

# Walker Books Classroom Ideas



## Jane, The Fox and Me

Author: Fanny Britt  
Illustrator: Isabelle Arsenault  
ISBN: 9781406353044  
ARRP: \$24.95  
NZRRP: \$27.99  
October 2013

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

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## Outline:

An emotionally truthful and visually stunning graphic novel about solace and redemption.

Hélène is not free to hide from the taunts of her former friends in the corridors at school. She can't be invisible in the playground or in the stairways leading to art class. Insults are even scribbled on the walls of the toilet cubicles. Hélène smells, Hélène's fat, Hélène has no friends ... now. When Hélène's heart hammers in her chest as Geneviève snickers at the back of the bus, inventing nasty things to say about her, Hélène dives into the pages of her book *Jane Eyre*. And, in the solace she finds there, Hélène's own world becomes a little brighter. But how will the story end? Is there any hope for the wise, strange, plain Jane Eyre? How could Mr Rochester ever love her?

## Author/Illustrator Information:

**Fanny Britt** is a Quebec playwright, author and translator. She has written a dozen plays (among them *Honey Pie*, *Hotel Pacifique* and *Bienveillance*) and translated more than fifteen others. She has also written and translated several works of children's literature. *Jane, the Fox and Me* is her first graphic novel.

**Isabelle Arsenault** is a Quebec illustrator who has won an impressive number of awards and has achieved international recognition. Her picture books include *Migrant* by Maxine Trottier, a *New York Times* Best Illustrated Children's Book and a finalist for the Governor General's Award, and *Once Upon a Northern Light* by Jean E. Pendziwol.

## How to use these notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

### These notes are for:

- Secondary years 7+
- Ages 12+

### Key Learning Areas:

- English

### Example of:

- Graphic novel

### Themes/ Ideas:

- Bullying
- Body image
- Friendship

### National Curriculum Focus:\*

English content descriptions include:

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
ACELA1782	ACELT1625	ACELA1552
ACELA1531	ACELT1805	ACELA1553
ACELA1764	ACELT1805	ACELA1553
ACELT1619	ACELT1719	ACELT1633
ACELT1620	ACELT1804	ACELT1771
ACELT1621	ACELT1721	ACELT1634
ACELT1803	ACELT1725	ACELT1635
ACELT1622	ACELT1628	ACELT1636
	ACELT1807	ACELT1637
	ACELT1629	

\*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.

## Discussion Questions and Activities

### Before Reading

Before reading *Jane, the Fox and Me*, view the cover and title and identify the following:

- The title of the book
- The author
- The illustrator
- The translator
- The publisher
- The blurb

Based on the cover, what do you think this story is about? How do you think it will begin/end?

### Exploring the text

Discuss the use or lack of colour the illustrator has used throughout the novel. What does each distinct colour palette represent?

What are the key themes in this book? Discuss how these themes are explored in this book. Write a statement of belief about each of these themes.

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.

Geneviève, Anne-Julie, Sarah and Chloe used to be friends with Hélène, but have since expelled her from their group. What do you think could have led to this happening?

Draw a timeline of Hélène's emotional journey through the novel. Mark down key moments in the story and note how Hélène reacts to them. Use the timeline to discover what influence other characters have on Hélène.

How does the imagery on page 37 reflect how Hélène feels about going to the nature camp?

The illustrator uses metaphors on full-page cells to show when Hélène is feeling a particularly strong emotion. Study each of these pages and discuss how the metaphor explains how Hélène is feeling. (ref. pages 19, 26-7, 41, 46-47, 58-59, 74-75, 88-89, 95 and 98-99).

What is the significance of Hélène and Geneviève waving at each other on page 97? How has their relationship changed?

Create Lucia Muniz's journal that she writes in on page 64. What do you think she would be writing about in the outcast tent? Do you think she feels differently or the same as Hélène about being at the nature camp?

What is the significance of Hélène meeting the fox? What emotions is Hélène feeling through this experience? What does this meeting pre-empt?

How important is having a good friend? How does loneliness affect people?

Rewrite several pages of the graphic novel as prose. Examine the location, the body language and movement of the characters and the mood to translate the graphic novel to text only.

Write a book review about *Jane, The Fox and Me*. Write about what you liked/disliked about it, draw connections with other similar books and make a recommendation as to who would like the book.

We see some important changes in Hélène during this story. Write about the changes that Hélène experiences, using examples from the book to demonstrate these changes.

Since being excluded from her group, Hélène needs a friend. How do you make a friend? What things do you do to become friends? Write a short paragraph about friendship using Hélène and Géraldine as an example.

### Body image

Hélène has a very poor opinion of her own body image. How is this portrayed in the book? How important is a person's body image? How does a healthy or poor body image affect people?

Why is buying a bathing suit a difficult experience for Hélène? Think about the immediate reaction she has to trying the suits on along with what the bathing suit signifies will happen in the future.

Hélène is teased for being fat and sees herself as a sausage when trying on clothes. The illustrator has drawn Hélène, Geneviève and the other girls as a similar size, so why does Hélène think she is particularly overweight and why do the other girls tease her about her weight?

Have a class discussion about body image and how the

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media affects the public's perception of attractiveness. Is this different for boys and girls? Is one gender affected more than the other? Look at magazines, newspapers and websites and collect images of what you think are unrealistic portrayals of healthy and attractive people. Do you think the media has a responsibility to portray more realistic images of people in advertising?

## Bullying

In groups, draw mind maps about bullying. Think about the many different ways people can bully or be bullied. What methods of bullying did you see in *Jane, The Fox and Me*?

Hold a class discussion about the different ways that girls can bully as opposed to the ways that boys can bully. What are the similarities and differences?

List the ways a victim can respond to bullying. Discuss the positive and negative potential outcomes of each response.

Why does H       not talk to her mother about bullying or her feelings? How would things be different for her if she spoke out about her feelings?

To create awareness of the consequences of bullying, ask students to create 'When ....., I feel .....' because.....' statements to share with the class. For example 'When people talk about me behind my back, I feel upset because I can't trust them'.

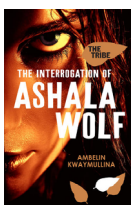
Look at the last three lines on page 93. How does this apply to bullying? How could people use this idea to help improve their own self image?

## Jane Eyre

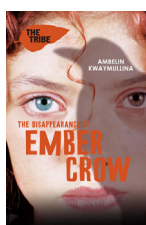
What are the similarities and differences between H       and Jane Eyre?

Do you have a book/film/poem/painting that you respond to in a similar way that H       responds to *Jane Eyre*? What is it about the piece that resonates with you?

## Other great young adult titles from Walker Books



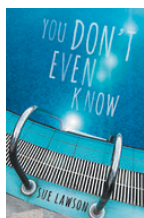
**The Tribe Book 1: The Interrogation of Ashala Wolf**  
Ambelin Kwaymullina  
9781921720086  
AU\$19.95/NZ\$21.99  
Classroom ideas available



**The Tribe Book 2: The Disappearance of Ember Crow**  
Ambelin Kwaymullina  
9781921720093  
AU\$19.95/NZ\$21.99  
Discussion guide available



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Sue Lawson  
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AU\$18.95/NZ\$21.99  
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Sue Whiting  
9781922077479  
AU\$16.95/NZ\$18.99  
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