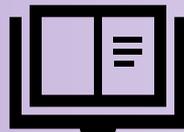


Ride High Pineapple Teachers' Notes

Written by Jenny Woolsey



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About the Story

The school year has just started for thirteen-year-old, Isabella Burgess. She's back at Pinnaroo High, now in Year Nine. The human problem she hoped would go away over the summer, has returned. Her name - Tia. Issy calls her The Beast for short. The Beast greets Issy each day with 'Hey Poppy Eyes', 'Hey Flatface', and other cruel taunts, making fun of her facial difference. All of Issy's attempts to stop The Beast fail and the bullying escalates. The Beast is not the only problem that Issy is dealing with. Like a typical teenager, friendship ups and downs with her best friend Tilly terrorise her. A crush on the cutest boy in the class, Tim, steals her heart. And she battles severe anxiety which controls her brain and body. Issy must find a way to overcome all of her problems and gain control over her life, before she loses her mind. Her passion for skateboarding and the analogy of a pineapple may just provide the answers she needs.

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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<http://crouzonsdownsandme.blogspot.com.au/>

Facebook:- <https://www.facebook.com/JennyWoolseyAuthor/>

Twitter: @Jenny_Woolsey

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

Why Jenny Wrote Ride High Pineapple:

Jenny was born in the 1960s in Brisbane. Her mum and dad, and two brothers were excited about her arrival. But when Jenny 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 surgeries on her skull to make it bigger when she eleven months old. Without these surgeries she would have died. There were no surgeries at that time to help her with her face. In the 1970s Jenny was able to have some pioneering surgery on her face. This surgery was ten hours in length and complicated. Jenny had a new face but had lost the sight in her left eye. She would never be able to drive due to her visual impairment.

Jenny continued going to the local public school. She loved writing, singing, playing ball sports and playing in the band and the guitar. She went to Brownies and Girl Guides, played tennis and learnt to ride a bike. Jenny did what other kids did., though all the time having to deal with people's stares and comments.

Jenny went to the local high school. Her first proved to be stressful as there were many new kids there that did not know her. Immediately she was being snickered at. She developed

good friends and became involved in everything she could. Jenny loved drama and public speaking. She wanted to prove to people that she was smarter than she looked. Outside of school Jenny progressed in the Girl Guide movement.

Something Jenny had to contend with, that other teenagers did not, was her face changing back to a similar version of how it was before her first operation. This was a very stressful thing for Jenny as she had loved her new face. This process caused her great distress. Once she was eighteen Jenny endured another ten-hour operation.

Jenny achieved her Queen's Guide Award, and then went on to study to become a primary teacher. She loved teaching but battled shyness, and anxiety and depression. Childhood memories haunted her. The children often asked her why she had a scar on her throat and why she had big eyes.

Jenny married and had three children. The first two children also had her syndrome. Her third child, had Down syndrome. Her children needed many surgeries, and are now teenagers.

Jenny has always wanted to write a book about a child or teenager with her syndrome. There were no stories that she knew of, until she heard about *Wonder* by RJ Palacio. Jenny didn't want to write a similar story, so used her own and her children's personal experiences and feelings to write *Ride High Pineapple*.

The foreword is written by the Children's Craniofacial Association and is endorsed by them.

The story is uniquely Australian, raw and honest.



Figure 1 Some photos of the changing face of Jenny up until she was 18 years old.

Study Notes for Teachers

Discussion Questions:

Ride High Pineapple is written as a journal. What is a journal? How is it different to a narrative?

CHAPTER ONE - FIVE:

- Are secrets good or bad? Are there different types or levels of secrets? What secrets are okay to keep? Which should be told?
- Issy uses emojis in her journal. What do they show about how she is feeling? Do you have a favourite emoji? Can you design your own emoji?
- How do you cope with bullying? Have you ever put your hand up and said, 'Stop it, I don't like it!' Did it work for you?
- Chapter Two introduces that Issy has anxiety. What is anxiety? What are the physical and mental signs of anxiety? What is a mental illness? What are ways to cope with anxiety?
- Who gets information from other people's blogs on the internet? Talk about how you know whether what you are reading is factual or just someone's opinions.
- What is the Richter Scale?
- Discuss the origins of Anime and the Japanese influence. Draw some Anime characters.
- Issy says on p. 25, 'In conclusion, I'm Issy and I just happen to have Crouzons. It's a part of me but it doesn't define me. I love skateboarding, drawing and writing poetry.' Does your outward appearance define you?
- What is a 'dobber'?
- Issy's telling of her secret backfires. The Beast still calls her names. What would you do in this situation?
- Would you let your best friend solve a problem for you? Why/why not?
- How do you deal with problems? Do you want to punch something?
- How do you know if someone's telling a lie? What is body language? Is what you say, or your body language convey the most about your message?
- What does 'naïve' mean? Do you think Issy was naïve about Tia?
- Do you eat when you are unhappy? Why do you think people eat when they are?

CHAPTER FIVE - NINE

- What is dementia?
- Can you design a skatepark?
- Do you think Issy's jealousy of Tilly and Sofia is justifiable? Why do you think Issy is so possessive of Tilly?

- Issy describes a box of assorted chocolates, saying they represent people. See page. 46. Do you agree with what she says? What is DNA?
- If you have a fight with your friends, how do you resolve it?
- What would your Island of Happiness look like? Can you draw and describe it?
- What is Groundhog Day?
- How have your experiences been at a swimming carnival? Is it scary to be up on the blocks in front of everyone?
- Why do you think Issy lied to her father and told him she had swum when she hadn't?
- What is PMS (pre-menstrual stress)?
- What are the pros and cons of using social media and Facebook. Does what you write come across how you meant it to?
- Does having lots of 'likes' on Facebook mean you are popular?
- How do you think Issy's hair colouring is going to go?
- Tilly's room has 'Keep out or clean my room!' on the front. What would you have on the front of your door?
- Tilly has a pet rat called Cheese. What pets do you have? What pet would you like to have?

CHAPTER TEN - FIFTEEN

- Can you draw/paint a crazy portrait/caricature of yourself or someone else?
- Have you ever had a good idea that's gone totally wrong? What did you do to try and fix it?
- What do you think Issy means when she says 'make a tree frog out of a cane toad' on p. 75?
- How do you know when you're in trouble with your parents? Do they use your middle name?
- Have you ever been scared to do something, but once you've done it, you've felt so fantastic about it? What was it? What did you learn by pushing through your nerves?
- What do you think the point of life is?
- Why do you think Issy's mum didn't seem interested in her skateboarding? Why do you think she'd never watched her daughter skateboard?

CHAPTER SIXTEEN - TWENTY

- If you had found Sofia's bracelet, what would you have done with it?
- Can you pose another ethical question and debate it?
- Issy was determined to succeed. Is there a time you kept on trying and finally succeeded? How did that process feel? What did that teach you?
- Does it really matter if you fail? What does failing teach you?
- What is an analogy?

- What do you think of the analogy of a pineapple? Can you imagine yourself as a pineapple? Can you draw yourself in your pineapple suit?

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE – TWENTY- FIVE

- Do you believe everything you read in magazines?
- Can you describe some strategies for bullying?
- How do you determine if a rumour is true?
- What harm can rumours do?
- What does Nanas' comment on p. 147, 'Be the apple on the top of the tree that the boy has to climb up and get not one of the loose ones that are lying on the ground?'
- If you were Issy, how would you solve her Tia problem?
- Do you think graffiti is art?
- Can you debate or do a persuasive text explaining why graffiti is or isn't art?

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX - THIRTY

- How do you make a decision? Do you write the pros and cons like Issy did about deciding whether to do the graffiti assignment with Tia?
- Why do you think Tia called Issy a snob?
- Have you ever been to hospital? What for?
- How do you think Issy feels having to explain her syndrome to the paramedics?
- Do you think Issy's mum had cause to be concerned?
- Have you ever broken a bone? If you have, what were you doing at the time?
- Do you agree with Mrs Burgess telling Issy that Issy won't be doing anymore skateboarding?
- There is a lot of pressure for actresses in Hollywood to have plastic surgery to stay young, how do you think people with facial differences or disfigurements feel about this?
- Research the Starlight Foundation. How do they help children who are sick or injured?
- Issy was given a gift from Sarah. It was a picture of a pineapple and under it, it said, 'You become what you believe.' What do you think this means?
- Do you believe things happen for a reason? Why/why not?
- What would a cool cucumber and a laissez-faire kid be like?
- Can you write a newspaper report about Issy's accident, and receiving the trophy and Certificate of Courage?

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE – THIRTY-SEVEN

- Do you think the newspaper report has changed Issy's life?
- Is there a time when you've stood up for your friends, or your friends have stood up for you?
- How does it feel when you reveal a secret?

- Could you identify with Issy at any time in the story?
- On p. 224-225, Issy lists the things she's learnt and how she's changed. Which of these do you think was the hardest thing for her to learn? Why?

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

- How did Issy change over the novel? What was her character arc?
- What was the turning point in the story?
- Did Issy get everything she wanted in the story? Why or why not?
- Can you compare the characters of Issy, Tilly, Tia, Sofia, Tim? Which character did you like the best? Why? Which character did you like the least? Why?
- Can you write some descriptive language e.g. hungry like a piranha?
- How did Issy's poems add to 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 Issy or any of the other characters?
- Do you know any people who are like the characters in the novel?
- How did you feel about Issy?
- Did you learn anything from her journey?



English

CREATING TEXTS:

- Persuasive Text
- Journal/Diary Writing
- Autobiography
- Poetry & Rhyme
- Recount of an event
- Procedural Text
- Narratives
- Multimodal Texts
- 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

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?
- Statement: Fact or Opinion
- Mental imagery
- Similes and Metaphors
- Story Map
- Semantic Web
- A graffiti wall

Health & Physical Education

- Food and Nutrition
- Health Benefits of Physical Activity
- Relationships and sexuality
- Safety
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Games and Sports

GENERAL:

- Skateboarding/scootering
- Volleyball
- Bullying
- Mental illness
- Analogy of a pineapple
- Ethics
- What is a friend?
- Being different
- Resilience

Design and Technologies and Digital Technologies

- Design a skateboard or piece of sporting equipment
- Design a skate park
- Using digital technologies design a skate park using scale; symbols and codes in diagrams; pictorial maps and aerial views using web mapping service applications
- Design and make a rat's cage – use recycled materials
- Analyse of food preparation and healthy eating
- Generate, develop, test and communicate design ideas, plans and processes for designing a new type of skateboard or other sporting equipment.
- Make a prototype

The Arts - Visual Arts

- Knowledge and skills: Using different types of subject matter, forms, styles, techniques, visual conventions, materials, and technologies to create a skateboard design



See www.jennywoolsey.com for free activity sheets