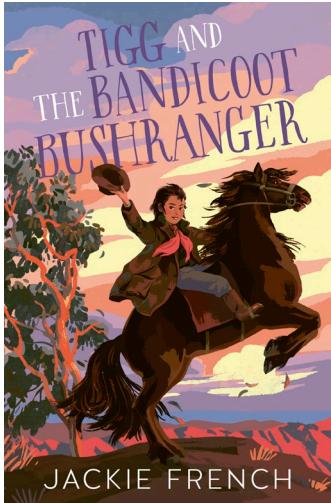


Classroom Resources



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Tigg and the Bandicoot Bushranger

Jackie French

BOOK SUMMARY

The year is 1859 and the goldfields are filled with diggers – and danger!

Orphaned twelve-year-old Tigg is the Bandicoot Bushranger, the youngest bushranger on the Ballarat goldfields in 1859.

When a robbery goes wrong, Tigg must flee in disguise as one of the tens of thousands of Chinese men and boys braving heat, thirst, starvation and murderous attacks on the long road from Robe in South Australia to the goldfields in Victoria.

But even further danger threatens. Who has offered a large sum of money for Tigg's capture? And is the mysterious Henry Lau a friend or enemy?

To be safe, Tigg must solve the greatest mystery of all. Who is Tigg?

KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

- AC9HS5K02
- AC9HS5K04
- AC9E5LE01
- AC9E5LE03

THEMES

- Gender
- Migrants and Refugees
- Identity
- Discrimination

Recommended Reading Ages: 9+

Resources Created For: Upper Primary

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Classroom Resources

Before Reading

1. Establish a class Learning Wall to record reflections, questions and answers, relevant information, quotes, examples of writing techniques and speculations.
 - a) Start with students' responses to and speculation about the questions below.
2. Looking at the cover, invite students' observations:
 - a) Can students make a guess as to the setting – where and when does the story take place?
 - b) What is a bandicoot?
 - c) What is a bushranger?
 - d) Why might these two words be paired?
3. Do students know of any (in)famous bushrangers?
 - a) What would they choose as a bushranger name?
4. Readers can assume that the character on the horse is Tigg. This seems a strange name.
 - a) Discuss where the name might have come from, such as an abbreviation or a nickname.
5. Organise a bulk loan of books, both fiction and non-fiction, covering:
 - Jackie French's work, particularly her historical fiction
 - 19th century Australia and Victoria
 - the Australian goldfields
 - Chinese migration to Australia, particularly in the 19th century
 - Australian bushrangers

During Reading

Narrative structure and techniques

1. The narrative opens with immediate action as Tigg and Big Jon hold up a stagecoach.
 - a) What clues do readers pick up from the first eight pages of the chapter?
 - b) Consider such details as Tigg using an accent, trying to look older and bigger, and appear threatening. Why might she be doing these things?
 - c) Tigg only demands half of any cash the coach passengers are carrying, and no jewellery whatsoever. This is all highly unusual for the average bushranger of the times, many of whom were ruthless and cold-hearted. What might this indicate?
2. At the end of the first chapter, as a class, brainstorm all of the clues about setting.
 - a) Based on these clues, where and when do the students think the novel is set?
 - b) What do they already know about 19th century Australia?

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3. Introduce or review the term 'foreshadowing'. The author uses this technique skilfully. Find examples of this throughout the text.
 - For example, on page 34, Ah Song says Tigg is '... brave like tiger, strong like horse'. This foreshadows, 'I had better warn you that your grandfather has already had your horoscope and Henry's read. You're a horse in the Chinese zodiac, strong and independent. Henry is actually a tiger, a leader, strong-minded and loyal to those he loves. They are very compatible signs for marriage.' (p. 275)
4. Throughout *Tigg and the Bandicoot Bushranger*, there are many places where the reader is invited to pause and predict what might happen next or be revealed later on in the novel.
 - a) Page 23: Stop before going on to the last paragraph in this chapter.
 - (i) Recap what is known already about Tigg.
 - (ii) Have students write a paragraph to describe Tigg.
 - (iii) Then read the final paragraph (p. 24) and discuss the response to the revelation that Tigg is a girl.
 - b) Page 32: What might make both Ma and Ah Song suggest that Tigg could pass as Chinese? "But ... but I'm not Chinese!" Tigg protested again.
 - (i) How do both Ma and Ah Song think she could pass as Chinese?
 - c) Pages 52–54: Despite having never bothered to try to find the Bandicoot Bushranger, suddenly there is a huge reward of £100 being offered.
 - (i) What could be the reason/s behind this?
 - d) Page 115: Henry asks Tigg what she remembers of her early life and any family. 'I can remember a man who might have been my father. He used to play being a horse for me. We lived in a house then, with a big room with real beds for the boys, and a big room with pretty curtains and cuddly toys for me, and a garden with swings. I vaguely remember a nice woman called Nanny too.'
 - (i) What do readers think might have been happening or did happen with Tigg's family?
 - e) Page 154: 'This must be Mr Rudolf, thought Tigg. But she was sure she'd heard his voice and accent before. His voice was so full of excitement she couldn't place it. "So you have found her!"'
 - (i) What do students think this might mean?

Vocabulary

Using the table below as a starting point, find definitions for words that are unusual or unfamiliar, and record them.

- a) Use contextual clues to predict the meaning.
- b) Check an authoritative source for the actual definition.
- c) Find at least five other examples from the novel.

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Word	What I think it means	What it actually means
shanty p. 2		
contemptuous p. 2		
gizzards p. 7		
sniggered p. 8		
patronisingly p. 9		
perfunctory p. 51		
discreetly p. 71		
plenitude p. 148		
luxuriant p. 176		
laboriously p. 200		

After Reading

Themes

1. The roles and expectations for girls and women in the 19th century were much narrower than those we have in Australia today.
 - a) What are some of the expectations around 'nice girls' expressed throughout the novel?
 - b) What do the Misses Primrose's descriptions of their father's control over them tell the reader about how much freedom girls and women had to make their own decisions about their lives?
 - c) How are these expectations reflected in the many personas Tigg takes on?
 - (i) Is Tigg's life easier or more difficult when she is pretending to be a boy?
 - (ii) What are some of the problems she has when she is dressed as a girl, and are these similar or different to her challenges when she is living as a boy?
 - d) Despite the quite restrictive expectations about their lifestyles and behaviours, some women in 19th century Australia did have important parts to play in areas such as politics, business and the arts. In small groups, have students research one of these women and prepare a presentation to share with the class.

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2. Officially, the White Australia Policy came into effect in 1901; however, it reflected attitudes that many white Australians, including those in government, had held for a long time. *Tigg and the Bandicoot Bushranger* focuses on the unjust treatment of Chinese immigrants to Australia in the 19th century, particularly by the Victorian Government of the time.
 - a) What examples of racism to non-English people can be found in the novel?
 - b) Which nationalities do those of English ancestry discriminate against?
 - c) Are any of these nationalities a surprise to you?
 - d) How does the government make life particularly difficult for people coming to the goldfields from China? What explanation is given for this?
3. Despite the Victorian Government going out of its way to make it difficult for Chinese and other people to get to the goldfields, these migrants displayed enormous resilience by undertaking the Long Walk.
 - a) What have students learnt about the Long Walk from the novel?
 - b) Ask students to research the history of the Long Walk and answer the following questions:
 - (i) What numbers of people are estimated to have been part of this?
 - (ii) What cultures or countries were they from?
 - (iii) What were the dangers?
 - (iv) What must it have been like for them without knowing the language, having money or transport?
 - (v) On a map, plot some of the routes travelled by these immigrants as they made their way to the various destinations.
 - c) Convert the imperial measurements of distances to metric.
 - (i) Students could challenge themselves to complete the same distance over a given period of time. For example, if they walk around the perimeter of the school three times every day, how many days would it take to complete the Long Walk?
4. Three different First Nations groups are mentioned in the text: Bunganditj, Wadawurrung and Djadjawurrung.
 - a) On pages 27 and 28, Tigg describes the impact of colonisation on the Wadawurrung people that Mrs O'Hare has described to her and that she has observed for herself. What are the impacts she describes and what others do we learn throughout the novel?
 - b) On your map, outline the Country of each of these groups and then choose one to research.
 - c) How were the traditional owners affected by the influx of these immigrants? Write a one-page report that enumerates the effects both short-term and long-term.

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Writing

1. Write and illustrate a newspaper article reporting one of the Bandicoot Bushranger's hold-ups. Use Trove to find articles from the times to get a sense of the language and style used, e.g. Ben Hall, the Bushranger, Sydney News, May 16, 1865.
2. Write a letter home to family in China describing your experiences since arriving in Victoria/the goldfields.
3. Beauty treatments of the past: research common advice for young ladies in the 19th century and create an illustrated pamphlet or booklet with tips.
 - Students will have already read some in the novel: 'grating the rhubarb root finely and rubbing it through damp hair, then leaving it there for anywhere from one to ten hours, depending on the colour you desired. It had also suggested soot to darken the eyebrows and thicken the eyelashes, and other useful recipes for beauty' (p. 89); 'how to soften her complexion each night with buttermilk' (p. 206); 'And add a sprig of lavender or rosemary when you wash your hair, and comb it with rosemary oil if you fear lice' (p. 263).

Note: As Tigg discovers, many of these treatments, while not harmful, *can* have less-than-desirable consequences on one's hair and skin. Please make clear to students that they **should not** attempt these treatments themselves; there's a reason they are not common practice today.

Activities

1. Choose one of the following topics to research and present to classmates or others in a multi-media format:
 - common diseases of the 19th century/goldfields, e.g. dysentery, typhoid (pp. 6, 22)
 - Levi's/American denim jeans (p. 8)
 - pre-decimal Australian currency: gold and silver sovereigns, shillings, sixpence (p. 10)
 - pocket watches (p. 12)
 - baby farmers (p. 18)
 - New Gold Mountain (p. 40)
 - traditional Chinese medicine (p. 18, 29)
 - Eureka Stockade (p. 5)
 - Bucephalus (pp. 105–106)
2. Create a Wanted poster for the Bandicoot Bushranger using description from the text.
3. Use the description of Tigg's hollow tree 'house' to make a model which represents this, OR construct a diorama depicting one location described in the novel, such as Ma Murphy's shanty or the Primrose Tearoom.
4. Tigg (as Millie) learns to make excellent scones. Hold a class scone 'bake-off'. Invite an 'expert' to judge the results (e.g. tuckshop/canteen manager, Food Technology teacher).

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5. Throughout the novel, Tigg's appearance changes considerably as she both grows and takes on different personas. Create a gallery of images (these could be drawn, collaged, generated) of the different 'characters' Tigg adopts. Use both descriptions in the novel and research to ensure the clothes and hair of each persona are reflective of the time in which the novel is set. Students should include:
 - the Bandicoot Bushranger
 - the Chinese boy
 - the girl in a faded dress with rhubarb-dyed hair
 - the girl kangaroo and possum skins living in the bush
 - the waitress in young lady clothes

About the Author

Jackie French AM is an award-winning writer, wombat negotiator, the 2014–2015 Australian Children's Laureate and the 2015 Senior Australian of the Year. In 2016, Jackie became a Member of the Order of Australia for her contribution to children's literature and her advocacy for youth literacy. She is regarded as one of Australia's most popular children's authors and writes across all genres – from picture books, history, fantasy, ecology and sci-fi to her much-loved historical fiction for a variety of age groups. 'A book can change a child's life. A book can change the world' was the primary philosophy behind Jackie's two-year term as Laureate.

Jackie French is available to speak to schools and libraries about *Tigg and the Bandicoot Bushranger*. Please contact her through her website: jackiefrench.com
facebook.com/authorjackiefrench

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