

## These notes are for:

- Primary School
- Ages 8+

## Key Learning Areas:

- English
- Art

## Example of:

- Novel
- Fantasy genre
- Illustrated fiction

## Experience of:

- Reading
- Writing
- Representation
- Groupwork

## Values addressed:

- Care and compassion
- Integrity
- Respect
- Responsibility

## Themes/Ideas:

- Fantasy
- Quests
- Courage
- Leadership

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

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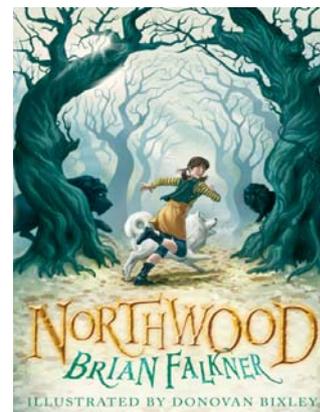
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## Northwood - Overview

### Northwood

Author: Brian Falkner  
 Illustrator: Donovan Bixley  
 ISBN: 9781921529801  
 ARRP: \$19.95  
 NZRRP: \$22.99  
 August 2011



## Outline:

Cecilia Undergarment likes a challenge. So when she discovers a sad and neglected dog, she is determined to rescue him no matter what. But her daring dog rescue lands her in deep trouble. Trouble in the form of being lost in the dark forest of Northwood. A forest where ferocious black lions roam. A forest that hides a secret castle, an unlikely king and many a mystery. A forest where those who enter never return. But Cecilia is determined to find her way home. No matter what.

Combining whimsical humour with a fast-paced plot full of twists and turns, Northwood is an absorbing fantasy certain to appeal to both male and female readers.

## Author/Illustrator Information:

### Brian Falkner

Brian Falkner was born and raised in Auckland. He is the award-winning, best-selling author of several novels for children and young adults including *The Flea Thing*, *The Real Thing* and *The Super Freak*. His action adventure sci-fi novels *The Tomorrow Code* and *Brainjack* were both short-listed for the New Zealand Post Book Awards for Children & Young Adults and the Esther Glen Award at the LIANZA Awards, with *Brainjack* winning the New Zealand Post Book Awards, Children's Choice Award (Young Adult Fiction category). *Brainjack* also won the 2010 Sir Julius Vogel Award, Best Young Adult Novel. Both these novels have also been published in the USA and Germany.

### Donovan Bixley

Born in Australia, Donovan moved to New Zealand with his family as a young boy. He studied at AUT school of Art and Design in Auckland and has become a highly successful illustrator, as well as awriting several books of his own. He lives in Taupo with his wife and three daughters.

## 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.

## Discussion Questions and Activities

- Read Brian Falkner’s introduction to the book. Why do you think he includes this? Would you have read the story differently if it wasn’t there?
- In small groups, make a mind-map of some of the characteristics of the fantasy genre. Consider settings, characters, events and themes. In what ways does *Northwood* resemble a typical fantasy novel? How is it different?
- Draw a map showing Brookfield and Northwood (Hint: read chapter 1 for a detailed list of places in Brookfield.)
- What are some of the things that are unique about the forest of Northwood? Design your own setting for a fantasy novel and draw a picture of it.
- Write an orientation guide for travelers arriving at the castle for the first time. Include information about food, clothes, jobs, accommodation, safety tips, “Who’s Who” and anything else that might help them adjust to their new lives.
- How has Mr Proctor changed since opening his hypermarket? What are some of the things that might have contributed to this change? What do you think happens to him at the end of the novel when Mrs Proctor and Jazz return to Brookfield? Does the family reunite? Discuss your ideas with a classmate.
- Towards the start of the novel, Cecilia is reading a book about King Arthur and Queen Guinevere. Research these characters on the internet or in the library. Who were they? What are some of the main stories told about them? Why do you think Cecilia might be reading a book about them?
- How is King Harry different to Cecilia’s expectations of a king? Would Cecilia make a good queen? Why or why not? What are some of the qualities that a good ruler needs?
- In small groups, explain how Cecilia demonstrates the following character traits in the novel:
 

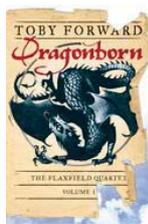
- resourcefulness	- courage	- persistence
- compassion	- independence	
- Create a comic strip of a key scene from the novel.
- Evan is fond of using long words in the wrong sense. Make a list of words which Evan uses incorrectly in the book. Look up the correct meaning of these words in the dictionary, then use these words to make a vocabulary crossword. You may like to use an internet crossword generator like Puzzlemaker (<http://www.discoveryleducation.com/free-puzzlemaker/>) or ed-helper (<http://edhelper.com/crossword.htm>)
- Choose a major scene in the novel and rewrite it from the perspective of another character. For example, the scene where Cecilia first meets King Harry, from the king’s perspective. Focus particularly on the character’s attitudes and feelings, rather than simply recounting events.
- Write a diary entry from Evan’s or Avery’s perspective after leaving the forest. How is their life different? What do they find most challenging about the modern world? Is there anything they miss about their old life?
- Imagine that a movie was being made of *Northwood*. In small groups, create a soundtrack to accompany some of the key scenes, thinking particularly about the mood you want to convey. You could either make a compilation of existing songs or compose your own musical pieces. Present your soundtrack to the class, explaining why you have chosen the pieces you have.
- Write your own fantasy story then publish it on Brian Falkner’s website ([http://www.brianfalkner.co.nz/Story\\_write.asp](http://www.brianfalkner.co.nz/Story_write.asp)) If you’re stuck, you may like to look at the “Story Starters” on the site for inspiration ([http://www.brianfalkner.co.nz/story\\_starters.asp](http://www.brianfalkner.co.nz/story_starters.asp))

## Other great fantasy titles from Walker Books



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Michelle Knudsen  
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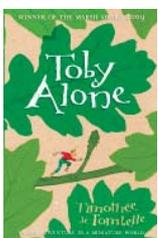
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