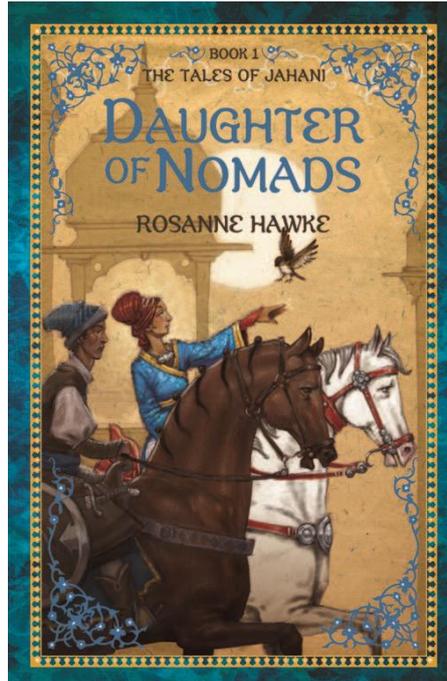


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DAUGHTER OF NOMADS

Rosanne Hawke



Teachers' Notes

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

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Synopsis	2
Themes	2
Writing Style	2
Study Notes	3
Author Motivation	5
About the Author	6

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SYNOPSIS

Daughter of Nomads begins Rosanne Hawke's two-part historical fantasy series, *The Tales of Jahani*. Set in the Mughal Empire during the seventeenth century, it is the story of fourteen-year-old Jahani, whose life changes forever when she is forced to flee the small village of Sherwan, the only home she has ever known.

Plagued by disturbing dreams of fire and a child who's lost her mother, Jahani senses that she doesn't belong. Unsure of her mysterious protector, Azhar, Jahani puts her trust in the warhorse, Chandi, and the snow leopards of her dreams. Slowly, she discovers the importance of trust, courage and destiny.

THEMES

Identity:

- Jahani discovers that her past is not as she thought; her true identity is yet to be revealed.

Trust:

- Jahani must learn to trust those close to her as danger and deceit is everywhere.

Courage:

- Jahani must have the courage to trust her instincts in order to follow her destiny.

Belonging:

- When living with the nomads, Jahani feels as though she truly belongs.

WRITING STYLE

Daughter of Nomads is written in third person, past tense. Rosanne Hawke combines ancient Mughal history with fables and traditional story threads, creating a historical fantasy that places the audience in a unique setting. The inclusion of a Persian flying carpet and the gypsy-like nomads adds mystique and character to the text. The inclusion of Hindustani, Burushaski and Persian languages is complemented by an extensive glossary. The text also features a detailed map of Jahani's journey, as well as a comprehensive list of the characters encountered on her travels. *Daughter of Nomads* would appeal to middle–upper primary and lower-secondary readers.

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STUDY NOTES

- The title and front cover of *Daughter of Nomads* reveals information about the novel. Discuss the illustration and title, including the setting of the story, both in terms of time and place.
- Discuss the author's choice to start her novel with one of Jahani's dreams. Why is this an effective way to draw the reader into the story? What do you like about the description in this scene?
- Throughout the text, aspects of Hindustani culture are included, such as the way in which a bride prepares for her wedding day, and customs surrounding marriage and widowhood. Compare these customs with your own. Why is it important that we experience other cultures through literature?
- Apart from chapter headings, what clues does the reader receive in the early chapters that the novel is set in a time and culture very different from our own?
- Rosanne Hawke uses figurative language to help enrich the text. As you are reading, keep a journal of this type of language and discuss how this contributes to the novel. Some examples include:
 - 'The day turned dark as night' (p1)
 - 'Smoke descended like giant black wings' (p1)
 - 'Fire surrounded them, licking their clothes' (p1)
 - 'The mountains with their snowy veils shone' (p2)
 - 'As black as a crow's feathers' (p4)
 - 'A deathly stench enveloped them, like charred meat and hair' (p60)
 - 'She fought waves of sleep as they crashed over her mind and body' (p74)
 - 'Jahani felt peace flood her body' (p83)
 - 'The lake stretched before her like smooth silver paper' (p93)
 - 'The mountain rose up from the lake as if cradling it' (p93)
 - 'The white mountain peaks surrounding the lake like armoured protectors; their reflections, underwater giants' (p98)
 - 'Jahani's gifts were sprouting like magic seeds' (p153)
 - 'They're like a pair of dogs circling a bone with an eye on each other' (p174)
 - 'The whole camp was shadowed by the mountains, cloaking them in safety' (p215)
 - 'It's like pristine cream, beaten for giant genies to eat' (p241)
- Sameela was going to be given a quilt of her childhood memories. Design a quilt of your childhood memories. Choose some of these memories on which to write reflections, explaining their significance to your life.

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- What indications do we receive that Jahani feels stranded in the wrong place? How does this dovetail into the rest of the narrative?
- Why did Jahani see Sameela's marriage as an adventure? Why did she feel she would never have such an adventure herself?
- In what ways are Sameela and Anjuli similar? What role do they play in Jahani's life?
- What clues do we receive that Jahani is someone important?
- In Chapter 4, we learn that Azhar has a flying carpet. Do some further reading into the role flying carpets play in Persian fables.
- What role does Kifayat play in Azhar's life? How does he help him?
- Re-read p53, in which Jahani is told of Ashoka the Great as she enters the village of Mansehra. How are the ancient values of self-control, respect, generosity and tolerance relevant to modern society? In this context, discuss the important role of literature in transposing time and culture to convey themes.
- How does the legacy of the Demon King threaten Jahani's world?
- How does the verse on p89 give the reader clues as to Jahani's real identity?
- What role does the scimitar play in revealing Jahani's destiny?
- Why does Jahani find it difficult to speak to Zarah and Baqir when she first meets them?
- What was your reaction when you learnt of Jahani's arranged marriage to Muzahid Baig? How did you feel when Azhar helped her to escape?
- Why did Jahani wish to return to the nomads rather than escape with Azhar?
- Discuss Jahani's question to Azhar: 'Don't you think it is important to know who we really are?' (p171). Why is identity so important to one's life?
- What does Jahani mean when she says 'she now knew how it felt to have no wings: abandoned and alone' (p202).
- What is the symbolism behind the nomads' tradition of stitching a dress onto the girls until they outgrew it?
- Why, when Jahani goes to live with the nomads, is it her 'first inkling of belonging' (p213).
- Take time to observe the map at the end of the text, contextualising Jahani's route.
- Make predictions about Azhar and his true identity.
- If Jahani became ruler, how would she change her society?
- Why did Princess Jahanara order that caravanserais be built? Research this princess and her family further, including her father's decision to have the Taj Mahal built as a resting place for her mother.

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- In the role of Jahani, write a diary entry about the discovery that Hafeezah is not your real mother. As you read the text, add more diary entries after you've met Zarah, and then Yasmeen. How do you feel about Hafeezah by the end of *Daughter of Nomads*? What does this reveal about Jahani's relationship with Hafeezah?
- Research more about the Silk Route and the trade that took place along this route, particularly with reference to trade between Hindustan and China.
- Create a graphic organiser to show how Jahani's life has changed throughout *Daughter of Nomads*.
- How is the role of females in *Daughter of Nomads* different from today?
- After reading the first chapter of *The Leopard Princess*, make predictions about the plot of the second novel of The Tales of Jahani series.
- Select a scene from *Daughter of Nomads* to write from a minor character's perspective.
- Retell one of the folktales or fables from *Daughter of Nomads* in your own words. Alternatively, create one of your own, centring its message around worthy values or ideals.
- Share in the reading of other Persian or Hindustani fables. In small groups, plan and write a chapter suitable for inclusion in *Daughter of Nomads* that incorporates one of these fables.
- Write a review of *Daughter of Nomads*, commenting on its structure, plot, characterisation and themes. Share these reviews on a class blog.
- Create a book trailer to promote *Daughter of Nomads*.

AUTHOR MOTIVATION

Daughter of Nomads began years ago when we were holidaying with our children in our favourite part of the Karakoram Mountains, Pakistan, during the time we were working there as aid workers. 'Tell us a story, Mum,' they asked and I began one about a lost child, who travelled to find her family. Since then, my daughter Lenore asked me many times to write this one, but there were always other deadlines. Finally I won an Asialink Fellowship in Pakistan with a proposal based on this project.

While writing *Daughter of Nomads* I needed to make creative choices. How much history versus how much fantasy? Whether I could use historical people from the past and change place names. I decided to set the story within a historical period but not base characters on historical people. A few people from history are mentioned like Emperor Aurangzeb, but the only historical person who takes part in the story is the Mughal Princess Zeb-un-nissa.

After deliberating how far I could play with history in the plot I decided the story would be fiction/alternate history: what could have happened if the little

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mountain kingdoms of the area now called Pakistan banded together and fought for their freedom.

My children are grown now but are still as excited by this story as when they were early teens. They have read drafts and given great advice; my son Michael also wrote Jahani's poems. They can't wait to revisit the settings of their childhood in print.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rosanne Hawke is the South Australian author of twenty-five books. She lived in Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates as an aid worker for ten years. Her books include *The Messenger Bird*, winner of the 2013 Cornish Holyer an Gof Award for YA & Children's Literature and *Taj and the Great Camel Trek*, winner of the 2012 Adelaide Festival 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 teaches creative writing at Tabor Adelaide, and writes in an old Cornish farmhouse with underground rooms near Kapunda.