



Brockwell the Brave Teachers' Notes

Written by Jenny Woolsey



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About the Story

Twelve-year-old Viking, Brockwell Ness, lives on a dragon farm in the village of Enga. His farm raises dragons from eggs, to provide the transport around the village. Brockwell loves the babies but is scared of the adults. He would much prefer to be at the healing hut helping out, than at home doing his chores. Brockwell also enjoys going to the markets for his mother. This is seen as 'women's work' and the village bully, Colden picks on him for this. Brockwell is a disappointment to his father, and Mr Ness tells Brockwell that Ingrid, Brockwell's best friend, is more of a son to him, than Brockwell is. This deeply hurts Brockwell as Ingrid is a girl. When Mr Ness does not come back from a mission to capture an injured dragon, Brockwell makes a decision which will change his and his father's lives.

About the Author



Jenny Woolsey is a writer and blogger, teacher, youth worker and advocate for people with facial differences, mental illness and disabilities. She has a Master of Education (Honours), a Certificate IV in Youth Work and a Certificate in Creative Writing.

Home is in the north of Brisbane, in Queensland, Australia, with her husband, three magnificent children, three spirited cats and her cute fluffy dog.

Jenny started writing stories when she was little. As a teenager, poetry was her favourite genre. In 2013 Jenny left the classroom and started writing children's novels. Her theme is *Difference and Diversity*.

Jenny writes to help children and teens who feel different, shy, anxious, or don't fit in. She understands as she was all of those growing up!

Jenny's message is:

You are good enough – in fact you are more than that – you are perfect just the way you are!

*Remember, no matter what you look like or feel like,
you are valuable and can achieve great things in life!*

It's okay to be different!

You can find Jenny in many places:

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Twitter: @Jenny_Woolsey

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/jennyw67>

Why Jenny Wrote Brockwell the Brave:

Jenny was born in the 1960s in Brisbane. When she entered the world, everyone knew instantly that there was something wrong with her. Her eyes were bulgy, like froggy eyes, and her skull was small. There was a flurry of movement and doctors were called. The baby – Jenny, was diagnosed as having a rare craniofacial syndrome, known as Crouzon syndrome. It meant that her life, and the life of her family, would not be like other people's.

Being different in a world where difference wasn't tolerated very well was hard for Jenny. She was stared at, comments were made about her and she was shunned. At school, she was verbally and physically bullied. Her brothers would get into scraps trying to protect her from other mean children. It was difficult for the whole family.

Jenny needed life-saving surgeries and reconstructive plastic surgeries. She became visually impaired due to complications in one of these operations, and would never be able to drive.

Jenny had an inner determination to succeed. She went to university and studied to be a primary teacher. It was during her career as a teacher, that Jenny had the privilege of spending time with boys who did not fit the typical description of what constitutes a male. She taught boys who were gentle, liked to play with My Little Ponies, who hung with the girls because they identified with them more than with the rough and tumble boys and grew their hair long. Jenny then gave birth to a son, who as he grew, was one of these boys as well.

Her son liked to wear girls' clothes and dress-ups, he liked dolls and other 'girl gender' toys, he grew his hair long, he liked playing with other girls and his best friends were girls. Her son identified though as a boy. As Jenny's son became a teenager, she noticed more boys around his age who were similar.

This is where the idea came from, for Brockwell the Brave.

In the story Jenny also uses the concept of a strong girl. Often females are portrayed as meek, mild and weak in stories, particularly fairy tales. In the story, Brockwell's best friend Ingrid, holds her own. She could be a female warrior.

The issue of gender roles and gender stereotypes is a strong theme in Brockwell the Brave.

Study Notes for Teachers

Discussion Questions:

1. From reading the blurb on the back cover, what do you think the story is about?
2. Do the pictures on the front and back covers give you any more clues?
3. As you read the story, you will hear some Icelandic language. This is the closest modern day language to Old Norse which the Vikings spoke in Scandinavia. On page 132 there is a glossary of terms.
4. Where in the world is Scandinavia?
5. Are dragons real? What genre would this book be?
6. This story is a fantasy but it is set in Viking times. The town of Enga is fictitious, but the clothing, the food, the houses, the village and other information about the Vikings are based on facts.

CHAPTER ONE - THREE:

- Describe Brockwell.
- Describe Ingrid.
- Describe Mr Ness.
- In chapter three, the Viking rule about inheritance is talked about. What do you think about this? Do you think it's fair? What other cultures have this rule?
- If you could own a dragon, what would it look like? Draw your dragon and write a description to match.

CHAPTER FOUR - SIX

- The carrots that the Vikings ate were white – why do you think they weren't orange?
- Research the food the Vikings ate.
- Research the clothing the Vikings wore.
- Describe Colden.
- Why do you think Colden is a bully?
- On page 21 Brockwell says that his name means 'strong champion'. What does your name mean?
- Brockwell talks about the dragon he thinks he would be if he was one. He said he would be a quiet one, like White-wings. Draw the dragon you would be and describe why you have drawn yourself that way.

- Brockwell scratches his head when he is stressed. Do you have a nervous habit?
- Why is Brockwell scared of the bigger dragons?
- How do you think Brockwell felt when his father told him that Ingrid would make a better son, than he would?
- Why did Mr Ness say this to Brockwell? Do you think what Mr Ness said was correct? Why or why not?

CHAPTER SEVEN - NINE

- What types of meals did the Vikings eat?
- How did the Vikings cook their food?
- What is a weaving loom? What would Brockwell's mother make with one?
- What was a longhouse?
- Would you have liked to live in a longhouse? Why or why not?
- How is your life different to the life of a child Viking?
- What type of toys did the Viking children play with?
- Do you have chores? What are they?
- Why did Brockwell change his mind about going with his father?
- Do you have any fears? How do you deal with them?
- What was Mrs Gulbrand's advice?
- Who is Brockwell like? Are you like one of your relatives?
- Draw a family tree.
- Why do you think Brockwell said he was scared of his father?
- What is a stoat?
- What is a horn cup?

CHAPTER TEN - TWELVE

- How did the Vikings tell the time? Make a sun dial.
- What was Gosta's predicament? Would you have made the same decision? Why or why not?
- Why do you think Ingrid is trying to make fun of Brockwell falling in the creek?
- Would you have given up and gone home after nearly drowning?
- Why do you think Brockwell kept going even though he was hurt?

CHAPTER THIRTEEN – FIFTEEN

- Draw a map of Brockwell's journey. Label on your map where he encountered difficulties.
- List some strategies for dealing with a bully.
- When Brockwell holds the tooth and says, 'Tooth help me,' what happens?
- Where do you think Mr Ness is?
- What do you think has happened to him?
- How do you think they will get the boulder off Mr Ness?

CHAPTER SIXTEEN - EIGHTEEN

- What would you do if you were Brockwell? Ingrid? Gosta? Why?
- Where do you think the boulder came from?
- How is the knowledge Brockwell gained at the healing hut coming in handy now?
- What were the dragons used for in the village?
- Why would a dragon be an effective form of transport? Pros
- What would be the cons for having dragons for transport?
- Why do you think Big Tore gave Brockwell a quizzical look when Brockwell told him to tell his mother where he was?
- How would you tame a dragon?
- Do you think it was right that Brockwell took the dragon's egg? Why or why not?

CHAPTER NINETEEN – TWENTY-ONE

- Design a sturdy bridge for crossing the creek.
- Why do you think Mrs Ness found it hard to believe what Brockwell was telling her in the healing hut?
- Why do you think Brockwell said that he was no longer scared of the dragons?
- What animals do you know of where the males are colourful and the females plain coloured? Are there any animals the opposite like the dragons were?
- What does 'alpha of the clan' mean?
- Do you think the tooth had the power? Why or why not?

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO – TWENTY-FOUR

- What were messenger ravens?
- What do you think Brockwell's final fear to overcome will be?
- What did the story tell us about why Colden was bullying Brockwell?
- Why do you think Brockwell invited Colden to his farm after Colden had spent a long time picking on him? If someone was picking on you, could you become friends?
- Why do you think the Gulbrands were going to receive a cow as a gift?
- Do you have a lucky charm or a special charm that helps when you are nervous?
- What is a folktale?
- Have you ever been scared of something, and over time that fear has gone? How did you overcome it?
- What types of jobs did Vikings do?
- How did Colden treat Brockwell at the end of the story?
- In many cultures, there are ceremonies when boys become men. Research some.

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

- How did Brockwell change over the novel? What was her character arc?
- How did Mr Ness change over the novel? What was his character arc?

- How did Colden change over the novel? What was his character arc?
- What was the turning point in the story?

PERSONAL QUESTIONS:

- What was your favourite part of the novel?
- What was your least favourite part of the novel?
- Could you identify with any of the characters?
- Do you know any people who are like the characters in the novel?
- How did you feel about Brockwell?
- Did you learn anything from his journey?



English

CREATING TEXTS:

- Persuasive Text
- Descriptions
- Recount of an event
- Narratives
- Procedures
- Information Report on Vikings or another culture
- Book reviews
- Writing from different points of view
- Use a range of software including word processing programs with fluency to construct, edit and publish written text, and select, edit and place visual, print and audio elements (multimodal texts).

INTERPRETING, ANALYSING, EVALUATING:

- Literal meaning questions – What do the words say?
- Inferential meaning questions – What does the message mean?
- Personal meaning questions – What do I think about it?
- What is the main idea of the story?
- Are there supporting details?
- Describe the story with Who, What, Where, When, Why and How
 - Where does the story take place?
 - Who is the main character?
 - What was the problem?
 - What happened?
 - When did things take place?
 - What is the outcome?

- How did Issy feel?
- Why did things turn out the way they did?
- What are the themes of the story?
- Discuss posing and discussing questions, such as 'Should this character have behaved as they did?', and begin to make balanced judgments about the dilemmas characters face and relative merit and harm.
- Talk about Point of View.
- Write the story from Mr Ness's, Ingrid's or Colden's point of view.
- Examine the author's description of a character's appearance, behaviour and speech and note how the character's development is evident through his or her dialogue and changing relationships and the reactions of other characters to him or her.
- Recognise the influence our different historical, social and cultural experiences may have on the meaning we make from the text and the attitudes we may develop towards characters, actions and events.
- Identify pivotal points in the plot where characters are faced with choices and comment on how the author makes us care about their decisions and consequences.
- Statement: Fact or Opinion
- Mental imagery
- Similes and Metaphors
- Onomatopoeia
- Story Map/Sequencing of story events
- Semantic Web
- Identifying facts about Vikings
- Make links between Brockwell's experiences and the students' own lives/experiences.
- Make inferences about the characters' feelings.

LITERATURE:

- Comment on how authors have established setting and period in different cultures and times and the relevance of characters, actions and beliefs to their own time.
- Draw upon literary texts students have encountered and experiment with changing particular aspects, for example the time or place of the setting, adding characters or changing their personalities, or offering an alternative point of view on key ideas.
- Collaboratively plan, compose, sequence and prepare a literary text along a familiar storyline, using film, sound and images to convey setting, characters and points of drama in the plot.
- Explore two or more texts by the same author, drawing out the similarities, for example subject or theme, characterisation, text structure, plot development, tone, vocabulary, sense of voice, narrative point of view, favoured grammatical structures and visual techniques in sophisticated picture books.

Health & Physical Education

- Food and Nutrition
- Health Benefits of Physical Activity
- Relationships and sexuality
- Safety

GENERAL:

- Bullying
- Being different
- Self-identity
- Resilience
- Male/female stereotypes
- Bush skills

Design and Technologies and Digital Technologies

- Explore, play with and test materials for their appropriateness, for example materials for a new style of bridge.
- Identify and explore properties and construction relationships of an engineered product or system, for example a structure that floats; a bridge to carry a load.
- Recognise the benefits food technologies provide for health and food safety and ensure that a wide variety of food is available and can be prepared for healthy eating.
- Examine models to identify how forces and materials are used in the design of a toy.
- Investigate the suitability of technologies – materials, systems, components, tools and equipment – when designing and making a product, service or environment, for example a toy for a young child, a composting system for household waste management, raised garden beds for improved access, weaving nets, bags or baskets.
- Sequence the process of converting ‘on-farm’ food or fibre products into a product suitable for retail sale, that is, the ‘paddock to plate’ supply chain, or when making yarn or fabric from fibre.
- Consider traditional and contemporary methods of food preparation used in a variety of cultures, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander methods.
- Represent and communicate design ideas using modelling and drawing standards including the use of digital technologies, for example scale; symbols and codes in diagrams; pictorial maps and aerial views using web mapping service applications.
- Investigate traditional and contemporary design and technologies, including from Asia, and predicting how they might change in the future in response to factors such as social change and the need for more sustainable patterns of living.

The Arts - Visual Arts

- Storyboard and film a short sequence showing a conflict, selecting camera angles, lighting and costume to convey meaning without dialogue.
- Explore genres such as narrative, non-narrative, experimental and documentary and making a trailer in a similar style.
- Practise drawing images and making objects related to self, others and personal environments in different forms, for example, painting, sculpture, photography, weaving.



See www.jennywoolsey.com for free activity sheets