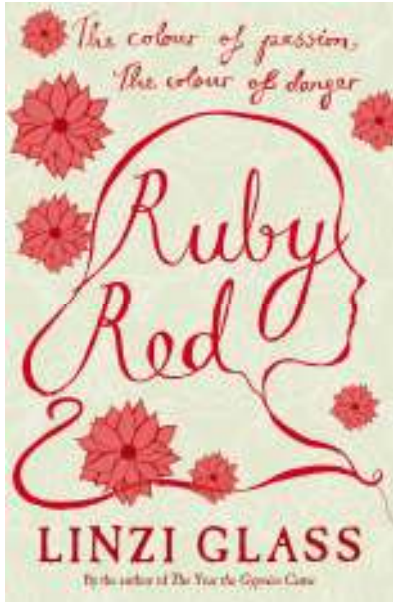
8) The pilgrimage is a long and dangerous journey and it has its casualties. What do you think is the cause of Lady's Gwyneth's death? How does it affect the rest of the party, and Gatty in particular?

9) Brother Gabriel tells Gatty, 'the point of a pilgrimage is the journey, not the destination.' What does he mean by this? Does it have any special significance for Gatty?

10) How has Gatty changed at the end of the pilgrimage? Has she changed for the better? What about her opinion of Saracens and Christians? Can we apply any of Gatty's conclusions to attitudes concerning religion in our modern world?

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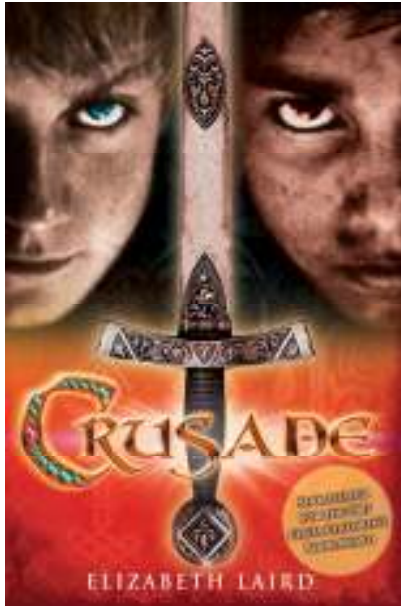


Ruby Red by Linzi Glass

- 1) 'It was May 1976 and South Africa was at the height of apartheid' Ruby tells us. What kind of context does this give to the story? If we didn't know where and when the story was set, would our understanding be affected, and in what way? In what way are these dangerous times?
- 2) What is apartheid and what kind of attitude do Ruby and her parents have towards these laws? Do many other people share their view? Why was it such an unjust law?
- 3) Julian Mambasa is an artist and Ruby's mother runs an art gallery. Why is art such a central theme to this story? In what way is Julian Mambasa's work influenced by the state of South Africa at this time?
- 4) Why is the gallery so important, not just to Ruby's mother, but to Ruby too? Is it a symbol of something greater, and if so, what might that be?
- 5) When Julian tells Ruby '...beauty and pain are close companions...' what does he mean? Ruby's mother calls her 'Julian's muse'. What is a muse and what kind of function does he or she play in art?
- 6) Why does Julian paint what he paints? How do you imagine his paintings to look? What is the significance of colour in the story, and in the title?
- 7) Much of what Ruby's parents do is shrouded in secrecy. How does this affect the way that Ruby lives her own life? And what does it say about the kind of activities that Ruby's parents are involved in?
- 8) What kind of girl is Ruby? How much is she a product of her privileged lifestyle in Johannesburg? What kind of friendships does she have? Who are her true friends, do you think?
- 9) At first, Ruby doesn't understand why Julian wants to paint 'a white schoolgirl reading a book.' Why do you think he wants to paint her? What is the significance of Inkululeku, the book she is reading?
- 10) How does Ruby's life compare with that of her boyfriend, Johann? How does their relationship affect her school life? Is she right to continue the relationship despite the difficulties they face?

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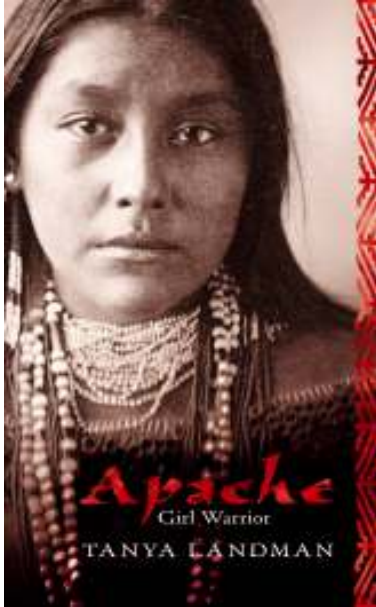


Crusade by Elizabeth Laird

- 1) This novel follows the parallel lives of Salim and Adam, two boys living in very different parts of the world during the twelfth century. What kind of backgrounds are they from? Despite the obvious differences, are there any similarities between the boys' lives?
- 2) Both Adam and Salim are offered 'apprenticeships' by respected figures. Whose job has the better prospects? Are they both suited to their new roles? Which job would you rather do?
- 3) Adam and Salim are from two different religious backgrounds: one is Muslim, the other Christian. How do both these sects view the other? Are there any religious views that they agree on, or are they poles apart? Why was it so important to the Christians to go on their crusade?
- 4) Does Salim want to leave his family to serve his apprenticeship under Dr Musa? Does he show promise as an apprentice? What kind of doctor is Dr Musa? How is he regarded by the two different factions? Is it important that he is neither a Muslim nor a Christian but Jewish?
- 5) Much of the danger of the crusade is in the journey itself. What risks were there in travel at this time? Is Adam brave to undertake the crusade? When he volunteers, do you think he ever imagines the hardships and trials that will follow?
- 6) Sultan Saladin describes the Franks as 'cruel, fanatical people' and adds 'but you can't deny that they're brave'. How do the Franks see their enemy? Do they have a mutual respect for each other? What do you think this tells us about humankind in general?
- 7) It's not until half way through the book that Adam and Salim finally meet up. Why does it take so long? What do the two boys make of each other? Despite the huge gap between them, do they connect in some way?
- 8) Following Lord Guy's injury in battle, there's a difference of opinion between the doctors as to the best way to proceed with treatment. What does this tell us about medical science at the time? Is it a very precise art? What part does superstition and ignorance play in their proposed treatment of Lord Guy's horrendous injury by Dr Nicholas?
- 9) The book features some quite graphic accounts of battle and the horrors of war. How have the main characters attitudes towards the conflict changed by the end of the book? What do you make of Dr Musa's statement that 'no intelligent man fights, Salim.'? Do you think Adam would agree with him?
- 10) By the end of the book, Adam and Salim have separated for good, but still think of each other. What keeps them apart? How have their lives changed as a result of their experiences together? In what way has the world evolved since medieval times? What about attitudes towards different faiths? Have they changed at all?

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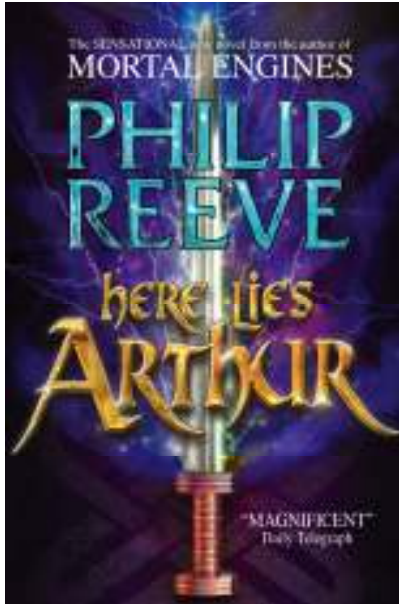


Apache: Girl Warrior by Tanya Landman

- 1) The novel opens with the cruel slaughter of a four-year-old Apache boy. What kind of death has Tazhi have, and why is this crucial to the story? What are the consequences of Tazhi's killing and how does it impact upon the rest of the story?
- 2) It's not until page 24 that we finally discover Siki's name. Why is she kept anonymous for so long? Why is this a key moment in the narration of Siki's story?
- 3) Siki describes Nahasgah's task of teaching her to be a woman as 'unending'. Why should this be so? What does it tell you about the kind of person Siki is?
- 4) Although it is the custom of the Apache to burn the possessions of the dead, Siki refuses to burn Tazhi's spear. Why does she hold it back? What does the spear come to symbolise for Siki?
- 5) When Dahtet tells Siki "You choose a lonely path' what does she mean? Is she right? What are the implications for Siki of the choice that she has made? What kind of sacrifices must she make? Does she make her decision lightly?
- 6) Does Siki believe Keste when he tells her that her father was a coward? Why would she doubt his word? What evidence does she have that he is telling the truth or not?
- 7) Are you surprised to discover that the Apache have snatched Mexican children and brought them up as their own? Do you think this is justifiable?
- 8) There are constant attacks and counter attacks between the Mexican 'White Eyes' and the Native Americans. Who do your sympathies lie with, and why? Does the land 'belong' to anybody, and if it does, to whom?
- 9) What is the 'power' that Siki possesses? How does this affect her and what advantages does it give her over her enemies? Is she the only one to possess such qualities?
- 10) When Siki says 'gold is sacred to Ussen' what does she mean? Does the Apache tribe shows more respect for the land than their enemies? In what way does this give them an advantage?

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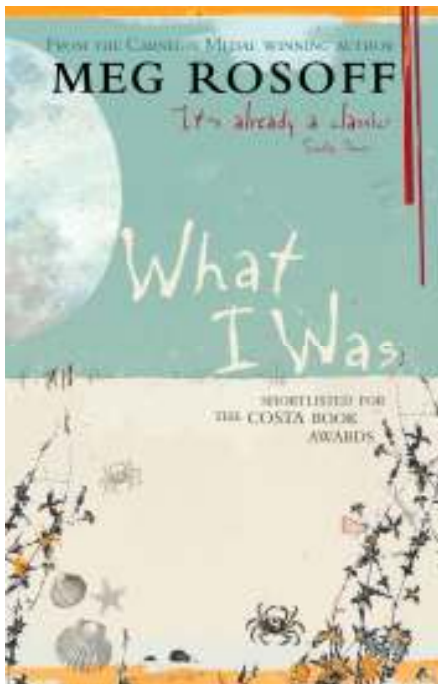


Here Lies Arthur by Philip Reeve

- 1) As a preface to the book, the author gives a note on names and pronunciations. Why has he used these forms rather than the versions we are more familiar with? Why is this point of difference relevant to the story?
- 2) The story is narrated by a young girl, Gwyna the Mouse who 'always has the sense to scurry out of trouble'. Why does Reeve choose to tell his story through such a humble character? What other skills and qualities does Gwyna have? How do these get her noticed by Myrddin?
- 3) According to Arthurian legend, Merlin was a powerful magician. What kind of character is Reeve's Myrddin? What skills does he rely upon? Would you call him a fake, or would you say his powers are genuine?
- 4) The art of storytelling is a recurring theme in this book, and Myrddin is a master at it. Why is he so good at telling his stories? Does he always tell the truth? Does it matter if he changes stories each time he tells them, or depending upon his audience?
- 5) When Myrddin first meets Gwyna she is a girl, but after his trick with the sword in the lake, he disguises her as a boy, Gwyn. Does Gwyna mind being a boy? How does Gwyna cope with the transformation? What problems does this create for both Gwyna and Myrddin later?
- 6) What is the relationship between Arthur and Myrddin in this story? How much of Arthur's success is attributable to Myrddin? What power does Myrddin's storytelling impart to them both? Is the real Arthur very different from the legendary figure of Myrddin's tales?
- 7) As the story progresses how does Gwyna's personality change? What kind of skills does she learn, and who are her principal teachers?
- 8) Gwyna is frequently required to change gender depending upon the situation. What kind of lives do the women live compared to the men? Why is this, and what does this tell us about Gwyna? How does this explain her relationship with Peredur?
- 9) Why does Gwyna betray the secret of Gwenhwyfar and Bedwyr's love affair to Myrddin? Does she realise what the consequences will be? And later, when she tells the story of what happened at Aquae Sulis, why doesn't Gwyna tell the truth?
- 10) Most of us are familiar with the legend of King Arthur from books, films and television. How many of the characters did you recognise? In what way did they differ from what you already knew? Did the book give a new perspective on the legend of King Arthur and his court at Camelot? Do you think this is any more or less realistic than the more traditional versions of the legend?

CILIP CARNEGIE SHORTLIST TALKING POINTS

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What I Was By Meg Rosoff

- 1) The book begins with the narrator introducing himself from a time in the future. Can we tell when exactly it is? How do we know that? Although the book begins at a date in the future, its story is set in the past. Why is the story not told from the present? Why is it important that we know from the very beginning that our narrator is actually a very old man?
- 2) The setting of *What I Was* is as important to the story as the two main characters. Why is this? In what way does the geography of the area contribute towards the story? What is the significance of the map at the beginning of the book? Why is it there?
- 3) What kind of school is St Oswald's? What does it tell you about education and attitudes towards education in the 1960s? How does it compare to your school now?
- 4) Why is the narrator of the story kept anonymous until the end of the story? And why does Finn give the narrator's name when he's admitted to hospital? At the end of the story, when he introduces himself to Lara, why does the narrator call himself Finn?
- 5) Throughout the book, the narrator refers to ten different rules, the last being 'there is no such thing as truth'. Why is it appropriate that this should be the final rule? Why are there rules at all, and why should there be ten? What do they bring to the story?
- 6) What is the role that history plays in the story? Why are there so many historical references, and why should Finn be so fascinated by the subject? To what degree is *What I Was* a history of a doomed love affair?
- 7) How does the relationship between the two boys develop? How important is it to both of them? Are they in love? Why does the hut become so important to the boy narrator?
- 8) How does Hilary cope with Finn when he falls ill? In what way are their previous roles reversed? Does he make a good job of looking after his friend?
- 9) Did you guess the truth about Finn before the end of the book? Did the writer leave any clues as to his true identity? Were you surprised to discover what Finn was? How does the title of the book relate to the protagonists?
- 10) In what way has Hilary been born out of time? In the final chapters, is there any sense of sadness and regret about the days he spent with Finn? When he writes 'Time erodes us all' what do you think he means?

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Finding Violet Park By Jenny Valentine

- 1) What is unusual about Violet Park? When Lucas talks about her, he always speaks of her as a real person? How real is she to Lucas?
- 2) Despite the fact that Lucas never met Violet, she makes him think about the process of growing old. Is it unusual for teenagers to think about getting old? Is it more usual for older people to think about the time when they were teenagers, perhaps?
- 3) Why is Lucas obsessed with his father? Why does his mother resent it so much? Can you understand why it is so important to Lucas and his family that they find out what happened to Pete?
- 4) Lucas talks about the 'unspeakable stuff rattling about behind the scenes' in any family. Does Lucas' family have more secrets than most? When he lists all his family's secrets (pages 64-66), did any surprise you, or even shock you? Which ones didn't?
- 5) The book is set in and around north London. How important is the setting to the action? Could it have been set anywhere? Why do you think the author set the book in north London?
- 6) What effect does the death of Martha's mother Wendy have on Lucas? What does Lucas make of the church service?
- 7) To what extent does music play a part in the story? Think of all the different references to music, musical instruments and records. What is the connection between them all?
- 8) Lucas compiles a list of things that makes him realise that parents are 'less than perfect'. What do you think of Lucas' list? Can you think of any things your parents do that you may want to add to his list?
- 9) Do you think Pete played a part in Violet's death? Did he help her commit suicide, or did he murder her? Was he right to take the money Violet left him in her will?
- 10) Why does Lucas send Violet's ashes to his dad? Do you think he'll ever hear back from him? Do you think it still matters to Lucas?