

These notes are for:

- Secondary – years 9-10
- Secondary – years 11-12

Key Learning Areas:

- English

Example of:

- Novel
- YA Fiction

National Curriculum Focus*:

English content descriptions include:

Year 9	Year 10
ACELA1550	ACELA1563
ACELA1551	ACELA1568
ACELA1557	ACELT1640
ACELA1559	ACELT1641
ACELT1771	ACELT1812
ACELT1634	ACELT1814
ACELT1637	ACELT1815
ACELY1742	ACELY1813
ACELY1743	ACELY1752
ACELY1746	ACELY1756
ACELY1747	ACELY1757
ACELY1748	ACELY1776

*Key content descriptions have been identified from the Australian National Curriculum. However, this is not an exhaustive list of National Curriculum content able to be addressed through studying this text.

Themes:

- Identity
- Isolation
- Coming of age
- Relationships
- Secrets

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

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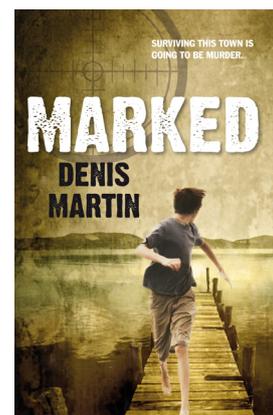
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Marked

Marked

Author: Denis Martin
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 NZRRP: \$19.99
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Synopsis

Surviving this town is going to be murder.

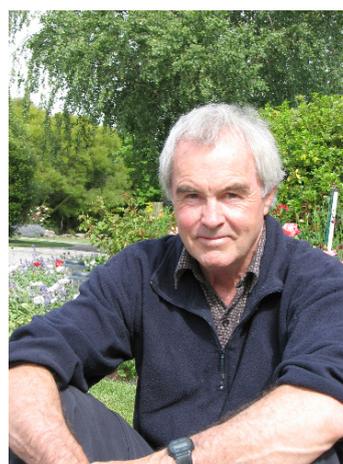
Cully thinks life in small-town Cooksville will be quiet. Then he meets Kat. Athletic. Stunning. Intriguing.

But something is going on with Kat – Cully is sure of it. He knows he should stay out of it, but he can't.

Now Kat and Cully are caught in the middle of a deadly web. And it's too late to hide from those who hunt them.

Author Information

Denis Martin is the author of three acclaimed teen thrillers: *Face It*, *Playing For Keeps* and *The Silence of Fear* (all published by Penguin New Zealand). Formerly an English teacher and librarian, he now writes full-time. He lives in Blenheim, New Zealand.



How To Use These Notes

These notes provide a variety of discussion questions and activities that can be used with *Marked*. Please select according to the level, learning style and targeted outcomes of your students.

Denis Martin on *Marked*

As an English teacher I began to notice that most novels studied in class concerned such cheerful and uplifting subject matter as teen suicide, coping with disability, coming to terms with parental separation, terminal illness, teen cancer, bullying and general depression. They didn't do much for me – and it was obvious that most of the kids didn't like them either. So I set about writing books that might be more exciting and more fun to read, but which also followed the general principles of good literature, thereby making them suitable for study as well as enjoyment. *Marked* is one of these – I hope.

Although *Marked* is fictional it is pretty firmly grounded in reality. The idea grew from the unsettling experience of trying to bid farewell to a good friend at his funeral. Unfortunately I had only known him for about thirty years; most of the speakers were lauding the jolly fine chap that had existed before that time – a different bloke altogether. I wanted to say goodbye to the rogue I remembered – and found it impossible. Jed's funeral is a bit like that.

The characters are mostly inspired by people I've met: the colleague who left teaching to pursue his interest in a senior student, a young girl I tutored whose beauty was unmarred by the large birthmark on her neck, my father's diligence in teaching me how to box. I tended to take these memories and wonder "what if ...?"

But most of all, this book owes its origins to the wonderful environment of New Zealand's Coromandel Peninsula – especially the area around Whitianga, on which Cooksville is loosely based. It is an area I've come to know well.

Before Reading

- Study the cover and title of *Marked*. Based on your initial impressions, what do you think this book is about? Where is it set? What genre is it? Once you have finished the novel, compare your initial thoughts to what the novel is actually about.

Language

"If you reckon Kat's a bit on the filipticious side," he'd grinned, "you wait'll you see Blissy."
He liked making up his own words ...
 page 60

- Throughout the novel Jed uses made-up words to describe situations and emotions. Identify these words and use the context of the sentence to write a definition of the made-up word. Suggest some words that he could have used instead.
- Describe and compare the different relationships that Cully has with other characters. Using the text as evidence, discuss what the reader knows about these relationships based on the language used in their conversations. For example, compare Cully's relationships with his father and Jed.
- Read up to the end of chapter four (page 57). What clues are given as to Kat's situation? What do you think is the reason for Kat's behaviour and why is Bullyboy following her around? Compare your thoughts at this point with what you have learned by the end of the novel.
- What effect does Cully's nicknames for characters (i.e. Bullyboy, Leatherman, the dancer) have on your perception of them? Would you think of these characters differently if Cully had used their actual names rather than nicknames?
- Discuss the significance of the title, *Marked*, for Cully and Kat.

Interpreting, analysing and evaluating the text

- *Marked* is written as a first-person narrative through Cully's eyes, meaning the information the reader has about characters and events is how Cully has interpreted them. Pick a key sequence in the novel and rewrite it from Kat's perspective. How does Kat feel about Cully or the men chasing her? What information does Kat know that Cully doesn't?
- As a class, discuss whether Cully is a reliable narrator. Is the reader getting the objective truth about the events in the novel?

- The reader only ever sees Kat through Cully's eyes. Kat knows a lot more about the situation than Cully and she has been through a lot before the novel starts. Use evidence from the text to write a character assessment of Kat.
- How does Cully change over the course of the novel? Identify key points which signal change or growth and chart them on a timeline.
- Keep a "Vocab Journal" while reading the novel. Make a note of any words you come across that you don't know and look up their meaning. Also keep track of any words or phrases that you particularly like and write a note next to each explaining why you like that word/phrase.
- A storyboard is a series of panels of rough sketches outlining the scene sequence and major changes of action or plot in a film. You can use this technique with a novel as well. *Marked* features a number of exciting action sequences. Storyboard an action sequence of your choice, highlighting a key incident (such as the motorcycle crash when Cully and Kat are being chased by the black Pajero or Cully shooting the dancer during the climax, etc.).
- Why do you think the author finishes several paragraphs by jumping forwards in time? For example:
'I did come across Bullyboy again though. The very next day.' (page 57)
'But I hadn't seen Bullyboy for a day or two – he seemed to have disappeared. I didn't see him again for about a fortnight. Not till just before he was killed.' (page 101)

Creating texts

- Write a report based on what happens at the end of the novel. Be sure to include all the relevant information on the incident, keeping in mind the sources the information would be coming from (witnesses, local police, an interview with Cully, etc.). Present your work as either a traditional newspaper report, an online newspaper report or a script for a television news programme. Include any relevant photos or pictures that could accompany the story.
- The novel ends with a letter from Cully to Kat. Write a response from Kat to Cully, taking into consideration how the events in the novel would have affected her and how she feels about Cully.

Responding to literature

- In the climax of the novel, Cully shoots and presumably kills the "dancer" (page 256). This raises moral and ethical questions about what is acceptable behaviour for self-defence. As a class, discuss how Cully would deal with the repercussions of killing a man based on what we know about his personality from the novel.
- Cully expresses that he doesn't think he or Kat should use the spear gun on the dancer ("*Yeah. But Kat, you can't use it.*" *The thought was sickening. "Not on a person."* page 249). Discuss what might have been going through Cully's mind that would result in him shooting the dancer.

Class Debate

Consider the proposition "Cully should have left Kat alone from the beginning". Ask students to form three groups based on their agreement or disagreement with the statement.

- Group 1: Agree 100% with the statement
- Group 2: Neutral/undecided
- Group 3: Disagree 100% with the statement

Students can take turns arguing their position on the statement using evidence from the text. Students are allowed to change groups during the debate if they find an argument persuasive.

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