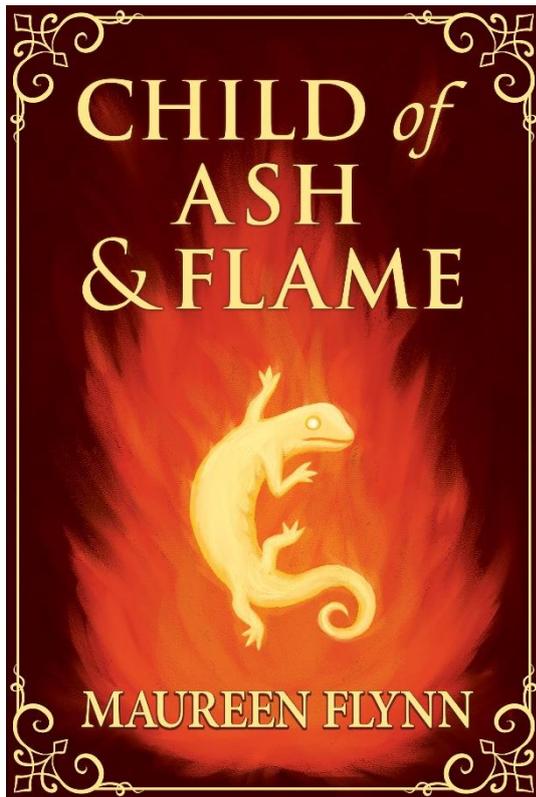


TEACHER RESOURCE: CHILD OF ASH AND FLAME



TITLE: CHILD OF ASH AND FLAME

PUBLICATION DATE:
NOVEMBER 2021

GENRE: YOUNG ADULT
FANTASY

WORD COUNT: 110 000
WORDS/ 314 PAGES

READING AGE: 10-16 YEARS
WITH MOST SUITABLE
SCHOOL YEARS 7-10 FOR
NSW CURRICULUM

SUMMARY

How would you feel if you discovered your mum had lied to you your entire life? That she's actually a magical being from another world?

Sixteen-year-old Claire finds out when her beloved brother, Marcus, is snatched away to another world, her parents admitting the pair have inherited fire magic. Ignoring her family's warnings, Claire will do whatever it takes to get her brother back, even if she has to follow him to her mother's homeland, Kelnarium, a place of magic, danger and prophecy.

But Claire's desire to bring Marcus home soon turns into a deadly quest. Kelnarium is set to explode unless Claire does something to close The Rift, a chasm in the sky forged in Civil War. Time is short, but magic is no longer popular with many people and a mysterious dark force is always moving against Claire. Can she save Kelnarium, her new friends and family, take out her enemies and find a way home? Claire knows she has to try ...

AUTHOR STYLE

This novel uses the conventions of young adult fantasy and may be used as a possible case study to discuss genre fiction with students. The novel is told from third person close perspective, following Claire's quest style journey throughout the book. The novel also follows the tenets of the hero's journey, with a female protagonist.

USE IN THE CURRICULUM

Child of Ash and Flame is a standalone young adult novel set in regional Australia and in the fantasy world of Kelnarium. It is most suitable for speculative fiction readers in Years 7 to 9 and for speculative fiction study in secondary school. The book's message of standing up for yourself and finding grit and resilience as a young person, learning tolerance, and forgiveness as well as its exploration of the meaning of friendship will relate to the personal experiences of many students. The vivid descriptions of elemental magic, brave and interesting young male and female characters and the story's fun romp through a land that isn't quite like our own is sure to appeal in the classroom.

THEMES

- Bigotry and the value of accepting others
- Friendship
- Forgiveness

SUGGESTED TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Literary techniques, structure and style

1. Read the short prologue of *Child of Ash and Flame* and consider the following questions:
 - a) What tone did the prologue create?
 - b) Were you hooked to continue reading the story? Why?
 - c) What did you learn about the personalities of Claire and Marcus?
2. What aspects of Chapter One grab your interest as a reader?
3. What is meant by 'point of view?' Whose point of view does the reader follow throughout the story?
4. What is meant by the term 'third person close perspective?' How does the author use this in the story? (Tip: Look at Chapter four, pg. 28 for an example)

5. How has the author made Lotte's voice different to the other characters in the novel? What effect does it have in shaping your perception of Lotte? (Tip: Take a look at how Lotte speaks to Claire in Chapter 12)
6. As a class, research the three-act plot structure. Work together to map certain plot points of the novel to the components of the three-act structure.
7. Read and respond to the below passage featuring a conversation between Lotte and Claire from the end of Chapter Fourteen:

"Ya said yer'd keep me safe, that yer'd give me coin so I can start again."

"Lotte," Claire whispered. "We're safe for now."

"Ya are," she said. "Yer important. At the first sign of danger yer'll be protected, but me? I'm nuthin' and no one." She paused. "I can't stop thinkin' about how they died—all of 'em. It's different for ya. Ya didn't know yer grandfather all your life like I did my parents, my brother and everyone else in that camp."

"I'm so sorry," Claire said miserably. "Tell me about them." She got up quietly and climbed over the log to sit beside Lotte.

Lotte had pushed her cloak back to dip long fingers into her sheepskin pouch. "My mam were an orphan. She stumbled into the camp and my da took her in. He never asked any questions about why she didn't have somewhere else to go. He said she bewitched him with her lovely voice. She'd sing to Jan and I and sometimes we'd have dancing and she'd tap out the beat with Da and some of the others." Lotte opened her clenched fist. In it sat a string of carved wooden beads, grimy pink quartz and feathers, bits of rusting silver twisted around the rope cord. Claire recognised the style. No Dorran would ever mistake it for anything but an exile's work. "This was hers. She told me to keep it on me always. It's important, she said, though I dunno why. Da said she were sentimental that way."

Claire closed Lotte's fingers over the necklace. "Keep it to yourself. I don't know if I can protect you if someone finds it."

"I know."

As Lotte reverently placed the necklace back in her pouch, Claire thought back on how they'd met. So much else had happened, they'd had no opportunity to discuss why the Crian had sent Lotte to the Manor with Claire. For that matter, Claire hadn't had a chance to ask about who the strange spirit was.

"Oh, her?" Lotte said in answer to the question. "She's always been around. Said she were friends with my mam, but she helped me more than her."

- a) What does the term ‘foreshadowing’ mean and why do you think authors use this technique?
- b) How has the author used foreshadowing here given what we learn of Lotte’s identity later in the novel?

Character

1. Divide into small groups. In your group, work together to compile a character profile (NB: Two sample character profiles are provided at the end of this document) on one of the following characters.

- Claire
- Marcus
- Lotte
- Gareth
- Jemroth
- Grandfather Dorran
- Eidan

Note how they first appear in the story and what we learn and discover about each character as the story progresses.

Present your character profile to the class.

2. In your group, discuss who you think is the most interesting character in the novel. Why? Did your group agree on the character, or did people have different responses? Each group could share their responses with the class.
3. How do Claire and Marcus grow and change in the novel? What events change their perspective? What realisations do they have?
4. Though Eidan and The Rift Beast are villains, do you feel any sympathy for them? Do you understand their motivations for the conflict they cause in the novel?

Themes

Bigotry

1. As a class discuss what is meant by the term ‘bigotry?’ What are some examples of bigotry throughout the novel? Your class could make a list.
2. As a class, discuss some examples of bigotry in modern Australia. Your class could make a list.

3. Do you think there are parallels between the magical realm of Kelnarium and Australia? Hint: See if anything on your two lists matches up.
4. What makes some of the characters in the novel change their beliefs about magical users and Rift dwellers? How do they come to accept those who are different?
5. How does Claire stand up for others and for what she believes?

Friendship

1. What do you look for in a friend? Can you see any of the qualities you look for reflected in the novel?
2. What are some examples of strong friendships in the novel? Why do you think they're strong?
3. Is the relationship Claire has at the start of the book with Marcus a healthy one? Why/why not? How does she change her opinion of her brother by the end of the novel?

Forgiveness

1. In pairs, discuss how it can be valuable to forgive others in your day-to-day life. Are some things harder to forgive than others? What are some examples? Discuss examples of things that are hard to forgive. Your class could even make a list.
2. Who does Claire need to forgive throughout the novel and why? How does she feel when she's able to forgive? Are there things she can't forgive by the end of the novel? Why?

Imaginative Responding

1. Write a letter as Lotte to Gareth and Jemroth after Claire has returned to Australia. What have she and the others done to make Kelnarium a better place? How does she feel with Claire gone? Remember to think about setting (place), staying in the character's unique voice and imagining what challenges and victories might exist in Kelnarium's future.
2. Imagine you are whisked to Kelnarium. Write a journal entry about how it felt to be trained in either fire, water, earth or air magic. Try to use your five senses to describe the experience.
3. Write a short story where magic is an important feature of the complication. Think about how to describe the world the story is set in, the rules of magic and the main character of your story. The story should have a clear narrative structure.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Maureen Flynn lives on the East Coast of NSW on Dharawal nation land and grew up in the Sutherland Shire. She is a lifelong fantasy reader as well as an avid speculative fiction and crime fiction lover, writer and fan. She has judged on the Aurealis Awards, Australia's premier speculative fiction awards three times and slush pile read for Australian anthologies and for Andromeda Spaceways In Flight Magazine. Her short stories have featured in publications by CSFG, Specul8 and Deadset Press. *Child of Ash and Flame* is her first novel. You can learn more about her books at her website and find her at the usual social media channels below:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/maureenflynnauthor/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/maureenflynnauthor/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/InkAshling>

Maureen is also available for school talks and workshops. Contact her by emailing maureen@maureenflynnauthor.com for more information.

Character Traits

Name: _____ Date: _____

External (Outside) Traits
What you see on the outside.

Internal (Inside) Traits
Thoughts, feelings, actions, and dialogue.

Character's Name:

Character's
Picture:

Character Analysis Worksheet

Title of Book:	
Name of Character:	

Provide Quotes from the book for the following questions		
What does the character feel?	How does the character act?	What do others say about the character?

List Three Character Traits:	Provide Quotes as Evidence for these traits
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.