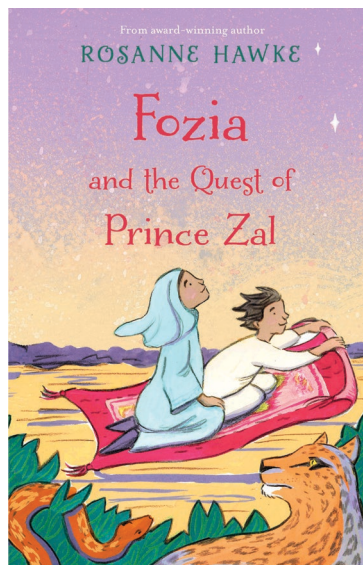


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FOZIA AND THE QUEST OF PRINCE ZAL

Rosanne Hawke



Teachers' Notes

Written by a practising teacher librarian
in context with the Australian curriculum
(English)

ISBN: 978 0 7022 6307 1 / AUS \$14.99

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SYNOPSIS

Six months after Pakistan is devastated by floods, Fozia clings to the hope that she will be reunited with her parents. Living with Jehan and his family and attending school in her new village, Fozia carefully guards a secret that could jeopardise everything. She must also avoid the brick-kiln owner to whom her parents are indebted.

To keep her spirits afloat and mind distracted, Fozia tells the story of Prince Zal's quest to find his sister. Confronted by conniving leopards and dangerous fairies, he must rely on his courage and resourcefulness to overcome looming obstacles. But how do Fozia's and Zal's futures entwine?

Fozia and the Quest of Prince Zal is a companion novel to *Kelsey and the Quest of the Porcelain Doll* and *Jehan and the Quest of the Lost Dog*, three stories that share themes about the importance of family, community and hope.

THEMES

- Hope
- Love
- Resilience
- Courage
- Family
- Aid
- Pakistan floods 2010

WRITING STYLE

Fozia and the Quest of Prince Zal is told in third person, past tense. Prince Zal's story is seamlessly integrated into Fozia's, who, as a result of the 2010 Pakistan floods, has been adopted by Jehan's family. Audiences young and old will be immediately captivated by Fozia's plight as she navigates this new world, reluctant to accept the love her new home is offering. Rosanne Hawke's storytelling elicits in readers a sense of empathy and compassion for Fozia and others like her. The inclusion of modern-day leprosy and bonded labour in the brick kilns adds further substance to the novel's themes and setting. It is both suitable as a read-aloud as well as for independent middle readers.

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STUDY NOTES

- After reading the first chapter, discuss the setting and context of Fozia's story.
- Find out more about the 2010 Pakistan floods to help contextualise Fozia's situation. Use images such as those found at the following link to stimulate discussion <http://www.fao.org/emergencies/crisis/pakistan-floods-2010/fr/>.
- Although Fozia is living with Jehan's family and attending the tent school, what clues do we get in the first chapter that she is sad? How do we know? What are we told literally, and what do we need to infer?
- How does seeing the peahen cheer up Fozia? Why do baby animals make her feel as though 'the world was the right side up again' (p. 12)?
- When Amir pleads with Fozia to tell them a story, why does she 'almost ... forget her heartaches' (p. 14)?
- What does Fozia mean when she says, 'Folktales ... can tell us a lot about ourselves' (p. 14)? How is this true for Fozia and Zal?
- What is a quest? How is Zal's story, both in his real life and in Fozia's fairytale, a true quest?
- Why does Fozia's 'throat [grow] tight' when Jehan says, 'I would fight *badrooh*, demons, to find you' (p. 17)?
- At the end of chapter 2, Fozia stops telling the story of Prince Zal because it's bedtime. Before reading any further, write your own ending to this fairytale.
- In the role of Fozia, write a recount of your visit to your home village for the first time since the flood. Include your encounter with the brick-kiln owner.
- What is the significance of Fozia finding her mother's wedding bangle in the mud at her house?
- Why is Fozia so reluctant to work at the brick kiln? How important is education to her? What comment is the author making by including these details in the text?
- Why does Fozia feel guilty for loving Jehan's family, 'as if she were being disloyal to her own family' (p. 34)? How would you feel if you were Fozia? Share in a reflection.
- How are the stories of Prince Zal and Fozia similar?
- Prince Zal is told 'do not fear what you cannot see' (p. 40). How does this advice help him? Write a reflection about a time in your life when this advice would have helped you.
- Why does Fozia decide to make a carpet? In what ways does this help her? Why does making it fill 'her heart with sad and happy memories' (p. 85)?
- In small groups, re-enact the Skype chat with Kelsey in chapter 5.

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- Why does telling Prince Zal's story make Fozia feel closer to her 'whole family' (p. 63)?
- Why, when Aunt Meena calls her *Beti*, does Fozia cry? When might she be ready to call Aunt Meena and Uncle Akram *Ummie* and *Abu*? What is holding her back? Why does this make her reluctant to keep telling Prince Zal's story?
- Why, at times, does Fozia feel it easier to talk to Kelsey rather than those in her village? How does Kelsey help give Fozia the courage to speak?
- Prince Zal is told by the *pari* that he is 'resourceful and wise' (p. 81). Why doesn't Prince Zal identify those same traits in himself? How does he show these strengths later in the story?
- Toto tells Prince Zal that he can do anything and to 'remember who you are' (p. 82). Who, in Zal's life, does Toto represent? Support your ideas with evidence from the text.
- Why is Prince Zal uninterested in revenge? What does this tell us about the dangers associated with revenge?
- Discuss the following quote from Fozia to Jehan and Amir: "I love you," she said softly, the words new and helpless like seedlings" (p. 108).
- Why do Jehan and Amir want to call the sister in the fairytale Fozia? How does this make Fozia feel?
- Why does Fozia feel that 'living with Jehan's family was a little like living in *Paristan* (p. 120)?
- What is the significance of Nanna buying Fozia's carpet? Why does the envelope of money feel 'heavy like a stone in her heart' (p. 125)?
- What prompts Fozia to reveal her secret about Zal?
- In what ways does Aunt Meena help Fozia throughout the novel? Why is Fozia so reluctant to love her? What finally allows Fozia to love her new family?
- Why does Fozia say that 'some secrets shut you up inside, making you afraid' (p. 131)? Have you ever kept a secret that shut you up inside? Share with a friend.
- In what ways is the leopard a metaphor for the obstacles that face Fozia and Zal in real life?
- With a partner, compare life for Fozia before and after the flood. Share your thinking in a format of your choice.
- Describe the relationship between Jehan, Amir and Fozia. Why is Fozia somewhat reluctant to accept them as her brothers? How does this change? Discuss.
- How important is Lali to Fozia? Write a reflection about their relationship.
- Discuss the way in which Rosanne Hawke has interwoven Zal into the novel through both Fozia's fairytale and her real-life story. At which point

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did you first realise that Prince Zal was in fact Fozia's brother? What clues helped you?

- Discuss the theme of hope in *Fozia and the Quest of Prince Zal*.
- Discuss the role of Kelsey and her family in *Fozia and the Quest of Prince Zal*. How would the novel be different without these characters?
- What is the significance of the *charpai* that is made for Fozia?
- How important are people such as Izaak to this story? Why has he been included in *Fozia and the Quest of Prince Zal*?
- Discuss the use of figurative language throughout *Fozia and the Quest of Prince Zal* and the contribution it makes to the text. Examples include:
 - His eyes sparkle like brown garnets (p. 15)
 - All she could see on the floor was grey, oozing mud. It looked alive (pp. 28–29)
 - Slowly, as if it were waking after a long sleep, the carpet rolled a corner towards him, and then another, touching his hand. It reminded Zal of a dog making friends (p. 53)
 - Even his good leg felt like wobbly rubber (p. 54)
 - The leaves on the floor of the pit whispered and shook like a wave in a lake (p. 55)
 - The carpet didn't move at first – but then, like a wisp of smoke, it slowly rose (p. 56)
 - He was as huge as an eagle and looked like a palette of paint had been splashed over him (p. 61)
 - The snowy mountains in the distance sparkling like diamonds in the sun (pp. 76–77)
 - There was just one thing pressing on her heart – a secret as huge and troubling as a hidden serpent (p. 112)
 - 'When the flood came, my grandparents' house melted like chocolate' (p. 139)
- How do you feel when Fozia is reunited with her brother? Why do you feel this way? Share in a reflection.
- Rewrite one of the chapters in the role of Lali. To help with this, read some of Lali's chapters from *Jehan and the Quest of the Lost Dog*.
- Using words from the glossary on pp. 152–155, write a short chapter in the role of one of the suitable minor characters suitable in *Fozia and the Quest of Prince Zal*.
- In small groups, write a chapter to follow the last chapter of the novel. What do you think may happen in the months following the reunion of Fozia with Zal and her grandparents?
- Find out more about the aid organisations that are continuing to help Pakistan following the floods. As a class, decide on a course of action you can take to actively support the children who lost so much during this

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time. Promote your project to the school community via assemblies, flyers, posters and the school newsletter.

- Read *Kelsey and the Quest of the Porcelain Doll* and *Jehan and the Quest of the Lost Dog* as companion novels to *Fozia and the Quest of Prince Zal*. Teachers' notes are available on the UQP website.

AUTHOR MOTIVATION

After *Jehan and the Quest of the Lost Dog* was released, I received feedback from readers asking if there would be another story in this series. They had enjoyed the first book, *Kelsey and the Quest of the Porcelain Doll*, too. To write a third story I would need another character. Whose story would it be? Someone new? Or a person Kelsey and Jehan already knew? I asked children in schools, and Todd from Year 4 at Riverton Primary School said, 'It should be Fozia's story because we don't know what happened to her family.' I thought that was a good idea, and when my publisher at UQP suggested I write another book in the series and that Fozia had more to say, I knew I could write Fozia's story.

I began a journal in which I made notes, drew mind maps about Fozia and thought of events that could happen. The story is set in Pakistan because I lived there as an aid worker with a mission group for seven years. While I was there, I was impressed with how kind people were to each other even though they had little to share. The idea for Fozia's family to work at a brick kiln came from my interest in raising money from my royalties to free people from bonded labour. I'm also involved in helping to cure a person of leprosy.

Even though I thought these were interesting elements of Fozia's life, before I began writing, Fozia took over her story and wanted to find her family. She also thought of a magical story to tell Jehan and Amir. When I had finished the first draft and read it, I could see many other themes such as kindness, hope, and love for family and friends, even joy when times are hard. I think Fozia is brave and resilient to be able to raise money to free her family. It can be surprising what children can do to be kind to others – they can change their world.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rosanne Hawke is a South Australian author of over thirty books. She lived in Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates as an aid worker for ten years. Her books include *Kelsey and the Quest of the Porcelain Doll*, a CBCA Notable Book, and *Taj and the Great Camel Trek*, winner of the 2012 Adelaide Festival

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Awards for Children's Literature and shortlisted for the 2012 NSW Premier's Literary Awards. She is the 2015 recipient of the Nance Donkin Award; an Asialink, Carclew, Varuna and May Gibbs Fellow; and a Bard of Cornwall. She has taught creative writing at Tabor Adelaide and writes in an old Cornish farmhouse with underground rooms, near Kapunda. www.rosannehawke.com