



# TEACHERS' RESOURCES

## RECOMMENDED FOR

Secondary  
(ages 12+; years 7+)

## CONTENTS

1. Plot summary	1
2. Synopsis	1
3. About the author	2
4. Author's inspiration	2
5. Writing <i>Wreck</i>	3
6. Themes	3
7. Discussion questions and activities	3
8. Further reading	5
9. Worksheets	6

## KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English
- **General capabilities:** Critical and creative thinking; Ethical understanding

## REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- A thrilling YA novel from award-winning Australian author Fleur Ferris that weaves two separate narratives to explore alternative perspectives, the truth, grief, and power and corruption in the media.

## THEMES

- Truth
- Loss and grief
- Power and corruption
- Journalism and the media
- Domestic abuse/violence
- Friendship
- Crime
- Murder
- Actions and consequences

## PREPARED BY

Penguin Random House Australia and Fleur Ferris

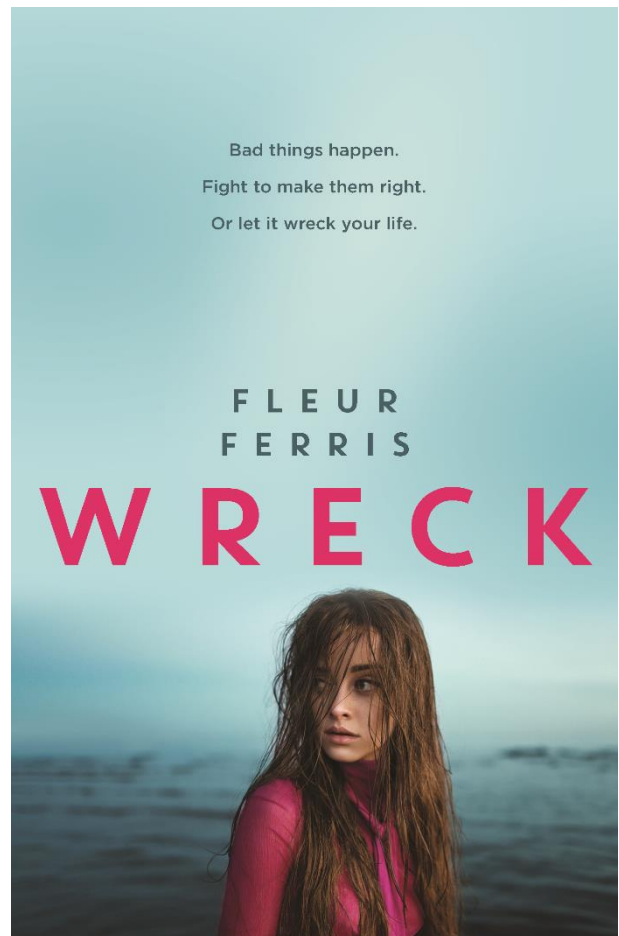
## PUBLICATION DETAILS

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Wreck

Fleur Ferris

## PLOT SUMMARY

Tamara Bennett is going to be the first journalist to strictly report only good news. Finished with high school, Tamara is ready to say goodbye to her sleepy little town and part-time job at the local paper.

But things take an unexpected turn when Tamara arrives home to find her house ransacked and her life in danger. What is the mysterious note her attacker wants – and why is he willing to kill for it?

A tragic boating accident five years ago holds the clue that could keep Tamara alive. But how can she find the truth when she can't tell who's lying?

## SYNOPSIS

Tamara is heading home after dropping her parents to the airport. It's meant to be her last night at home before she heads off to university.

But when Tamara opens her front door, she's confronted by an intruder who demands to know

where the note is. Tamara can't work out he's talking about. She locks herself in the bathroom, but can't escape from the small window. Luckily the intruder outside is confronted by someone else, and there's the sound of fighting. Tamara runs for her bedroom, ready to remove the window screen to escape.

One of the intruders finds her first. He says he's here to save her, but how can Tamara possibly trust him? She's almost out the window when he covers her with a doona so she can't flee, and abducts her in his car.

Here the story splits and we begin to hear another, equally terrifying story. Five years ago, a teenage boy, William Chisel, is on his family yacht when a huge storm hits during the night and the yacht smashes against something and begins to capsize. William's family rushes for the life raft. William's older half-brother, Knox, is so drunk that he doesn't even wake up, and William's cousin Christian gives Knox his own life jacket as they haul Knox on deck. William, his mother, his aunt and Christian's girlfriend, Portia, can only watch in horror from the life raft as their vision of the others is swamped by a wave and the yacht sinks.

From this point onwards, the story continues to alternate between Tamara's story and William's.

Tamara's captor, who calls himself Zel, takes her to the newspaper office where she works – it seems that the note everyone wants is the message in a bottle that Tamara found at the beach. What they find at the office is the dead body of her boss, and Tamara realises that her pursuers want her dead too. Zel drives them to a hotel in the city. When she's sure he's asleep, Tamara sneaks out, heading to the state library. Who can she call without putting her friends and family in danger? Can she trust the police? It seems not, when the detectives who arrive after she phones for help don't seem legitimate. It's only with Zel's help that she escapes them – to hear on the radio that she's now a wanted fugitive.

Meanwhile, five years ago, William's life raft washes up on a tiny island. Miraculously, he finds that his father, brother and uncle have washed up on the next beach – but Christian isn't with them. A massive search begins, but William starts to realise that his cousin won't be found. He has his own suspicions about what has happened, but his grieving family don't want to listen.

What is the connection between William's story and Tamara's? What is the significance of the note, and why does someone want to kill to keep it secret? Who is Zel? Can he be trusted, or is he a troubled and delusional young man, as the police and the Chisel family seem to think?

Tamara decides she must find out the truth, even if it means putting herself back in danger.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Fleur Ferris spent the first seventeen years of her life growing up on a farm in Patchewollock, north-west Victoria. She then moved twenty times in twenty years.

During this time, Fleur sometimes saw the darker side to life while working for a number of years as a police officer and a paramedic.

She now lives a more settled lifestyle on a rice farm in southern New South Wales, with her husband and three young children.

Fleur's colourful and diverse background has given her unique insight into today's society and an endless pool of experiences to draw from. When she isn't weaving this through young adult fiction, reading or spending time with her family, you will find her with friends, talking about art, books and travel.

Fleur has also published two other thrillers for young adults, *Risk* and *Black*.

Visit Fleur at [fleurferris.com](http://fleurferris.com).

## AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

Fleur says:

I drew inspiration from a number of sources when coming up with the plot for *Wreck*. Whenever I heard of the discovery of a floating note at sea I wondered how long it had been floating for, how far it had travelled, who sent it, were they still alive, what did the note say? Often the discovery of these notes made world news and sometimes the sender, or members of their family, were tracked down.

These stories got me thinking . . . What if the floating note wasn't a wonderful discovery? What if it revealed something sinister? What if the person who found it was unknowingly thrust into danger simply because they had possession of it, simply because they had seen it? What if the note indicated or revealed something someone wanted concealed? For the discoverer, it would be as unfair as it was random and they would be completely blindsided by what was coming.

Instantly, my protagonist, Tamara, came to life in my mind. I knew where she lived, that she was the girl-next-door type of girl, excited by her goals and aspirations and about to move out of home and commence university. But instead of chasing her dreams she is running for her life.

But who is she running from? And why?

The answer to these questions came to me as quickly and as easily as Tamara's character did. The person who wanted her dead was respected, in a position of



power, had access to unlimited resources and was so convincing and well placed that he could influence and manipulate his family, law enforcement agencies and the wider community. This of course disables Tamara, taking away her power and resources and isolating her.

I knew I wanted to criss-cross characters' paths and timelines, and to show how an event that happened in the past can have a vast ripple effect for many years into the future.

But, although the characters and main idea for the plot came easily, the rest happened on the keys and sometimes I didn't know what was going to happen until I had written it. This made *Wreck* a thrilling, fast-paced story to write.

## WRITING WRECK

Fleur says:

The story of *Wreck* is told from two points of view, over two different timelines – Tamara (18) now and William (15) five years ago. When I first started writing *Wreck* I jumped from Tamara's voice to William's voice as the reader would read the story.

However, I soon found that the voices started to sound the same so I had to change my approach. In the end I wrote two separate thriller stories and then cut and pasted the stories together so the reader received the right information at the right time so the story would not only make sense, but create tension and to have the biggest impact.

For *Wreck* to work as a fast-paced thriller, language and writing style were also a consideration. *Wreck* uses simple language, an economy of words and description, and short punchy sentences, particularly in the pacier action scenes. This style comes naturally to me and while I'm writing the first draft, language and pace isn't something I am conscious of. Scenes play out in my mind and I write what I see. If I haven't got the pacing quite right in the first draft, my editor and I pick this up and amend it in the editing process.

## THEMES

- Truth – what is the truth and what does it mean to different people?
- Loss and grief – coping with the loss of a loved one and finding closure
- Power and corruption – whether people can own the news; the influence of powerful individuals and celebrity in the media
- Journalism and the media – objectivity in journalism and reporting the truth
- Domestic abuse and violence
- Friendship – emotional support and helping close friends who are experiencing difficult times
- Crime and murder – covering up past mistakes; finding evidence; seeking justice
- Strangers and trust
- Accidents
- Actions and consequences
- Point of view

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

### Truth

- What does *truth without fear* mean to you?
- What does living truthfully mean?
- When and why do people conceal the truth in their day-to-day life?
- Can the truth ever be erased?
- Tamara doesn't trust her captor at first, but over a number of hours he convinces her that he is 'good' and trying to help her. Then something is revealed (on page 156) that makes her question everything she thinks she knows about him and she no longer knows if her captor was telling the truth. List five examples you have seen in the news, movies or books where someone has deceived another about their intentions or identity. What was their ulterior motive for doing so?

### Friends, strangers and trust

- When meeting people for the first time, when should or shouldn't we be 'on guard'? Why?
- Tamara had her life all planned out, but for reasons out of her control, her plans changed. If your life unexpectedly changed what would you do? Who would you turn to? What resources do you have in your community who can help during times of change or crisis?

### Journalism and the media

- What responsibility does the media have in regards to reporting the truth?
- News is often seen to be sensationalised, presumably to sell more papers, to gain more viewers by TV networks, or to increase click-through rates on websites. Is there a place in our society for news to be entertainment? Or should the news only be a factual recording of history as it happens?



- What strategies can we use as consumers of media and news to ensure that we are reading a true account? Consider such critical thinking strategies as fact checking, corroborating facts with other sources, seeking evidence, checking that sources of information cited are reliable and accurate, and choosing trustworthy news sources. Choose a recent news article and apply these tests.

### Power, influence and corruption

- When Tamara thinks she has worked out who is chasing her she asks herself, 'How do I fight power and corruption? What disarms power?' (page 92) In what ways can the less powerful fight against those more powerful if they suspect corruption or are under threat?
- List five members/organisations in your community who have the power to influence others. Do you trust these people/organisations? What makes them trustworthy/untrustworthy?
- Discuss or debate the saying 'absolute power corrupts absolutely'. Does gaining power always lead to corruption? Why/why not? What safeguards does our society put in place to stop corruption of those in power?
- What influence do the owners of media outlets have over what we see, hear or read? Can you think of any examples where bias has occurred?

### Domestic abuse and violence

- It is not uncommon for brothers to fight or be rough with each other, but when does this become domestic violence?
- William received regular and ongoing abuse from his older brother Knox and kept this secret. Why didn't William tell his parents? Could William have done something to make it stop? If so, what?
- List different types of abuse. Who in our community can help victims of ongoing abuse?

### Point of view

- The story of *Wreck* is told through first-person point of view from two characters. How important is point of view when writing a story?
- What problems does the writer face when using first-person point of view? How can a writer get around these problems?
- Why did Fleur choose first-person point of view in writing *Wreck*? Experiment with writing a chapter from a different point of view.
- The story of *Wreck* is told through first-person point of view from two characters. Have a go at writing a story with split perspective. Discuss any difficulties you encounter making the story work.

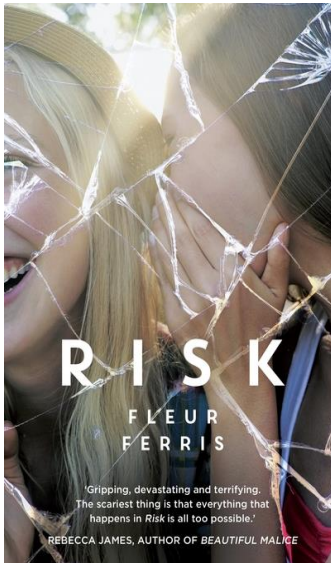
### Accidents

- Life changes constantly, both expectedly and unexpectedly. List five changes (major or minor) that expectedly occurred in your life in the last year. List five changes (major or minor) that unexpectedly occurred in the last year.





## FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA



*Risk*  
by Fleur Ferris

Taylor and Sierra have been best friends for their whole lives. But Taylor's fed up. Why does Sierra always get what – and who – she wants? From kissing Taylor's crush to stealing the guy they both met online for herself, Sierra doesn't seem to notice when she hurts her friends.

So when Sierra says Jacob Jones is the one and asks her friends to cover for her while she goes to meet him for the first time, Taylor rolls her eyes.

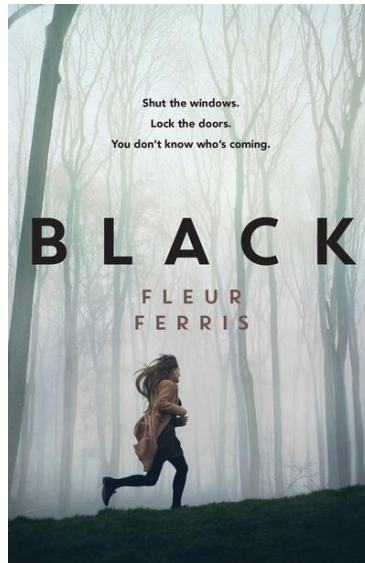
But Sierra doesn't come back when she said she would. One day. Two days. Three . . .

What if Taylor's worrying for nothing? What if Sierra's just being Sierra, forgetting about everyone else to spend time with her new guy?

When Taylor finally tells Sierra's mum that her daughter is missing, Taylor and her friends are thrown into a dark world they never even knew existed.

Can Taylor find Sierra's abductor in time? Or should she be looking for a killer?

[Teachers' resources available.](#)



*Black*  
by Fleur Ferris

Ebony Marshall is in her final year of high school. Five months, two weeks and four days . . . She can't wait to leave the town where she's known only as 'Black'. Because of her name, of course. But for another reason, too.

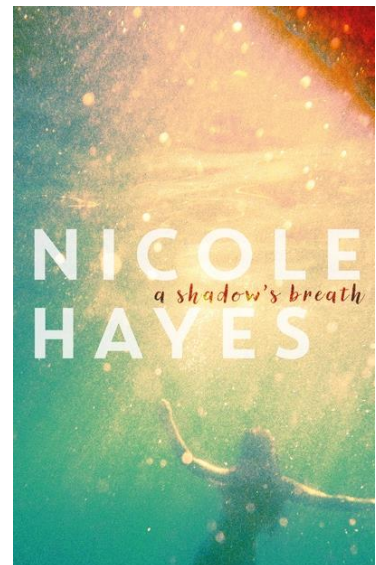
Everyone says Black Marshall is cursed.

Three of her best friends have died in tragic accidents. After Oscar, the whispers started. Now she's used to being on her own. It's easier that way.

But when her date for the formal ends up in intensive care, something in quiet little Dainsfield starts to stir. Old secrets are revealed and terrifying new dangers emerge.

If only Black could put all the pieces together, she could work out who her real enemies are. Should she run for her life, or stay and fight?

[Teachers' resources available.](#)



*A Shadow's Breath*  
by Nicole Hayes

Then, things were looking up for Tessa. Her mum was finally getting back on track. Tessa had started seeing Nick. She was making new friends. She'd even begun to paint again.

Now, Tessa and Nick are trapped in the car after a corner taken too fast. Injured, stranded in the wilderness, at the mercy of the elements, the question becomes one of survival. But Tessa isn't sure if she wants to be found. Not after what she saw. Not after what she remembered.

[Teachers' resources available.](#)





## ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
Wreck	Fleur Ferris	9780143784319	7+	\$19.99		
Black	Fleur Ferris	9781925324976	7+	\$19.99		
Risk	Fleur Ferris	9780857986474	7+	\$19.99		
A Shadow's Breath	Nicole Hayes	9780143781097	8+	\$19.99		
<b>TOTAL</b>						

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