



**RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA
TEACHING SUPPORT KIT**

***The Locket of Dreams*
by Belinda Murrell**

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BLACK-LINE MASTER ACTIVITIES:

- Match the word to its meaning
- Police report
- Use your five senses
- Write a time travel story

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1. PLOT SUMMARY

Sophie discovers a golden locket in an old treasure box which belonged to her grandmother's grandmother, Charlotte Mackenzie. When Sophie falls asleep wearing the locket, she magically travels back in time to 1858 in Scotland to learn the truth about Charlotte.

Daughter of a wealthy Scottish laird, Charlotte and her sister Nell live a wonderful life with their parents and animals, on a misty island with its own ruined castle. Then disaster strikes and it seems the girls will lose everything they love.

They are sent away on a perilous journey to the harsh, wild and dangerous land of Australia. Why were Charlotte and Nell sent halfway around the world to live with strangers? Did their wicked uncle steal their inheritance? What happened to the priceless sapphire – the Star of Serendib? And what is the secret of the old oak box?

With the magic of the golden locket, Sophie unravels the mystery and shares many adventures with Charlotte and Nell – outwitting greedy relatives, escaping murderous bushrangers, and fighting storm and fire.

Will Sophie and Charlotte be able to save the Star of Serendib? More importantly, can they save Nell?

2. ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Belinda Murrell, author of *The Locket of Dreams*, spent two years travelling with her family in Europe and around Australia in a caravan. While they travelled, Belinda home-schooled her three children Nick, Emily and Lachlan and wrote *The Locket of Dreams*.

Some of the family adventures included living with an Aboriginal family on the remote Dampier Peninsula, staying on vast outback cattle stations, sailing the islands of the Barrier Reef, fossicking for gold and gemstones and exploring the Mackenzie country on the west coast of Scotland.

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 cottage overlooking the sea with her husband Rob, three gorgeous children and lots of animals including a beautiful 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

3. AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

Belinda says: 'When I was a little girl, my grandmother Nonnie used to tell my sister and me many stories – many of them Scottish tales. My favourite, however, was how her own grandmother had come to Australia in 1858 from Scotland, with her sister. The two Mackenzie girls, Ellen and Jane, were orphans, sent by their uncle away from their home on the west coast of Scotland. Nonnie used to tell us that their father had been a rich Scottish laird with a castle, but that the girls had lost everything when their father had drowned at sea, closely followed by the death of their mother.

'Nonnie's mother had told her that the castle should rightfully have belonged to the girls, but that the uncle had sent the sisters to Australia so he could claim their inheritance. All we have left of this Mackenzie heritage are the stories and a small gold locket. As children, we dreamt of going back to Scotland to claim our Mackenzie castle. It was only later that I learnt that girls in those days had very few legal rights and could not have inherited the estate. *The Locket of Dreams* grew out of my own imaginings of what might have happened to my ancestors, the two Mackenzie sisters.'

4. THEMES FOR DISCUSSION

1. Grief and loss
2. Coping with change
3. Family relationships, history and genealogy
4. Storytelling and storytelling traditions in different cultures
5. History – Scottish and Australian
6. The dangers of life in early Australia, e.g. bushrangers, bushfires
7. Australian pioneers
8. Magic and Scottish fairytales – magical creatures, fairyfolk such as selkies

5. QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Charlotte and Nell have lost their mother, father, baby brother, their home and all their friends. How would you feel if you lost someone you loved?
2. Charlotte and Nell cope differently with their loss – e.g. Charlotte is angry and tries to fight her uncle, Nell becomes withdrawn and hardly speaks. What does this reveal about their characters? How do the girls change throughout the book?
3. Why do you think Uncle Roderick sends the girls to Australia? Is his motivation evil, cruel, weak-willed or thoughtless? Do you think differently about him when you learn that he thought the girls would be happier with Annie than at boarding school?
4. How would you feel being sent across to the other side of the world to start a whole new life in a strange country? How does this compare to the changes in Sophie's life – losing the family house, changing schools, worrying about money, her father's depression?
5. If you could travel back in time, where and when would you go?
6. For thousands of years, people have communicated, shared knowledge and explained their world by telling stories. Storytelling is an important part of *The Locket of Dreams*. Stories are told by Nonnie, Nanny, Eliza, Angus, Charlotte, Sophie and Pot among others. Do families still tell stories to share family history? Can you think of examples of stories which have taught you something valuable?

6. SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Time travel story

Write a short story about travelling back in time. Where would you go? How would you get there? (For example, Sophie falls asleep wearing the golden locket.) Who would you meet? What do you see? What happens – is it frightening, funny, interesting, dangerous? Do you have an adventure? How do you get back home? How do you feel when you are safely home (e.g. relieved, happy, sad the adventure is over, angry)? Have you changed at all through your adventure?

The differences between Scotland and Australia

Draw up two columns – one labelled Scotland and one labelled Australia. In each column, write down some differences between the two countries. Think of colours, weather, animals, flowers, houses, people, landscape, dangers, homes, food, etc.

Find out more about the different mythologies and fairy stories in the different countries. For instance, in Scotland magical creatures included brownies, elves and selkies, while in Australia there were bunyips and Aboriginal spirits.

Bushrangers (read pages 226–231)

Bushrangers are a colourful part of Australia's early history. Many of the early bushrangers were escaped convicts who survived in the bush stealing valuables from travelers and local farms. Many of these bushrangers were violent criminals who murdered or terrorised people to get what they wanted.

During the gold rush a new wave of bushrangers emerged to rob the gold transports, miners and wealthy pastoralists. Later bushrangers were generally not convicts, but the Australian-born sons of poor settlers, and many of these, such as Ned Kelly's gang, captured the imagination and sympathy of the public for their daring exploits.

1. Draw a picture of a bushranger. Your bushranger could be dressed like Captain Lightning with seven pistols and a coiled stockwhip in his belt, a red kerchief around his neck and a felt hat, or he could wear full body armour like Ned Kelly.
2. Character sketch – imagine your own bushranger. What does he look like? What is his name? How does he behave when he robs travelers? Write a character sketch of your bushranger including a description of how he speaks and how he behaves. Why is he a bushranger? Where does he live? What does he like to eat?
3. *Bail-up!* Write a play about a band of bushrangers bailing up a coach or carriage. Think about your characters (the heroes and villains), how they react (brave, frightened, violent, withdrawn?), and what they wear? What is the setting (bushland, highway, farm, the centre of town)? What is the resolution of your play – do the passengers lose their belongings or does something happen to prevent the hold-up? If so, what could it be (a passenger fighting back, a troop of policemen passing by, etc)? Think about your ending – is it happy, sad or funny?
4. Research a famous bushranger on the internet, e.g. Ned Kelly, Ben Hall, Thunderbolt or Captain Moonlight. Write a short biography on your chosen bushranger – his early life, when and where did he live, what did he do? Was he famous for anything in particular? Why did he choose to become a bushranger? How did he die?

Travelling to Australia by ship in the 1850s

Write a journal entry describing a day on the ship on the journey to Australia. Think about some of the following: What is the name of your ship? Are you a convict, an emigrant or a soldier? Why are you going to Australia? What happens during your day e.g. a storm, crossing the equator, leaving the shores of England, arriving in Australia, getting seasick, etc? How do you feel about what is happening? Describe some smells, tastes, sounds, sights, food, weather, you have seen on your journey.

Living in the 1850s

Charlotte and Sophie are girls who are about the same age, but they live 150 years apart. Think about the lives of children in the 1850s and in the 21st century. Make a list of some of the differences between life in the 1850s and now (think about food, clothing, schooling, freedom, conveniences, chores, transport, dangers). Would you rather live now or in the 1850s? Why?

Family history

Interview your parents or grandparents about your family history. How did your family come to Australia? Where did your family live before they came to Australia? Are there any famous or interesting ancestors in your family history, e.g. bushrangers, soldiers, writers, artists, sports

people or celebrities? Ask them to tell you an interesting family anecdote – this could be something like the Mackenzies hiding Bonnie Prince Charlie from the English, or how Pot came to earn his nickname. Ask them if you could share the story with your classmates (some family stories are private and some are fun to share with your friends). Stand up in front of the classroom and tell a story from your family history.

Bushfires

In Chapter 24, 'Inferno', the Rosedale homestead is nearly lost in a raging bushfire. Charlotte, Sophie, Annie and Nell must fight the fire to save the homestead. In February 2009, Australia experienced its worst recorded natural disaster when bushfires swept through Victoria killing more than 200 people, destroying more than 2000 homes and killing millions of animals.

Imagine the bushfire brigade has just knocked on your door, and given you five minutes to save what you can from your house before you must flee to safety. What would you rescue? Think about family members, pets, treasures. Write down ten things you would rescue. What do you notice about the list? Did you put living things (parents, siblings, pets) above objects (games, toys, books, photos)? Does this list help you think about what is most important in your life?

Magical creatures

First, read the story of Jeannie Macdonald in Chapter 5 or the tale of the Tailor and the Waterhorse in Chapter 14.

Think of a magical creature. It could be a Scottish fairy like those in the stories above, an Aboriginal mythological monster such as the bunyip, or it could be a being you make up yourself. Draw a picture of your creature – showing what it looks like.

Underneath write a detailed description of your magical creature including its characteristics or personality, its likes and dislikes, what it eats, where it lives, what its intentions are towards humans, its enemies and friends, its magical powers and its behaviour.

Imagine a situation where you might meet this creature. What happens?

7. CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES

The Locket of Dreams could be used to support various curriculum or school activities and integrated units on history, such as:

- **Excursions:** a visit to a museum or heritage building to find out about life in the 1800s
- **Cultural activities:** creating costumes and dressing up the way Australians dressed in the 1800s; learning Australian bush dances or finding out about Scottish highland dancing; researching or cooking Scottish foods (e.g. shortbread)
- **English:** read the book and read non-fiction books about bushrangers and Scotland; give presentations on any of the topics suggested in the activities above (e.g. family history, Scotland, or fairytale creatures); write stories or reports based on one of the themes of the book (e.g. bushrangers, time travel)
- **Humanities / History / Human Society and its Environment:** use *The Locket of Dreams* to explore history and how people lived in Scotland and Australia in the 1850s (costume, food, geography, history); explore cultural differences such as how different cultures have their own storytelling and fairytale traditions; research how ships and passengers traveled to Australia in the 1850s; research migration to Australia in the 1800s
- **Creative arts / Drama / Art:** draw bushrangers or pictures of the characters in their 1850s outfits; write or perform a play based on the book or a bushranger hold-up

ACTIVITY: THE LOCKET OF DREAMS

Match the word to its meaning

Find the meaning of each of the following Scottish words used in *The Locket of Dreams* and write it in the correct space below.

Bairn	Bagpipe	Bannock	Bonnie	Brownie
Burn	Changelings	Dun	Eilean	Elfhome
Gae	Gillie	Guid	Hame	Ken
Kelpies	Kilt	Kirk	Selkies	Sporran

- a bag, often made of sealskin, worn with a kilt
- beautiful
- child
- church
- fairy babies left in place of human babies
- fairy water-horses
- fairyland
- flat bread made of oatmeal
- go
- good
- Highland laird's hunting attendant
- home
- island
- know
- musical instrument consisting of wind bag and pipes
- sea-creatures that transform from seals to human form
- traditional tartan skirt, worn by Scottish men
- shy household fairyfolk who help humans
- small river or brook
- tower or castle

Police report

Read pages 232 to 236.

You are a policeman and must fill in a Police Report of all the facts you know about the bushranger and his crime from what the victims tell you.

What items have been stolen? What did the victims notice about the bushranger? Are there any clues that might help the police find Captain Lightning and rescue Pot? **Fill in the report below.**

TIME OF CRIME

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LIST OF STOLEN PROPERTY AND OTHER CRIMES COMMITTED

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LIST ANY KNOWN FACTS ABOUT THE PERSON WHO COMMITTED THE CRIMES

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NAMES AND OBSERVATIONS OF ANY EYE WITNESSES

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.....

NAME OF POLICE CONSTABLE

.....

DATE OF REPORT

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ACTIVITY: THE LOCKET OF DREAMS

Using your five senses

The Locket of Dreams contains wonderful descriptions of what Charlotte eats, what Sophie sees, smells and hears, and what happens when she touches things in Charlotte's time.

Read the examples below, then write your own sentences about things *you* have experienced, using words that describe taste, smell, touch, sound and sight.

TASTE

'The soup was rich and flavoursome, and they ate it hungrily.' (p. 198) *'Sophie longed to enjoy the feast . . . but when she ventured to steal a tiny morsel of crackling, it tasted of nothing.'* (p. 199)

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SMELL

'The smell was unmistakable: salt, sweat and horse.' (p. 22) *'The smell of crushed grass and wet mud filled her nostrils'* (p. 12) *'The kitchen filled with the spicy aroma of hot gingerbread.'* (p. 99)

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FEEL/TOUCH

'Sophie . . . bent down and touched a pebble. It felt cool and smooth under her ghostly fingers. Sophie tried to pick it up. Nothing happened. It was as if the tiny pebble weighted a tonne.' (p. 30) *'Using her fingertips she rummaged through the box and found the cool, slippery gold of the old locket chain.'* (p. 7)

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SOUND

'He jumped to his feet as the sound of galloping hooves echoed through the cobbled gateway.' (p. 13) *'Gradually the noise below increased . . . the chattering and laughter threatened to drown out the musicians.'* (pp. 45–46)

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SIGHT

'Nonnie looked so beautiful and fragile in the old photograph. They could see the same narrow shoulders and straight back, the same curls, although now streaked with grey, and a hint of the same mischievous smile.' (p. 2)

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Write a time travel story!

If you could travel through time like Sophie does, which time and place would you travel to? Use your imagination to write a story about travelling back or forward in time for a day. What adventures happen while you are visiting that time? Write about what you see, hear, smell and taste.

(Use your own paper if you need more space.)

My adventure in (place) in the year

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