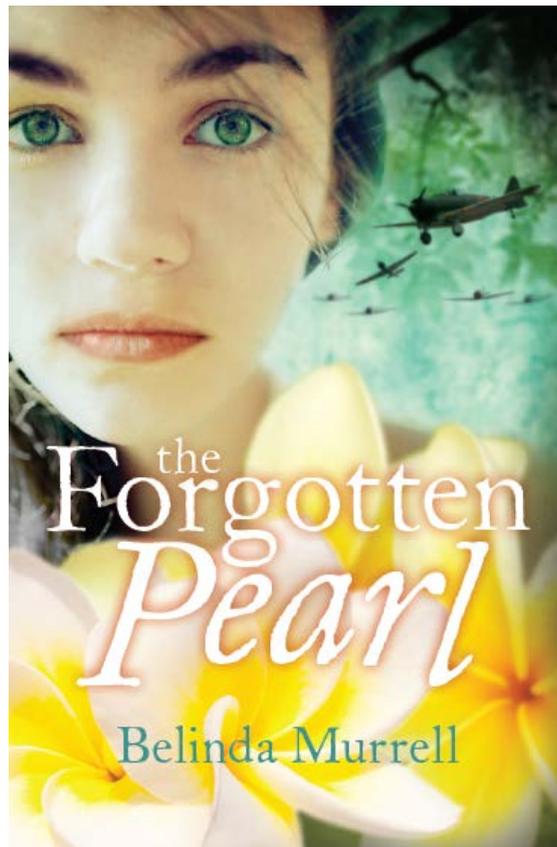


THE FORGOTTEN PEARL

BELINDA MURRELL



TEACHERS' RESOURCES

Prepared by Belinda Murrell

Recommended for ages 10 to 14

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PLOT SUMMARY

When Chloe visits her grandmother, it unleashes a flood of memories, not discussed for seventy years. Chloe could never have imagined how close the Second World War came to destroying her own family so many years ago. Could the experiences of another time help Chloe to face her own problems?

In 1941, Darwin is a remote outpost in the far north of Australia – a peaceful paradise far from the war. Poppy is a mischievous, fun-loving girl, with a menagerie of unusual pets. Her life seems perfect but when Japan attacks Pearl Harbor, then Australia, Poppy's world is torn apart. Everything she holds dear is threatened – her family, her neighbours and her friends Jack and Maude. Her brother Edward is taken prisoner-of-war. Her home town becomes a war zone, as the Japanese raid over and over again, on their relentless march south. Australia is under the looming threat of invasion.

Terrified for their lives, Poppy and her mother flee to safety in Sydney, only to find the danger follows them there. Poppy must face her war with courage and determination.

Will Poppy and her family survive the war? Where is the forgotten pearl? Will her world ever be the same again?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

At about the age of eight, Belinda Murrell began writing stirring tales of adventure, mystery and magic in hand-illustrated exercise books. As an adult she combined two of her great loves – writing and travelling the world – working as a travel journalist, technical writer and public relations consultant.

Now inspired by her own three children, Belinda is a bestselling children's author currently writing her twelfth book. Belinda's books include her fantasy adventure series for boys and girls aged 8 to 12, *The Sun Sword Trilogy*, and her three time slip adventures – *The Locket of Dreams*, *The Ruby Talisman*, and *The Ivory Rose*.

Belinda comes from a very literary family, with a history of Australian writers stretching back 180 years. Her great-great-great-great grandmother Charlotte Atkinson published the first Australian children's book in 1841.

Belinda lives in Manly in a beautiful old house overlooking the sea with her husband Rob, three gorgeous children and lots of animals including a faithful Rhodesian Ridgeback called Asha, who was the inspiration for one of her characters.

You can learn more about Belinda Murrell by visiting her website:
www.belindamurrell.com.au

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

- What do you know about World War II?
- Do you know any stories about the experiences of your relatives in World War II?
- How do you think WWII affected Australian families?
- What does the cover tell you about the book? What kind of planes do you think are depicted on the cover?

AUTHOR'S NOTES ON WRITING *THE FORGOTTEN PEARL*

Belinda says:

When my family spent eighteen months travelling around Australia, we spent about three months in the Top End of the Northern Territory, including Darwin. During this time we stayed on vast, remote cattle stations, and visited some incredibly beautiful places. As well as the sheer beauty of the Territory, we were overwhelmed by its history. Despite studying Australian History while I was at university, I had very little knowledge of the bombing of Darwin during World War II and how close the war actually came to Australia's shores.

As a family we explored many of the World War II historic sites in the Northern Territory from air strips, bomb craters and bunkers to the deeply moving Adelaide River War Cemetery where over 400 Australians are buried who died defending our country. The youngest was only 16 years old. The adjoining civil cemetery has the graves of many civilians who died during the bombing raids on Darwin, including six women who worked at the Post Office.

As we travelled, we came to realise that not only Darwin but many other Australian towns including Broome, Townsville and Katherine had been attacked, with hundreds of people killed. Later in the trip we visited the War Museum in Canberra and saw the remains of the Japanese midget submarines which had invaded right into the heart of Sydney Harbour.

And as we travelled we heard so many stories of life in Australia in those perilous years. It was these stories of ordinary women, men and children, and how they tackled the difficult challenges of these extraordinary times, which I found so fascinating,

It was these stories and adventures which inspired me to write the story of Poppy and *The Forgotten Pearl*.

THEMES FOR DISCUSSION

1. **Friendship**
2. **Differing perspectives of war** – soldier, child, nurse, doctor, wireless operator, prisoner-of-war, Japanese internee
3. **Growing up** – finding your voice, finding what is important to you and standing up for what you believe in
4. **Coping with change** – resilience, leaving home, starting school, starting a new life, friends and family going away, grief
5. **Making a difference** – an individual can make a difference to their lives, and the lives of others
6. **History** – World War II, the bombing of Darwin and the Japanese invasion of Sydney Harbour, women’s involvement during the war and the changing role of women in Australian society
7. **Family relationships**

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What do you think is the most important theme of the book? Find examples of scenes and quotes in *The Forgotten Pearl* which explore this theme. How is this theme relevant to you and your own life?
2. In *The Forgotten Pearl* there are many letters and stories from different characters, which give their perspective of what is happening to them during the war. Make a list of characters and summarise some of their experiences, feelings and contributions.
3. Do you think Poppy changes through her adventures? How does she alter? Brainstorm some of the ways Poppy changes throughout the book.
4. What kind of film do you think *The Forgotten Pearl* would make? Brainstorm ideas, including: cast, setting, key scenes, style and genre.
5. Brainstorm some of the roles that women and children played on the Home Front during the war. What do you think life would have been like for your family if you lived during the war now?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Sharing stories

Interview a relative, such as a grandparent, about their experiences during World War II. Do they have any mementoes such as photos, medals, letters or artefacts to show you? This interview could be recorded on video or audio to share with other members of the family or your class. Remember to ask for permission before sharing stories with others as some memories are private.

Collage

Create a collage using words and images and that represent one major theme of *The Forgotten Pearl*.

Letter writing

Pretend you are a character in the book and write a letter explaining what you have experienced. How do you feel? How has your life changed? How can you make your letter as interesting as possible for your reader?

Newspaper report: Living in Australia during World War II

Write a newspaper report describing what life is like for families in Australia during World War II. Consider food, work, clothes, lifestyle, entertainment and changes to society. Include quotes from fictional characters to give differing points-of-view and find images on the internet to illustrate your story.

Setting

The first part of the narrative is set in and around Darwin. Describe the setting, including the year, season and weather, Poppy's home and the township itself, the cultural and historical background, and the emotional atmosphere. Find paragraphs from the book to support your descriptions, highlighting the ways in which the author has used figurative language to create character or setting.

Covers

Analyse elements of the cover design and comment on what makes them effective. Consider colour, font and images in your discussion. What is the significance of the girl, the planes, and the frangipani flowers, for instance? What images would you have chosen to put on the cover of *The Forgotten Pearl*?

Excursion

Visit a war memorial or museum near you to find out more about how war affected the people in your local area, and see mementoes and artefacts from the various wars Australia has been involved in.