



TEACHERS' RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Middle to upper primary (ages 9 to 12; years 4 to 6)

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KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning Areas:** English; SOSE (Natural Disasters and Sustainability)
- **Cross-curriculum Priorities:** Sustainability
- **General Capabilities:** Literacy; Critical and Creative Thinking; Ethical Understanding

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- Considering sustainability and how our lives are affected by our environment
- Researching ways to protect our planet
- Discussing moral and ethical dilemmas
- Creating empathy for others
- Discussing new technologies, particularly robotics and its place in society and the ethical and moral complexities of its presence
- Encouraging critical thinking
- Encouraging creative and imaginative writing
- Examining different writing styles – variations in voice, use of symbolism
- Analysing how language and writing evoke mood, tone, tension and characterisation

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Final Storm Deborah Abela

BOOK BLURB

In a world of wild weather, is anyone safe?

Isabella, Griffin and their friends have settled into New City, enrolled in school and are making new friends, including the charming Aleksander Larsen.

But their home is facing a new threat – weather patterns are becoming erratic and fierce ice storms batter the city.

When someone from Isabella's past returns, loyalties are tested. Who is watching her from the shadows? And can Isabella and Griffin's friendship survive this furious final storm?

Watch the trailer here:

youtube.com/watch?v=rewgPM7qBok

PLOT SUMMARY

The novel opens with a diary entry from Griffin recapping all that has happened since being stranded in Grimsdon and vowing to protect his friends. This is followed by a prologue of a man on a balcony watching a flock of eagles fly into the clouds, followed shortly by a violent ice storm.

Having survived for three years in the flooded city of Grimsdon and uncovered the terrible secrets of New City, Isabella, Griffin and their friends have now settled into a new home with their guardian, Jeremiah.

They have also been handpicked to attend The Academy, an elite school for the city's brightest and most talented children to create inventions and ways to combat the new changes the planet is facing.

The Academy also works with companies, most notably Future World Solutions and their prim, smiling representative, Ariella Frost, who first appears in the novel at a school assembly, demonstrating their latest collaboration: Robotic Rescue Eagles.

It's at the Academy that Isabella meets the charming, smart and humble, Aleksander Larsen. He is attractive and popular, and never boasts about his achievements, which makes Xavier instantly wary of him.

The normally wary Isabella, falls for his charm and for the first time in years, begins to feel safe.

She is also being watched by someone in the shadows.

Meanwhile, the weather is becoming increasingly dangerous with ice storms battering the city and Jeremiah, Chief Climatologist at the Bureau, can't explain why. During a homework assignment, Griffin finds footage suggesting the rescue eagles may be involved, but Ariella shows them evidence of why he is wrong. Soon after, Griffin, Jeremiah and Isabella are involved in a terrible crash that Griffin suspects is no accident.

When Isabella's mother is found by the City Archives, the two are reunited. Her mother left when Isabella was young and her sudden appearance has Griffin worried that she isn't who she seems to be.

With the worsening weather, the Bureau is shut down and Jeremiah's house is paint bombed. The kids are sent to Aleksander's home for safety. Soon after, it's announced that Isabella has gone away with her mother. At the same time, the normally reclusive head of Future World Solutions, Phineas Snowden, makes a rare appearance, announcing an exciting upcoming demonstration to save the world, but Griffin and Xavier reel at the sight of Byron P Sneddon, the wild-haired man of Grimsdon whose inaction led to the floods.

Griffins now realises the accidents, the paint bombing, the storms, Isabella's disappearance, are all because of

Sneddon. Isabella, they are yet to discover, has been kidnapped and sent back to Grimsdon, which Sneddon is about to destroy in a worldwide demonstration of climate engineering: technology that he claims will save the world and make him vastly rich.

It's also now we find out Aleksander is Sneddon's son, who has been spying on them for his father all along.

Normally shy, anxious Griffin, has to find proof Sneddon is behind the destruction but also to face up to his worst fears if he is to find his best friend before it's too late.

USING FINAL STORM IN THE CLASSROOM

Deborah Abela's books *Grimsdon*, *New City* and *Final Storm* started as one little question: *What would happen if the world ignored the implications of climate change, a city flooded and some kids were left behind?* Deborah wanted to write about a world that has a lot of familiar elements (friends, laughter, family) but is also quite unique. The kids' need to survive drives the books and this calls for a large dose of action, which Deborah loves writing.

Teachers and students have responded amazingly to *Grimsdon*, and it is a set text in many schools around Australia. Readers in years 4 to 7 love *Grimsdon* not only for its flying machines, sneaker waves and sea monsters but also for its brave and resourceful young characters.

Behind the adventure and fun, there is plenty to talk about in the classroom for both *Grimsdon* and *New City*: about the possible effects of climate change, how humanity will live in the future, and how the forces of money, power and technology affect our lives.

The three books are perfect for learning focused on the Australian Curriculum's cross-curriculum priority of sustainability, as well as the important general capabilities of critical and creative thinking and ethical understanding.

In addition to a continued focus on sustainability and the environment, *New City* considered the human cost of climate change: what happens to those who are made refugees as a result of environmental disaster? How should we treat those who are less fortunate than ourselves? *Final Storm* looks at solutions to saving the planet, including robotics, but this isn't enough without leadership and major industry, communities and governments working together. All three books consider these issues in a way that is exciting and fun for young readers.

All three books can be studied and read independently of each other.



Teachers' Resources for *Grimsdon* are [available here](#). Deborah Abela also collaborated with the Primary English Teachers' Association Australia and they have produced a unit of work for *Grimsdon* based on KLAs (Key Learning Areas) and outcomes. You can find these additional resources here:

petaa.edu.au/imis_prod/w/Teaching_Resources/Authors_in_Schools__Units_/w/Teaching_Resources/AIS/Grimsdon.aspx

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Having been a mad reader and writer as a kid, Deb left school and studied Teaching before she left Australia to see the world. For three years she travelled from America to the UK to Africa, Europe and parts of Asia before returning home and driving around Australia. After that she completed a Bachelor of Communications majoring in writing and film at the University of Technology, Sydney, which meant she got to write, read and watch a lot of films.

Her first job was in the script department at Southern Star, producers of many shows including *Love My Way*, *Paper Giants* and *Offspring*.

After that, she worked in the script department of Network Ten before moving to the children's show *Cheez TV* for seven years. Her main job was coming up with the ideas and writing the scripts. She'd choose the guests, direct the studio and location segments and edit stories. It was a great job and she travelled to lots of fun places like New Zealand, New York, England and the snowfields of Australia.

She left that job in December 2001 to write. She's written the Max Remy Superspy series, about a feisty girl spy, the Ghost Club series and the Jasper Zammit (Soccer Legend) series with the advice of soccer champion Johnny Warren. *The Remarkable Secret of Aurelie Bonhoffen* was shortlisted for Best Children's Book in the Aurealis Awards, an IBBY award and was named a Children's Book Council of Australia Notable Book. Her recent books are *The Stupendously Spectacular Spelling Bee* and *The Most Marvellous Spelling Bee Mystery*, and her first picture book is the fractured fairytale, *Wolfie An Unlikely Hero*.

You can find out more about spies, soccer, ghosts and flooded cities at deborahabela.com, including fantastic book trailers and interviews with the author.

PRE-READING

Questions and activities

1. Before you begin to read the novel, carefully examine the front cover. What images are foregrounded on the cover? What atmosphere is created? How has this been achieved?

2. What ideas do you think are created by the images on the cover?
3. What predictions can you make about what might happen in the story?
4. Read Griffin's diary at the beginning of the book. How does Griffin feel about all that has happened since the floods? What are his main concerns at the beginning of the book? Can you make any predictions about what might happen to the kids of Grimsdon next?
5. Book trailers: Watch the trailers for all three books in the series.

Grimsdon [youtube.com/watch?v=qhIGvEAXnm8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qhIGvEAXnm8)

New City [youtube.com/watch?v=bC7KnxmbaIA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bC7KnxmbaIA)

Final Storm [youtube.com/watch?v=rewgPM7qBok](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rewgPM7qBok)

Film and book trailers try to give a sense of the story without giving too much away, while trying to entice the audience to read the book or watch the film. Create your own trailer for *Final Storm*. Consider the audience, the most important elements of the story to you, which images will best portray the story, music, the pace of changing the images and how they match the music and the book.

Start by jotting key plot points, writing a script, storyboarding the trailer, choosing music and titles. Make sure you use royalty free music and images.

CHARACTERS

Isabella Charm

Isabella Charm is the thirteen-year-old leader of the group of children who survived in the flooded city of Grimsdon for three years before escaping to New City. She is resourceful, capable, and can solve problems that many adults would find difficult. Isabella is fiercely protective of her friends, especially the younger children, Bea, Raffy and Fly. She is feisty, reluctant to follow rules that don't make sense and easily infuriated by injustice, which often lands her in trouble.

Griffin

Griffin and Isabella have been friends their whole lives. Although they are the same age, Griffin is anxious and cautious, and acts as a calming influence to Isabella's impulsiveness. He is thirteen, bookish, resourceful and clever, not athletic and prone to fainting at awkward moments. Like Isabella, his primary concern is the safety of the younger children, and he refuses to do anything that may endanger them, but when asked to face his greatest fears or risk losing Isabella, he knows he has no choice but to do his best to save her.



Xavier

Xavier created the Aerotrope flying machine that finally enabled the children to make contact with the people of New City and be rescued. He is tall, brash, popular with girls and loves to add a generous measure of danger to whatever he does. In contrast to Isabella and Griffin, he is more than happy to see himself as a hero for having survived Grimsdon. Unlike the other children, Xavier's parents survived the floods, but his brashness and tendency to show off can be directly attributed to the dysfunctional relationship he has with them. Arguably he gained a better family with the children in Grimsdon than he had before the floods. When he meets the charming, clever Aleksander Larsen, he instantly dislikes him, especially as his friendship with Isabella grows closer.

Bea and Raffy

Having lost their families in the floods, inseparable nine-year-old twins Bea and Raffy adore Isabella and Griffin as their new family and will do anything to stand by them and their new guardian Jeremiah. They have vivid imaginations and love disappearing into stories Griffin reads to them every night. Bea easily settles into her new studies at the Academy in New City, but Raffy struggles and fears he'll be thrown out and face his greatest fear . . . being separated from his sister.

Fly

Fly rarely spoke while the children were in Grimsdon, probably as a direct result of the trauma she experienced during the floods. She is a brilliant artist and records her thoughts and drawings in a journal. She is fond of the other children, especially Griffin, who she regards as her older brother. In *New City*, Fly was reunited with her parents and discovered she had a one-year-old sister, April. Her parents initially planned to take her far away, however, seeing how distraught she was without her friends, they relocate to New City.

Fly has a natural affinity with animals and is able to communicate with them without words, something that will be crucial to their survival in *Final Storm*.

Jeremiah

Jeremiah is the only adult the children trusted while they were in Grimsdon. Once sporting an overgrown beard and plaited hair, he has tidied himself up for his re-entry to civilisation and to improve his chance of being the children's legal guardian. He is a gentle soul who is happy to allow the children to be in control of their situation. As a Physical Oceanographer, Jeremiah worked with Isabella's father in their attempts to warn the government of the possibility of floods. He blames himself for the city's devastation. As the head of New City's Bureau of Weather, he is confounded by the

increasingly unpredictable ice storms and dangerous weather and worries he is failing the world once again.

Aleksander Larsen

Aleksander Larsen is all poise, kindness and smarts. He is one of the brightest students at the Academy but never boasts about his achievements, in fact often plays them down, which makes Xavier instantly wary of him. Isabella is never one to trust anyone too quickly, but Aleksander's humble manner makes her feel at ease. Neither Xavier nor Griffin are convinced and suspects that he is hiding something.

Phineas Snowden

Mr Phineas Snowden is the secretive and reclusive owner and creator of *Future World Solutions*, a company working to solve the problems of the world's new weather. He has a neat beard and silver hair swept back in a stylish wave. In his black-rimmed glasses, suit and scarf, he looks more like a well-groomed bank manager, than a genius inventor. His plan is to not only combat the world's weather but control it, but when the kids from Grimsdon meet him, his true ambitions are revealed and they must work together to stop his plans before he destroys everything they love.

Ariella Frost

Ariella is Snowden's assistant. She is efficient, unquestioning and acts as his spokesperson. There is something formidable behind the unflinching smile and perfect manner, but Griffin soon smells a rat and thinks this woman with her bright orange bob and lips that sparkle fiery red isn't all that she seems.

Professor Singh

Professor Singh is the head of Robotics at the Academy, working both within the school and with industries to use robotics to deal with the changing world. She's easily excited about robots but socially awkward. She doesn't see the purpose of emotions and feels much more at home with robots than humans.

Questions and activities

1. Create a wordle for each of the characters, highlighting key words or phrases that describe their personalities.
2. The children have survived living in a flooded city and uncovered the secret of New City and are now facing a new safer year at the Academy. Imagine that you are one of these children. Write about how you feel about facing a world with changing weather, and living with your new family in New City. What are your hopes, your fears, your questions, etc. Does anything change when we hear it through another person's voice?



- Imagine that *Final Storm* is to be made into a film. Create a casting board, showing who you would cast as each of these characters. What attributes does each of these actors have that makes them suitable for the roles?
- Choose one of the characters from *Final Storm* and conduct an interview with them. Make it as interesting and entertaining as you can. Find out how their childhood was, their dreams and hopes, a funny story from their life that helps us know them better. Use what you know from the story but also what you think may be true about them. Write this up as a newspaper report or a transcript of an interview, or create a video.

THEMES

Sustainability

In the *Grimsdon* trilogy, parts of the world have been lost forever because humans haven't taken enough care of the planet. There are a number of measures taken in the book to improve sustainability, from wind turbines and fields of solar panels. Here is a website and FB page with lots of facts, info, videos etc about climate change: coolaustralia.org

Questions and activities

- What is the difference between global warming and climate change?
- Research five ways the earth's rising temperature has affected the way people live. Eg emergency services, how and where people live, farming, tourism etc.
- Investigate five new ways that are being developed to take care of the planet as we move into the future and write a persuasive speech about why you believe they will work.
- Imagine you are in government. Name five laws you would pass to take better care of the environment.
- You are an inventor . . . create a new invention or method that you think would help tackle climate change and protect our planet in the future.
- Write a persuasive speech about why we need to act sustainably to protect our planet. Research your speech so you can add persuasive facts or statistics. Avoid using generalisations and exaggeration and don't forget, even though it can be a serious subject, a good speech can often contain humour.
- Sustainability in Schools. Have a look at these facebook pages. Is there anything you can do in your school to improve your waste management and promote sustainability?
facebook.com/groups/1021992804620105/ and facebook.com/sustainableschoolsns/ and coolaustralia.org/take-action/sustainability-in-your-class-all-you-need-to-know/
- Challenge each class in your school to come up with a plan to improve your school's carbon footprint, sustainability and waste management.
- Research resources online, (websites, movies, documentaries etc) that help explain climate change and sustainability and offer ways we can take better care of our planet. Create a webpage and share the top points with your class.
- Even though Australia is just one country, do you think it is important we do what we can to take care of the planet? Do you think richer countries have an obligation to help those who aren't so wealthy?
- One major way to combat climate change is planting trees. Gardening superstar Costa Georgiadis chats about planting a trillion trees to combat climate change. tinyurl.com/y2a86cag
Discuss ways you can help make this can happen in your school and community.
- It is said that cow farts contribute more greenhouse gases than cars. youtube.com/watch?v=oH79CGm4u7s
Research ways to reduce these farts.
- Many believe that protecting the planet can only happen with government leadership, people power and industry making changes and all three working together. Name one thing each of these groups can do that you think will be world-changing and explain why you think so.
- '*You are never too small to make a difference.*'
Greta Thunberg, climate activist.
In August 2018, Greta started a school strike outside the Swedish Parliament asking for action regarding climate change that has since spread all over the world in a movement called Fridays For Future.
youtube.com/watch?v=uRgJ-22S_Rs
Watch this video. What does it make you think? What are the main points you took from this video? Greta says her Asperger's made her more focused and says it made her act. What do you think of Greta's journey to becoming an activist? Do you think this movement, started by one person, will make a difference?
- If you were asked to address a climate conference like Greta, what would be your main reasons for



asking the adults of the world to act? Include facts about climate change, as well as your thoughts about the ethics of taking care of the planet.

- Other websites to investigate: climatekids.nasa.gov/ interestingengineering.com/21-sustainability-innovations-and-initiatives-that-might-just-change-the-world tinyurl.com/y27wzym7 tinyurl.com/y68ju5yk and TED talks on climate change can be found here: ted.com/topics/climate+change
- David Suzuki has been an environmental warrior for decades. His foundation shares ideas to help save the planet. davidsuzuki.org/what-you-can-do/top-10-ways-can-stop-climate-change/ Which ideas do you think you, your family and your class could put into action tomorrow?
- Debate topics: That individuals cannot make a big impact in combating climate change. That being a vegetarian is better for the environment than being a meat-eater. That protecting the environment is a government problem.

Survival

For three years we survived without electricity, computers, phones and our families, facing sea creatures and sneaker waves and an evil harbour lord called Sneddon. (p. viii)

Questions and activities

- The children have survived for three years in Grimsdon before being rescued and taken to New City. Would you have the skills to survive? Would it have been more challenging to have had no adults to help them?
- Imagine that your hometown has been destroyed by a flood. What would you need in order to survive? How could you achieve this with the very limited resources available?
- One theme that runs through the Grimsdon trilogy is that the kids survival was only possible because they had each other. How did being together help them survive? Do you think it would be hard to survive alone?
- The Academy is a special school designed for the brightest of New City to create inventions to help cope with the changing weather. They've invented hoverboards, Armavans and cyclone proof buildings. If you had to create an invention to help you survive, what would it be? Create an advertisement (poster, video, webpage) about your invention, highlighting its most exciting aspects, why you think it would be useful and why people should buy it.

Natural disasters

Questions and activities

- In *Grimsdon*, why do you think the government failed to listen to people such as Jeremiah and Isabella's dad before the floods?
- In *New City*, most activities are done indoors, from recreation to farming. Is this a good solution to the problem? What other problems might this cause?
- In *Grimsdon*, the children faced floods and now *New City* is battered by ice storms and blizzards, and have had to come up with clever ways to stay safe. In small groups, create a survival plan in the event of a blizzard. How would you prepare? Focus on what needs to be done and how you would choose who would do what.
- Climate change is creating weather patterns that are sometimes unsafe, such as increasingly intense hurricanes and bushfires. Is there anything we can do to prepare for natural disasters such as these? What measures could world leaders put in place now to protect their people?
- Human activity has impacted the environment. Choose one way humans have adversely changed the environment. What ways can humans have acted differently or can now act to protect the environment in the future?

Humans vs nature

Questions and activities

- Man has always tried to conquer nature. What does this novel suggest about our ability to do so?
- Throughout *New City* the weather patterns are shown to be unstable and often dangerous. Do you think that this is a natural occurrence or do you think this is controlled by humans? Give evidence to support your opinion.
- Do you agree that moving everything indoors is the only way to win the battle with nature?
- Describe five ways human settlement has impacted on the natural environment.
- How have our weather patterns changed since human existence, and especially since the height of industrialisation?
- What can we do to counteract the impact we have had on the environment?
- Do you think that there will be an increase in the number of natural disasters in the future? Why? Provide evidence.



8. The environment and nature are very strong forces. Which do you think poses the greater threat, the environment or mankind?
9. Debate topic: That the greatest threat to human existence are humans themselves.

Robots

Questions and activities

Professor Singh, head of Robotics at the Academy, believes the safety of the world's future lies with robotics, but acknowledges:

'...some people aren't happy having robots in our lives. They think they'll malfunction, or take over the world.' She dug her fists into her hips. 'Humans have been in charge for centuries and look where that's got us.' (p. 30)

1. Do you agree with her? Why?
2. What are some of the ways robots are used in *Final Storm* to help people's lives?
3. Why do you think people are afraid of robots?
4. What happens when Isabella is first introduced to the robots in Singh's lab?
5. Read Jeremiah's reaction below when he finds out.

Jeremiah lifted Isabella's hand and winced at the faint bruising. 'A robot harming a human isn't nothing.'

'It was a mere blip. A coding error that interfered with her behaviour.' Professor Singh frowned as if she deeply regretted starting the conversation. 'She's been sent back to the workshop. Nothing to worry about.'

'There's everything to worry about.' Jeremiah held her nervous gaze. 'What if we lose control of them? Or they malfunction?'

'You humans needn't worry.' Professor Singh seemed not to include herself. 'There are safeguards in place. Kill switches. Remotes. It'll be a much more efficient world. You'll see.' (p. 54)

Why does Jeremiah believe they're unsafe?

6. Research Asimov's three laws of robotics. Do you think these are reasonable rules? Why?
7. Astrophysicist, Stephen Hawking, joined over one thousand scientists in signing a letter warning humanity about the potential dangers of taking artificial intelligence too far. Research the letter online and write a response about the views expressed in this letter. Do you think the scientists are right to be worried?
8. Look up at least three different types of robots and how they have advanced humans and how we live.

9. Have a look at this lesson plan on an introduction to robots. There are lots of ideas of exploring what they are and robots in action.
pbslearningmedia.org/resource/engo6.sci.engin.d.esign.lp_robot/what-is-a-robot/
10. As a class, brainstorm all the reasons you think robots can be helpful and another list of ways they may be harmful.
11. Set up an opinion line: a continuum that at one end says strongly agree and the other end says strongly disagree. Students need to mark along a line to indicate what their opinion is on the topic of robots. Make statements such as:
 - Australia should embrace robotics without question
 - Robots are the way of the future
 - Robots will steal all our jobs
 - We need to spend more money on robots
 - Robots will mean humans won't need to work
 - Robots will make human lives easier and safer
12. If you could design a robot to help with an everyday task, what would it be like?
13. Make a webpage advertising the latest in robot technology. Explain what it does and why it is a must-have in every home.
14. Robots are used in everything from washing dishes to exploring space. Have a look at these lesson plans from NASA, which explore how they are being used.
nasa.gov/audience/foreducators/robotics/lessonplans/#.XRGQ4ntS-u5
15. Debate Topic: That autonomous cars will make driving safer.
16. Debate Topic: That robots will make our lives better.

Loss

'I wanted to pretend everything was like it used to be. Just for a little while. Does that make sense?' (Isabella, p. 101)

'I miss being together like we were in Grimsdon, with no adults messing everything up.' His face was wet with tears. 'Don't you miss it too, even a little?' (Raffy, p. 175)

Questions and activities

1. Isabella and her friends lost their homes in Grimsdon and were separated from their families. Even though life was dangerous living in a flooded city, what aspects of living there do they miss?



- When Isabella and Griffin talk about their families in chapter one and twelve, what do they miss the most?
- What would you miss most if you lost your house and all your belongings? Or suddenly had to leave your home and everything you knew?
- If you could number the five most important things/people in your life, what/who would they be?
- Think about your own house. Make a list of all the things you own that you tend to take for granted, but that would seem unimaginable to people who have nothing.
- Point of View: Each of the characters fears for Isabella when it is discovered she is missing. Choose one of Isabella's friends and describe, from their point of view, how they were feeling as Griffin's plan to save her was put in place. You can do this as a blog or a diary entry. (p. 265)
- Who do you consider a hero in your life? What qualities do they have or actions have they done that make them a hero?
- Research a famous hero, living or from history, and write a three minute speech on why you think they deserve to be called a hero.

Family

Questions and activities

- What does it mean to be part of a family?
- What benefits do we gain from being in a family?
- Why does Jeremiah want to adopt the children? Would this make their lives different from just continuing to be together?
- In what ways have the children become a family unit?
- Xavier prefers to be with his friends rather than with his own parents? What can they provide that his real family cannot?
- Isabella is reunited with her mother in *Final Storm*. Write a diary entry about how she feels after being separated from her mother for years, including any fears. How is she feeling? What is she thinking?
- Aleksander is in awe of his dad and even acts in ways to please him that go against what he thinks is right. Why do you think he does this?
- Imagine that you hadn't seen your family for six years. How would you feel when you were reunited? Would the fact that you shared blood be enough for you to reconnect with your family?
- Do you agree that the bonds you share with your family are stronger than those you share with your friends?
- Are there people other than your family who are significant to you? What role do they play?
- Stage a debate on the topic: That blood is thicker than water.
- Create a family web that links you with all the significant people in your life. Consider how you would be a different person if any one of these people was removed.
- Choose the person on this web who you feel has the most significance in your life and write a short paragraph about this person.
- 'We never needed anyone in Grimsdon.' (p. 132) Xavier is furious that they are forced to live with Aleksander. Why does he think they are better on their own? Is it simply one reason as he said above or is something else going on?

Courage

Questions and activities

- What does it mean to have courage?
- What does it mean to be a hero?
- Complete the Frayer definition of courage (see Worksheet 3)
- She was in Grimsdon.*
And it was because of Sneddon. She didn't know why or how she'd got there, but what she did know was this – he'd tried to kill her once and failed, just like he would this time.' (p. 226)

When Isabella wakes in Grimsdon, with no way out and no device to call for help, she could have easily given up. Why didn't she? What reasons do you think made her so determined not to give up?
- I wish I could be as brave as Isabella and as strong and confident as Xavier, but one thing I do know, I am going to do everything I can to keep all of them safe. That's a promise.'* (from Griffin's diary p. ix)

Griffin is very loyal and smart, but lacks confidence when it comes to being brave or doing anything physical. And yet, in *Final Storm*, he has to do something that terrifies him if he is to save his best friend. Name a few brave decisions Griffin makes. Why do you think he makes these decisions?
- Do you think people are born brave or can they learn it? Do you think bravery is something that can be sparked by events?



LANGUAGE AND WRITING STYLE

When she straightened, her eyes fell on the glass doors of the library. This had been one of their favourite places in the Palace. It was where she and the others would huddle on lounges and snuggle under blankets, while Griffin read stories. It was here they could forget everything – the floods, Sneddon and all they'd lost.

She pushed the doors open. A strong smell of mould drifted up from the sodden rugs. Wooden shelves bulged where rain dripped through cracked beams and books lay on the floor like dead fish, bloated and wrinkled.

She walked out, not bothering to close the door behind her. (p. 196–197)

Questions and activities

1. What literary devices does the author use to create not only a visual image but also an atmosphere? How does the description help you understand how the character is feeling?
2. Read Griffin's diary entry (p. vii). Why do you think the author chose to start the novel this way? How does it feel different having the novel start with a character talking to the reader, rather than a descriptive passage? What do we learn about Griffin from this passage and can you make any predictions about his character?
3. *They toppled over and over. Isabella's head pounded. Her fingers loosened and she slid down Herman's back.*

The sea creature roared.

'Herman!' she screamed into the wind. 'I can't hold on.'

Isabella drifted even further. The barest tuft of fur was gripped in her fingers.

The last strands slipped away.

And she fell. (p. 281)

How does the author create tension in this scene? Consider choice of words, length of sentences, paragraphs, dialogue etc. See if you can increase the tension even further by writing what happens next.

Throughout the novel, each chapter is almost a scene in a movie, with its own orientation, complication and resolution. In this way the author is able to increase and decrease the tension, keeping the readers on their edges of their seats, while still allowing them a chance to breathe. Trace the events in the novel and chart them on a graph. Where are the major incidents or complications in the plot? How does the author take us on a roller-coaster ride?

4. *Jeremiah steered the Armavan through the snowy, lamplit streets of New City. A thick choking fog swirled in the cold breeze. Mounds of snow clogged the gutters and lay against the walls and doors like tired men.*

Something about the night made Griffin feel as if he couldn't breathe. He tugged at his tie. 'Do we have to wear these?' (p. 50)

The city sparkled in a way Isabella had never seen before. Wisps of fog curled around streetlights like ghostly alley cats and blankets of snow made everything glisten. She knotted her scarf against the icy breeze. (p. 58)

Writers are always trying to find unique ways to describe objects and moods. They sometimes use similes or metaphors, or try to use words in an original way to explain something similar. See if you can turn these boring sentences into something more unique and interesting. Make sure to add interesting detail.

The storm was intense.

The scared girl ran fast.

The castle was majestic.

5. Deborah Abela's writing is very vivid and imaginative, creating strong word pictures. Imagine that you have decided to turn *Final Storm* into a film. Choose a chapter from the novel and prepare a storyboard to help convert it into a scene from your film (See Worksheet 2). What can you do to help keep the same level of tension and atmosphere as Deborah Abela has in her writing? What images, music, dialogue and lighting could help create this scene effectively?
6. *In the distance, he saw two figures standing in the gloom with the barest trickle of light spilling on their faces. It took a few moments for his eyes to adjust and realise who they were.*
It was Ariella and Professor Singh.
He stepped towards them when he heard Ariella's voice echo against the stone. 'But you agreed to help us.'
Griffin watched Professor Singh mumble something in reply, squirming uncomfortably.
He slipped behind a column and peeked out to see the professor stroking her dog. She cowered beneath Ariella's imposing figure.
'We had a deal.'
Even though Ariella was smiling, her words were anything but friendly. (pp. 62–63)



Part of an author's job is to create dramatic conflict between characters. What do we learn about Ariella and Professor Singh in this piece? How does Ariella show she has power over the professor? Write a brief paragraph from Professor Singh's POV, showing how she was feeling when this happened. What words does the author use to help us see how the characters feel and who has the power?



FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA



Grimsdon
by Deborah Abela

Bestselling author Deborah Abela brings us a heroine to love and a great deal of danger to overcome in this thrilling novel set in a post-apocalyptic, flooded world.

Grimsdon is in ruins. Three years ago a massive wave broke its barriers and the sea flooded this grand city. Most were saved, some were lost – and some were left behind.

Isabella Charm and her best friend, Griffin, live with three other children in the top of an opulent mansion. They've survived with the help of Griffin's brilliant inventions, Isabella's fighting skills and their vow to look after each other.

[Teachers' resources available.](#)



New City
by Deborah Abela

Isabella and her friends are nervous about what they'll find in the New City. It's inland and it's dry – far from the flooded city they've just left. Will their lives here be as luxurious and carefree as Xavier says?

In fact, the city has been divided in two: the citizens who have, and those who the ruling Major General says have come to steal from them – the refugees who have fled the rising waters, who are imprisoned in a camp on the edge of the city. The kids of Grimsdon once faced sea monsters and evil harbour lords, but now they face new threats. From freakish weather events to the fierce misinformation that swirls around the city to the theft of their freedom, now they face the prison-like restrictions and control of the New City. Unlike the refugees, they're heralded as heroes. But what does the Major General really want from them?

[Teachers' resources available.](#)



The Stupendously Spectacular Spelling Bee
by Deborah Abela

A heart-warming story about a girl who's too afraid to follow her dreams, and the family who help make them happen.

India Wimple can spell. Brilliantly. Every Friday night, she and her family watch the Stupendously Spectacular Spelling Bee. When the Wimples suggest she enter the next Bee, India says she's not good enough – but her family won't hear it and encourage her to sign up.

There are plenty of obstacles to reaching the finals: something in India's past has made her terribly shy, and moving on to each round involves finding the money to make it happen.

And finally, there's Summer Millicent Ernestine Beauregard-Champion, a spoilt rich girl who is determined to win – and isn't afraid to step on anyone who gets in her way.

[Teachers' resources available.](#)



READERS' THEATRE

Extract from Chapter 3: A Special Demonstration

Dress as the following characters. How do you think they may stand, talk and look? You can read from the script, but practice a few times and try to remember some lines, so you can look at your fellow actors and the audience.

NARRATOR: Isabella and her friends are back at school. On the first day of term, Fly, who can communicate with animals, announces Charlie is no longer a rescue eagle. The eagles are being replaced by something better, which has made Charlie depressed. During the assembly, a tall woman in staggeringly high heels walked on stage with clipped, efficient steps. She shook the principal's hand before straightening her tight black dress and gripping the podium. Her hair was styled into a bright orange bob and her lips sparkled a fiery red.

ARIELLA FROST: Future World Solutions has worked on many projects to protect our planet. And I'm here this morning to present our latest.

NARRATOR: She gazed up to the ceiling, not saying a word. Griffin adjusted his glasses and squinted.

GRIFFIN: What's she looking at?

NARRATOR: Fly noticed a tiny movement in the rafters.

FLY: I think we're about to find out.

NARRATOR: A large bird spread its wings and flew into the hall. Students gasped. Bea and Raffy ducked as it sailed only centimetres above them before lifting into a gentle upward glide and landing on the lectern beside Ariella. The creature folded its wings and held its head high, as if waiting at attention.

GRIFFIN: Fly, what's he thinking?

NARRATOR: She closed her sketchbook and tried to concentrate on the bird's thoughts.

FLY: I'm not sure. I can't hear anything.

ARIELLA: Meet Ruben. Our newest breed of rescue eagle. Strong, resilient and fearless.

BEA: (UNIMPRESSED) That's Charlie's replacement?

RAFFY: What's the difference?

ARIELLA: Unlike previous eagles, which took months to train and became tired during long and difficult rescues, Ruben was trained in mere days and won't rest until his mission is complete.

NARRATOR: She searched the hall.

ARIELLA: Does anyone have a coin?

YOUNG BOY: I do.

ARIELLA: Hold it up and I'll send Ruben to fetch it.

NARRATOR: Bea couldn't believe what she was seeing.

BEA: She thinks this bird is better than Charlie because he can do tricks?

NARRATOR: Ruben launched himself from the lectern and glided through the hall. Fly and the others watched the eagle zero in on his target, but instead of taking the coin, Ruben's sharp talons snatched the boy's jacket and lifted him from his seat. Students scrambled to catch him but he was quickly out of reach.

GRIFFIN: Is that supposed to happen?



NARRATOR: Griffin stared as the boy was carried higher. His jacket bunched around his neck and his arms stuck out like a scarecrow.

ISABELLA: Maybe.

NARRATOR: Isabella was poised to help, until she noticed he was smiling.

ISABELLA: He doesn't seem too worried.

YOUNG BOY: Woo hoo!

NARRATOR: The boy cried as he was carried towards the stage. The eagle's wings rose and fell easily, as if carrying a human several times his own weight was no effort at all. Ruben let him down before landing on the lectern. Students and teachers jumped to their feet, cheering and clapping. Bea, Fly and Raffy reluctantly stood too.

RAFFY: It was impressive.

FLY: Just don't tell Charlie. He'll be even more depressed.

NARRATOR: The boy ran down the aisle, high-fiving kids as he went.

ARIELLA: Throughout history, animals have been used to rescue us, and sadly, not all survived or returned unharmed. We will no longer be that cruel.

NARRATOR: Then she did something astounding. She reached over to Ruben, worked her fingers into his feathery chest and opened it to reveal mechanical insides. Murmurs riffled through the hall. Fly stared in disbelief at the wires and circuit boards.

FLY: He looks so real.

ARIELLA: Ruben is from our new team of Robotic Rescue Eagles. Unlike real birds, they don't need rest or food and can brave the harshest weather. They can fly to rescue sites with pinpoint accuracy. More people will be saved and not one eagle will ever be in danger again.

NARRATOR: She closed Ruben's feathery panel, held out her arm and he hopped from the lectern onto her sleeve. Even though the bird was large, Ariella barely flinched.

ARIELLA: So study hard and together we will make the world a better, safer place.

NARRATOR: The robot released a loud screech.

ARIELLA: Ruben thinks so too.

NARRATOR: The students laughed and cheered. Ariella walked down the aisle. Everyone craned their necks to get a closer look. Ruben was unmoved by the stares and whispers, but as he passed Fly, he turned his head. His bright yellow eyes met hers, as if he was deliberately seeking her out. Fly flinched. Griffin saw her face pale.

GRIFFIN: Are you okay?

FLY: I ... I think so.

NARRATOR: As Ruben was carried from the hall, his eyes locked onto Fly's, he let forth one last, loud screech, before turning away.



WORKSHEET: Book report

Create a book report as a webpage, poster or a recorded review. Include the following information and any other information you think would be helpful for someone considering reading this book.

- Title
- Author
- Synopsis (brief description of the story)
- List the main characters
- What is your favourite part of the book and why?
- If you could be any character, who would it be and why?
- Describe and draw two inventions that have been used to deal with the weather in New City.
- What are the themes you think the author cares most about in this book?
- Would you recommend this book, why and to what age?



WORKSHEET: Creating a storyboard

The writing in *Final Storm* is very descriptive, creating strong images or word pictures. It is almost written in such a way that each chapter is a little scene in its own right, as it would be in a film.

Imagine that you are the director of the film version of this novel. Choose which chapter you would like to concentrate on and design the storyboard for that chapter. In each frame, consider what the key image needs to be to convey the real meaning in that chapter.



WORKSHEET: Using the Frayer model to define courage

<p><u>DEFINITION</u></p>	<p><u>FACTS/CHARACTERISTICS</u></p>
<p><u>COURAGE</u></p>	
<p><u>EXAMPLE</u></p>	<p><u>NON-EXAMPLE</u></p>



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