



TEACHERS' RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Upper primary and secondary
(ages 10+)

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KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English
- **General capabilities:** Intercultural Understanding; Ethical Understanding; Literacy; Critical and Creative Thinking

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- Develop critical and creative thinking
- Analyse how language and writing evoke mood, tone, tension and characterisation
- Encourage creative and imaginative writing
- Explore different modes of storytelling, recognising that ideas in literary texts can be conveyed from different viewpoints, which can lead to different kinds of interpretations and responses
- Understand how authors often innovate on text structures and play with language features to achieve particular aesthetic, humorous and persuasive purposes and effects
- Understand, interpret and experiment with sound devices and imagery, including simile, metaphor and personification, in narratives
- Show how ideas and points of view in texts are conveyed through the use of vocabulary, including idiomatic expressions, objective and subjective language, and that these can change according to context
- Identify the relationship between words, sounds, imagery and language patterns in narratives
- Identify aspects of literary texts that convey details or information about particular social, cultural and historical contexts

THEMES

- Family
- Friendship
- Identity
- Gender
- Class
- Crossing between worlds
- The environment and sustainability
- Time

PREPARED BY

Penguin Random House Australia © Penguin
Random House Australia 2022

PUBLICATION DETAILS

When Days Tilt ISBN 9781760895037 (pb)
9781760147563 (ebook); When Souls Tear
ISBN 9781760895044 pb 9781760147570 ebook

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When Days Tilt

Time Catchers Book 1

When Souls Tear

Time Catchers Book 2

Karen Ginnane

PLOT SUMMARY

When Days Tilt

It's 1858, and there are two queens on the throne. Victoria reigns over London, the biggest city the world has ever known. And in the shadow city of Donlon, another queen, the Green Witch, rules over her own domain – time.

London is in turmoil. A blazing comet is searing the sky and people are disappearing all over the city, returning with empty eyes and torn souls. When fourteen-year-old Ava is thrust into the dark world of Donlon, she must discover the truth about her own life and those she loves, as well as fight to protect the future of both worlds . . .

When Souls Tear

It's 1858, Ava is back in London and time snatchers are still at large. With Jack in London, and her father and Phoebe suffering the effects of being torn, will Ava's developing powers be enough to fight a new foe – one with terrifying, destructive abilities and ambitions of absolute power?

Magic, mystery and darkness – a gripping fantasy adventure series for lovers of Phillip Pullman's *Northern Lights*.

Visit penguin.com.au/teachers to find out how our fantastic Penguin Random House Australia books can be used in the classroom, sign up to the teachers' newsletter and follow us on [@penguinteachers](https://twitter.com/penguinteachers).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Karen Ginnane is an Australian author for middle grade and young adult readers. Her debut historical fantasy adventure novels *When Days Tilt* and its sequel *When Souls Tear* are part of the Time Catchers series published by Penguin Random House.



Karen has been variously employed as a freelance copywriter, a marketing director for Paramount Pictures in London, a grain weighbridge operator in rural WA, a swimming teacher, a life model, a deckhand in Chile and an English teacher in Japan. She's also taught creative writing, published short stories and in 2020 received an Invited Residency to Varuna National Writers' House for *When Souls Tear*. Karen runs a tour operator business with her husband, who is a Londoner, and lives in Melbourne with him and their two children. And two cats.

AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

Karen says:

London was the first character in this series. When I first went there as a young Australian (born in a new city plonked on top of ancient Country), London was the first old city I'd ever lived in. I had a strong sense of city and land intertwining – as if they had grown into each other, rather than one sitting slightly uncomfortably on top of the other. Parts of it are sunk so deep into itself that nothing can change it – no town planning, no gentrification, no number of trendy cafes or bars. London is no longer coal-stained and even the most mean and pinched terraces now command banker salaries – but still. Still.

An uneasy wind still shrills over Blackheath, once dreaded for its murders, no matter how pretty its glossy village. Pause near the Greenwich Observatory and look down over the Thames and hear the ghosts murmur. Wander the docklands and feel the shiver from the old brick warehouses, and the cemeteries. Go to mossy Nunhead Cemetery, with its gothic, tumbled angels swallowed by greedy green growth, and feel yourself being watched.

And the Thames! Go down at low tide and poke around with the mudlarkers and you'll find clay pipes from Shakespeare's time and oyster shells from Victorian meals. Bits of ceramic and iron, luminescent old glass, maybe a Roman coin. It's all down there, bumping around together. Like London always has.

I would walk the streets and feel layers of stories beneath my feet – millions upon millions of stories over hundreds upon hundreds of years. I had a sense that the city watched us, like characters sitting a little off to the side; sometimes bored by the tiny, short-lived lives scuttering along, sometimes throwing out a snarky comment, sometimes a ribald joke; other times watching silently with all-seeing compassion.

And there wasn't just one London, but multitudes. Different corners of the city felt as if you'd stepped into another world. Gleaming expensive homes sat cheek by jowl with council housing and scruffy high streets. Royal parks filled with spreading trees, lakes and deer edging onto traffic-and-bike-filled roads, built by the Romans. Areas that looked, smelt and sounded like another pocket of the world, far away. Londoners have always been thrust upon each other and have always been a diverse crowd.

Once I decided to put this story into Victorian London, it really came to life. Victoria's reign is quite probably the most documented period of English history. We peer back at it through the prism of Dickens's well-loved stories and because of this it feels nostalgic – grim, sooty and familiar.

Or was it? Surely living through that period would have felt more like *Blade Runner*? Being in Victorian London *at the time* would have felt dizzyingly fast, futuristic, breath-taking, dystopian and unbelievable. This was the idea that really grabbed me about Victorian London. The world had never changed so fast, ever, and London was at the forefront of that. New, world-tilting ideas were emerging (like Wallace's and Darwin's theories of evolution) and magic and mysticism held sway alongside science and technology. Respectable people of science also believed in the occult. It's not surprising that this book interweaves solid history with frenetic energy, magic and strangeness.

I dreamed up the magic in the book over time. Sometimes it felt like discovery, rather than invention, as if Donlon's places and beings were deciding to reveal themselves piece by piece. I had an image of a room full of brightly dressed seamstresses sewing intently through day and night long before I knew about the Needlies. Malaikah and his 'code-poems' simply emerged one day and just felt right. As a side note, I have always loved Anglo-Saxon kennings – those vivid, two-word phrases used in the place of a one-word noun, such as 'whale-road' for sea and 'bone-house' for body. They are direct and yet also startling, tilting your perception slightly. This old poetry found its way into Malaikah's dialect.

The Time Catchers books are historical fantasy adventures, but they also explore some big ideas;



time and how we use it, truth-finding (both within yourself and in the world around you), the importance of found family, social and gender stereotypes, class and privilege, and alternative ways of powering the world (Donlon's electricity comes from sun, wind and water and there is no internal combustion engine). It does all this from the viewpoint of a young girl and a damaged boy, neither of them privileged, neither of them with a voice at that time. You can use history (and also fantasy) to talk about very real and contemporary concerns.

London is still a place where every type of person rubs up together. Rich enclaves nestle cheek by jowl with council housing and scrappy public areas. It has an energy, a sense of anything being possible. This city has always been a place of comings and goings, with people of all races and backgrounds making it home. The melting pot of London is where stories and characters come together, and spill over into new stories.

The Time Catchers books are one such set of stories. I hope you enjoy reading them.

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. Examine the book covers. What are the images on the covers?
2. What feeling or mood do these images inspire?
3. What do you think the front covers might reveal about each story? Read the back cover blurbs to find out a little more.

KEY STUDY TOPICS

CHARACTERISATION, WRITING STYLE, LANGUAGE AND STRUCTURE

- In all novels, the protagonist has to change, to learn something over the course of the story. How does Ava change over the course of these two novels? What and who have made these big changes happen?
- These novels shift timeframes, settings and characters as the narrative unfolds. Discuss why an author might choose to use these shifts and the impact it has on the reader. How does the author play with text structure while still maintaining the overall elements of narrative text that we are familiar with?
- Consider various language aspects of the text. For example, look at page 4 of *When Days Tilt*, and determine what the occupation of the character may be based on the words in the

text. Look at the words in context to help determine a possible meaning (balance wheel, hairspring, eyeglass, sockets etc), as well as other words such as snickerty which you may be unfamiliar with.

- The language spoken by Malaikah is unique and the author has spoken about her inspirations for this. Examine why the author has chosen to invent a language for Malaikah, focusing on the impact it may have been intended to have on the reader, as well as how it develops the character and enriches the gap between the two timeframes.
- Explore the period-specific vocabulary and research explanations that assist the reader to better interpret parts of the text. Eg 'flotilla of fashionable crinolines'.
- Discuss the idea of the 'hero's journey' in the light of archetypal characters and story structure discussed in the work of Joseph Campbell, and examine how Ava and Jack's journey fits (or doesn't fit) these archetypes.

Activities

- Focus on one small section of text from *When Days Tilt* or *When Souls Tear* – just a paragraph or two – and unpack all the meaning hidden within the section of text. This includes analysis of vocabulary, sentence structure, inferences and so on.
- Describe a main character physically and their personality (for an intense 5 minutes) then re-write changing one or more of; gender, age, ethnicity, social group.

THEMES

Gender stereotypes and expectations

- Explore the cultural aspects of women's role in society during the time period in London in which these stories are set and why Ava was perceived as odd or different within her peer group. What were traditional versus modern roles in society? In Victorian England – how did these vary according to age, gender and social status? What were the gender stereotypes and how does Ava (and in some ways Jack) not fit them?
- For example, on p.101 of *When Days Tilt*– why did Ava feel the need to modify her behaviour in the presence of the Beadle?

Family

- Look at the role of women within the family unit during the time period and describe how Ava



diverges from what was common / expected during that time.

- Examine the role parents and foster parents play in these novels – find other novels or films with positive foster parent characters and compare and contrast. Compare Ava's four different parents.
- Think about the meaning of 'family.' What is a family? Discuss different representations of family.

The environment and human impact on it; sustainability

- Compare London's stink with Donlon's apparent utopia (environmentally at least).
- Contrast the technologies available in each place and explain why some of these are sustainable and environmentally friendly and others are not.

Class or socio-economic status and prejudice

- Research what social class meant in Victorian England. How was it different to material wealth?
- Discuss Ava's visit to Burlington Arcade in *When Day's Tilt*.
- Also, examine Phoebe's character and her background and character, and arc across the books.

Crossing between worlds

- As a creative writing exercise, imagine another sister city to the London of the Time Catchers books, or to another city, such as the city you live in. Write an introduction and description of a few paragraphs to this imagined world. Draw a street scene from each place.
- There are so many ways this idea of crossing between worlds can be found in fantasy fiction. Write a list of other books you have read that use this device. Compare and contrast the Time Catchers parallel cities with the parallel universes described in Diagon Alley from the Harry Potter series, for example, or the Chronicles of Narnia and/or the Marvel films *Dr Strange: Multiverse of Madness* and *Spiderman: No Way Home*. And for an Australian take on this, compare with *Playing Beatie Bow*.
- For more about parallel universes in fiction, read this article:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parallel_universes_in_fiction#Fantasy_multiverses

Identity and connection

- Identity and self-discovery are strong themes in *When Days Tilt*. Ava has to find the truth about her own story and who she is, and how that is different from what she has grown up believing.
- This theme is expanded in *When Souls Tear* with the importance of connecting with people around you to realise your greatest strength. Ava cannot achieve her true potential alone, without the support of those she loves and who care for her.
- Discuss the importance of knowing your own story and the value of community and friends in helping you become the best person you can be. How does the author communicate these themes in the books? Can you find examples in dialogue, character development or how the story events unfold?
- Ava has many different relationships in these books and none of them are straightforward. She struggles with learning who she is and who she can trust in the world.
 - Think about what Ava learns about herself during the course of the books, both as a person in the world and also internally. What changes?
 - Think about Ava's relationships with other characters, what the conflicts are and how these relationships develop and change during the books. What do these relationships reveal about Ava? How do they influence her own narrative arc? What are the problems in her relationships and how does she solve these – or not?
 - In particular, consider:
 - Ava and the Lady
 - Ava and Jade
 - Ava and Jack
 - Ava and Phoebe
 - Ava and Violet
 - Ava and Bill

Historical aspects

- The historical setting of the books is accurately depicted and carefully researched. What details has the author chosen from the real, historical world to immerse the reader in Victorian London? How has the author used real world historical events to inspire both the story and the imaginary world?



- For example, in 1858 Donati's Comet inspired both wonder and superstition, as well as being the first comet ever to be photographed. Consider that this was the year before Charles Darwin published his 'Origin of Species,' which presented the theory of evolution and was very controversial in a strongly Church-going society like London. How do the commonly accepted beliefs and attitudes of a period affect how people behave and their attitudes?
- Ava's attitudes are typical of a young Victorian lady. How do these contrast with the attitudes of Donlon, which are quite different? How do both of these contrast with our own society?
- These books are historical fantasy. Does this mean that the themes they examine and the concerns of the characters aren't relevant to modern day audiences? Discuss whether fantasy and history can be used effectively to examine real-life modern-day issues.

Classroom activities

- 'Where were you when...?' Choose a recent historical event and write about what you remember when it took place. How it made you feel, the effects of the event, how people talked about it, how it was reported? What changed because of the event?
- 'I remember.' Do a fast freewriting exercise around this prompt to examine your own personal history and family memories. Let your mind and memory go where it wants to. How has your own history shaped you?

Time

- Time is both theme and plot in this book. One simple definition of plot is the series of events that make up the story, while a theme is a central message or truth within the story. Discuss how time is handled as part of the plot and its significance as a theme.

Consider:

- Ideas around time as a concept. What is time? What are the differences in the way time works in the story and the way it works in our world?
- Each character has to learn how to best fill their unique time upon this earth. How does this connect with the theme of identity?
- As an exercise, write for five minutes about how you would use a time bubble.

CHAPTER QUESTIONS

When Days Tilt

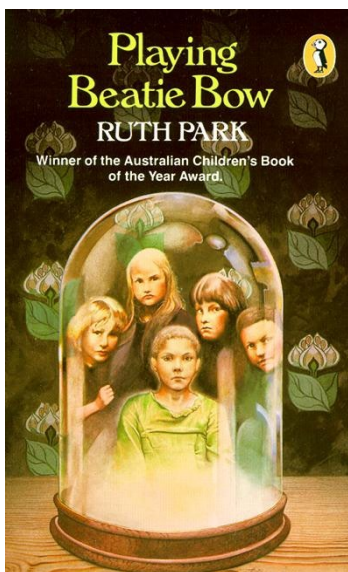
- Prologue – What purpose does the prologue serve?
- Chapter 1 – What does Ava Bailey want? What does she *not* want?
- Chapter 2: What impression does this chapter give you of Jack and of Donlon?
- How does Chapter 10 use both real historical detail and the author's imagination around time?
- How does Chapter 12 highlight differences in social status in London at this time?
- Discuss the plot turning point in Chapter 21. Did you see it coming? How does it change Ava's world?
- Chapter 27: What makes Hammer such a natural and respected leader for the people of Donlon?

When Souls Tear

- Prologue – What purpose does the prologue serve?
- There is a seemingly inconsequential detail in Chapter 7 that foreshadows events in the climax. We get a glimpse of this in Chapter 37. Once you've read the book, go back and see if you spot this connection and what it reveals about the story not on the page. (Hint: It involves Thorn and Jade.)
- Discuss the relationships and different family groups represented in Chapter 38.
- In the epilogue Phoebe says, 'The population is very accepting of impossibilities these days. It is most convenient.' What does she mean? How does this refer to the historical context as well as talking about time snatching?
- What purpose does the epilogue form? Why did the author write an epilogue, rather than another chapter?



FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA

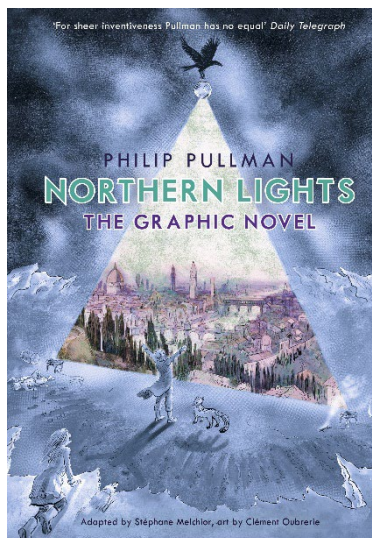


Playing Beatie Bow
by Ruth Park

Why this story? A thrilling adventure story for children and young adults by Park Ruth, *Playing Beatie Bow* follows Abigail as she suddenly finds herself in the Sydney of a hundred years ago as the result of a frightening game.

The game is called Beatie Bow and the children play it for the thrill of scaring themselves. But when Abigail is drawn in, the game is quickly transformed into an extraordinary, sometimes horrifying, adventure as she finds herself transported to a place that is foreign yet strangely familiar . . .

[Teachers' resources available.](#)



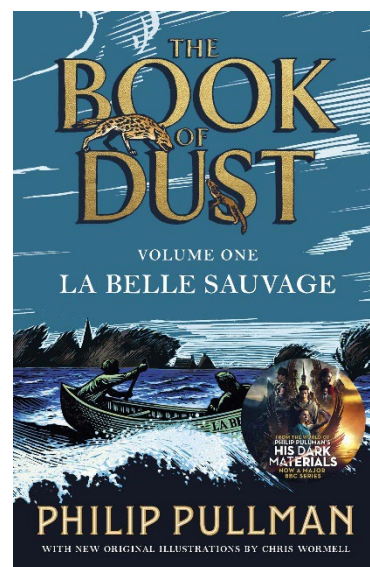
Northern Lights: The Graphic Novel
by Philip Pullman & Clément Oubrerie

Why this story? This is the stunning graphic novel adaptation of *Northern Lights*, part of the His Dark Materials trilogy.

Follow Lyra's story in a way you've never experienced it before, as the arrival of her fearsome uncle, Lord Asriel, draws her to the heart of a terrible struggle - a struggle born of Gobblers and stolen children, witch clans and armoured bears.

Lyra hurtles toward danger in the cold far North, never suspecting the shocking truth, that she alone is destined to win, or to lose, this more-than-mortal battle.

This edition combines all three illustrated volumes of the story, now available for the very first time in hardback.



La Belle Sauvage: The Book of Dust Volume One
by Philip Pullman

Why this story? Philip Pullman returns to the world of His Dark Materials with this magnificent first volume of *The Book of Dust* - a coming of age story like no other . . .

Malcolm Polstead's Oxford life has been one of routine, ordinary even. He is happiest playing with his daemon, Asta, in their canoe, La Belle Sauvage. But now as the rain builds, the world around Malcolm and Asta is, it seems, set to become increasingly far from ordinary.

Finding himself linked to a baby by the name of Lyra Belacqua, Malcolm is forced to undertake the challenge of his life and to make a dangerous journey that will change him and Lyra for ever . . .

ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
When Souls Tear	Karen Ginnane	9781760895037	5+	\$16.99		
When Days Tilt	Karen Ginnane	9781760895044	5+	\$16.99		
Playing Beatie Bow	Ruth Park	9780140314601	4+	\$16.99		
Northern Lights: The Graphic Novel	Philip Pullman	9780857535429	6+	\$45.00		
La Belle Sauvage: The Book of Dust Volume One	Philip Pullman	9780241365854	6+	\$19.99		
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