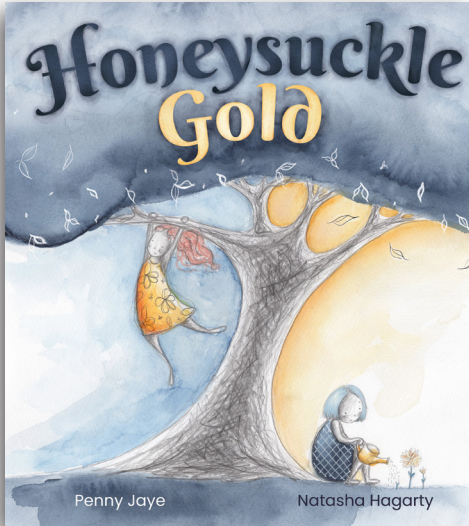

Teachers' Notes



HONEYSUCKLE GOLD

Penny Jaye / Natasha Hagarty

ISBN: 9781761112386

Recommended retail: \$27.99

Reading level: 4 to 7 years

BOOK SUMMARY

Once upon a time– both right next door and far away –there lived a girl. She went to school. She dreamed of wonders and made plans for her birthday; with cake and candles, and party dresses of honeysuckle gold.

But one day something happened ...

Honeysuckle Gold tells the story of two girls whose lives are connected by the global cotton supply chain. When one of the girls is trafficked into forced labour, both girls long for a better world. They need to find the courage to believe change is possible, and that they can be part of making it happen.

THEMES

Global Citizenship • Trafficking & Slavery • Exploitation Industries • Advocacy & Agency • Freedom

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**Penny Jaye is available for author talks and workshops.
Contact Wombat Books for more information.**

Honeysuckle Gold Teachers' Notes can be used in schools (independent learning, small groups, and whole classes); at home with caregivers; and as part of mental health support programs facilitated by counsellors, psychologists, children's charities, etc.



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Penny Jaye (also writing as Penny Reeve and Ella Shine) is the author of more than 30 books for children. She is a versatile author, with work ranging from early childhood picture books to gritty YA. Her Wombat Books titles include *Camp Max*, a fun junior fiction about friendship and generosity; *Out of the Cages*, an upper YA novel about human trafficking and *The Other Brother*, a moving story about family and belonging. Penny has a background in primary school teaching, a Master of Arts in writing and literature, and is currently working towards a creative writing PhD at Deakin University. She is an experienced speaker and writing teacher, and is comfortable presenting to all ages, from pre-school to adults.

You can learn more about Penny at www.pennyjaye.com and www.pennyreeve.com.

AUTHOR NOTE

Honeysuckle Gold is a story about connection. It's about two girls who live in very different locations and circumstances, connected through their interaction with the global cotton supply chain. In many ways, the girls are very much alike. I chose to write this story about 'a girl' to deliberately highlight these similarities. This ambiguous tone also allows the reader to be included as a participant in the events of the story. I wanted to explore the notion that our lives are never completely isolated from those of others. What we do and how we live will always have implications for others. Although *Honeysuckle Gold* is about the injustice of modern-day slavery, it's also a story about courage. It's about working together, holding onto hope and believing change is possible, even if that change has the smallest of starts.

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ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Natasha is a freelance illustrator based in north-west Sydney. Her days are spent sometimes painting, sometimes managing chocolate shops, sometimes having super excellent family drawing time with her husband and two daughters. Natasha started her career in picture book illustration, whilst simultaneously undertaking the delicious role of managing a chocolate shop. She has now created five picture books, painted private commissions for over 350 clients and was awarded the Westwords Illustration competition in 2023. Natasha also runs a community of 500 Australian illustrators, The Cardboard Box Illustrators.

ILLUSTRATOR NOTE

When I first started working on *Honeysuckle Gold*, I was drawn to the poetic text and loved the way the illustrations would tell the story and capture the emotion in Penny's writing. Although I had been given rough illustration notes outlining the basic plot, the challenge was figuring out how to tell that story purely through images.

I began by filling a sketchbook with ideas and exploratory drawings, focusing on how I wanted each page to feel and how all my ideas could work together. From there, I created a world that felt familiar to the reader without being tied to any specific part of our own world. This was created through the use of symbols and unrecognisable text, grey skin tones, unusual hair colours, and simplified cityscapes.

A minimalist colour palette — limited to blue, grey, brown, yellow, and pink — was used throughout the book. I varied the prominence of each colour across different spreads to reflect the emotional shifts as the story unfolded: hope (warmer yellows and pinks) and despair (blues and browns).

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REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

Honeysuckle Gold delivers an empowering message of hope, inspiring children and their families to become agents of realistic change. The story explores birthday wishes coming true in surprising ways, challenging readers' ideas about what it means for dreams and wishes to be fulfilled. It is a story of survival against the odds that highlights the power of working together.

The book introduces themes of social justice, child labour and modern-day slavery without explicitly using that language, allowing readers of different ages to engage with the content at an appropriate level.

Poetic language and engaging illustrations enhance the storytelling and provide rich opportunities for discussion and interpretation. The story conveys an anti-consumerist message of hope and global connection while demonstrating how girls can take action to create positive change in the world.

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS & LEARNING OUTCOMES

FOUNDATION

English, Humanities and Social Science, Science, Visual Arts

AC9EFLE01 - share ideas about stories, poems and images in literature, reflecting on experiences that are similar or different to their own by engaging with texts by First Nations Australian, and wide-ranging Australian and world authors and illustrators

AC9EFLE02 - respond to stories and share feelings and thoughts about their events and characters

AC9EFLY04 - read decodable and authentic texts using developing phonic knowledge, and monitor meaning using context and emerging grammatical knowledge

AC9EFLE04 - explore and replicate the rhythms and sound patterns of literary texts such as poems, rhymes and songs

AC9EFLA02 - explore different ways of using language to express preferences, likes and dislikes

AC9EFLA07 - explore the contribution of images and words to meaning in stories and informative texts

AC9EFLY05 - use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising and questioning to understand and discuss texts listened to, viewed or read independently

AC9HS1S04 - discuss perspectives related to objects, people, places and events

AC9HS1S05 - draw conclusions and make proposals

AC9HS1S06 - develop narratives and share observations, using sources, and subject-specific terms

AC9HS1K01 - differences in family structures and roles today, and how these have changed or remained the same over time

AC9HS1K03 - the natural, managed and constructed features of local places, and their location

AC9HS1K04 - how places change and how they can be cared for by different groups including First Nations Australians

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AC9AVAF01 - create arts works that communicate ideas

AC9SFU01 - observe external features of plants and animals and describe ways they can be grouped based on these features

AC9SFU03 - recognise that objects can be composed of different materials and describe the observable properties of those materials

YEAR ONE

English

AC9E1LE01 - discuss how language and images are used to create characters, settings and events in literature by First Nations Australian, and wide-ranging Australian and world authors and illustrators

AC9E1LE02 - discuss literary texts and share responses by making connections with students' own experiences

AC9E1LE03 - discuss plot, character and setting, which are features of stories

AC9E1LY05 - use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising and questioning when listening, viewing and reading to build literal and inferred meaning by drawing on vocabulary and growing knowledge of context and text structures

YEAR TWO

English

AC9E2LA01 - investigate how interpersonal language choices vary depending on the context, including the different roles taken on in interactions

AC9E2LA03 - identify how texts across the curriculum are organised differently and use language features depending on purposes

AC9E2LE05 - create and edit literary texts by adapting structures and language features of familiar literary texts through drawing, writing, performance and digital tools

AC9E2LE03 - discuss the characters and settings of a range of texts and identify how language is used to present these features in different ways

AC9E2LY01 - identify how similar topics and information are presented in different types of texts

TEACHING POINTS AND ACTIVITIES

This book may be used in whole class, small group or independent learning activities in schools.

Please note, the following suggestions and activities are suited to a variety of year levels spanning Foundation to Year 6 primary aged children. Some activities may be applicable to early secondary school students.

KNOWLEDGE AND LITERAL UNDERSTANDING

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. Give the students a moment to analyse the cover and ask them if there are any interesting details they can see. What makes these details interesting and what do they think it will mean within the story?
2. Read the back cover blurb and discuss. Ask what themes they think might be prevalent in the novel. Ask them if they have read other books that might be similar.
3. Ask - what do you like to do to celebrate your birthday?
4. Ask - What are human rights? What are the rights of a child?

AFTER-READING QUESTIONS

1. Which child's life is most like yours? Why?
2. What else could these children have done in these situations? Do you think they did the right thing?
3. Why do you think the author has written about 'a girl' when there are obviously more than one in the story?

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

- What small 'seeds' or 'ideas' grew in this story, and what difference did they make?
- What do the two girls have in common?
- What is the main thing that makes them different?
- How can we be kind to people we have never met?
- Why is it important to learn about people living in other countries and cultures?

TRAFFICKING AND SLAVERY

- How does it make you feel to know children are forced to work?
- Was it fair that one girl had to work so hard? Why?
- What do children need to be happy and safe?
- What can we learn from the two girls in this story?

EXPLOITATION INDUSTRIES

- What does the lock symbol on the storefront towards the end of the book signify?
- Where do you think your clothing comes from before you buy it in the store?
- Why is it important to think about the products we buy?
- What happens when customers don't question where their products are made?
- How can we learn more about the products we buy?
- Why should workers be treated fairly?

ADVOCACY AND AGENCY

- Why did the girls 'barely dare to dream'?
- What was something brave that happened in the story?
- Why is it important to speak up when you see something wrong?

FREEDOM

- What were the 'plans that had been made' and how were they 'interrupted'?
- How do the illustrations help communicate the emotion of the story?

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

POETRY

Honeysuckle Gold is written in very short poetic form. Choose one of the characters and write the story in longer prose form from their point of view.

LETTERS

- One of the girls writes letters in the book. What do you think she writes about and to who? Write this letter.
- Write a letter to your favourite clothing company and ask them about their cotton supply chain and whether their clothes are ethically produced and fair trade.

ACTING

In a small group, prepare a drama/role play to act out the story of *Honeysuckle Gold*.

COLOUR PALETTES

Research the different names and variations of your favourite colour and create a sample palette. Can you create a new variation and give it a unique name?

COTTON CHAINS

- Research how cotton is grown. Plant and grow cotton seeds.
- Make a poster showing the supply chain of cotton from seed to store bought clothing.

COLLAGE

Choose a scene from *Honeysuckle Gold* and create a collage picture of it (use sticks, cotton seeds/ wool, fabric, soil, etc.)

FAIR TRADE

- Find out what Fair Trade means and make a poster about it.
- Choose a product and research fair trade options for it. Eg. Chocolate, coffee, clothing etc.
- Do some research at home and record where 10 pieces of clothing were made. As a class, record your results in a graph and/or on a map of the world.

COMPARE & CONTRAST

Make a table to discuss what the girls have in common, and what is different.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The short story [Akash and the Pigeons](#) by Penny Reeve (available as a free download) is an open-ended story about children in another part of the clothing supply chain. This resource includes activities and pictures to encourage discussion and age-appropriate advocacy.

Baptist World Aid creates a useful [Ethical Fashion Guide](#) each year which may be useful for discussion and further research.

Be Slavery Free creates a [Chocolate Scorecard](#) which may be useful for discussing fair trade practices in the cocoa industry.

Further resources can always be found on our website.

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