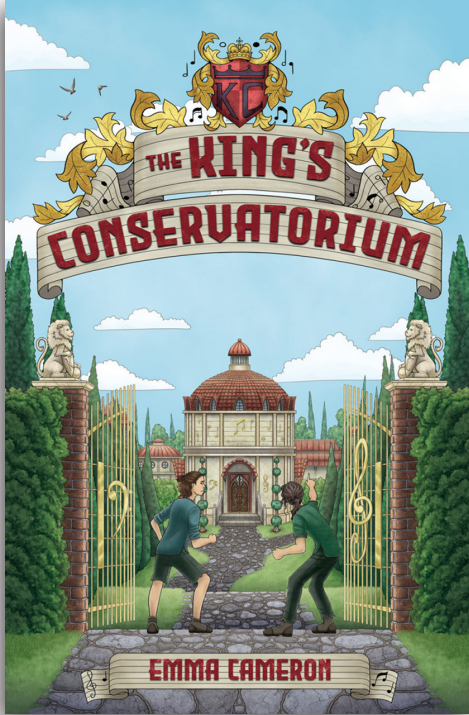

Teachers' Notes



THE KING'S CONSERVATORIUM

Emma Cameron

ISBN: 9781761112720

Reading level: 10-14

BOOK SUMMARY

I dream about the world my parents described, where music and song are allowed.

I was happiest when they sang with me. But now they are gone. And my brother has no voice.

Who will sing with me now?

When twelve-year-old Garlan and his mute brother Cadell are forced to run from their abusive guardians, they plan to find the land beyond their own, a place where they're allowed to sing, unlike the laws that banish all forms of music in their home in Elatha.

They begin a dangerous journey to cross the great wall at the kingdom's border. Pursued by the King's Guard and facing untold dangers, can they find this magical place or will it separate them forever?

THEMES

- Family Relationships ▪ Trust ▪ Honesty ▪
- Perseverance ▪ Longing ▪ Freedom ▪

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**Emma Cameron is available for author talks and workshops.
Contact Wombat Books for more information.**

The King's Conservatorium 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



Emma Cameron, internationally published author and editor, delights in standing barefoot on floorboards warmed by sunlight, believes that cooking for others is a privilege and knows the joy of growing sunflowers alongside blueberries. Her stories are well-regarded by the Children's Book Council of Australia, the Global Read Aloud and the Sakura Medal, as voted by international students. Emma's favourite childhood haunt was the school library and she later worked in some so that she could be home for her two children outside school time. She then worked elsewhere and in 2005, minus a job, examined old school reports to see what inspired her before adult life took over. At six, she was an avid reader, possessed a most expressive, effective vocabulary, and wrote well, with creative flair. She was destined to be an author. After studying editing and creative writing, Emma's creations were snapped up by publishers. Her first novel was published in 2012. She often ponders a lot without concluding anything, always feels a jolt inside when a bird flies into a windowpane and hopes the sky never falls down.

Her website: www.emmacameron.com.au

AUTHOR NOTES

The story began when I speculated about a world where people were denied something that was intrinsic to all humans. We always had music and song around us when I was growing up and still do. I can't imagine a world without it.

Historically, music has been banned for varied reasons in various parts of the world. I didn't want to use a real life example for this story. By using grief as the initial reason, I hoped it would make sense that people didn't buck the system to begin with and that there was no uprising or rebellion against the law, but that people navigated their way around it in peaceful ways.

I wanted the story to immerse readers in a world very unlike their own in some ways. I also wanted it to capture Garlan and Cadell's brotherly relationship. As a protagonist, Garlan had a problem and a perceived goal, but the end his goal changed because his character grew and he questioned what mattered most. I really liked that aspect of this story.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

1. In the Kingdom of Elatha, music and song were banned by a king who could bear no reminders of the wife he lost. Garlan says that he understands why this was so but that if he banished anything that reminded him of his parents, he'd have only half as much inside him that made him happy. Do you understand why he concludes this? Discuss.
2. At story's end, Garlan says he will find the Flintocks. Write an opening chapter for the next part of his journey that shows why he will look for the Flintock family.
3. Cadell's new life at the King's Conservatorium means he has an instant family of sorts. It will take time for him to embark on this next part of his own life journey. Write the opening page of his next story. Consider his feelings and thoughts about his newfound family.

TRUST

1. Garlan and Cadell must put their trust in each other on many occasions. List three of these. Can you think of a time when you have had to put your trust in someone? Discuss how it made you feel.
2. Garlan concludes that Sapph cannot be trusted to care for Cadell. Identify as many instances as you can that show why he reaches this conclusion.
3. When Master Hartwell wants to take the boys to the singing group, he must work out if he can trust them to keep it secret. Examine the discussion he has with Garlan about keeping secrets and discuss how he concludes the boys can be trusted.
4. At the story's end Garlan must make a tough decision, and Cadell must trust him before agreeing to it. Discuss why Cadell may not feel that Garlan's decision is the right one. List reasons why Cadell should trust that this is the right decision.

HONESTY

1. Garlan grapples with hiding the truth about his age. Find one reason why he feels compelled to do so. Explain why you think it was acceptable or unacceptable for him to hide the truth.
2. When Master Hartwell says that darkness helps to hide secrets, Mistress Gillian says, 'I didn't hear that.' What does she mean by this and why would she say this? Discuss.
3. Garlan's parents sang to him. Delayna and her husband sing to their daughter. It's obvious that many people break this particular law. Why do you think people choose to do this?
4. Do you think there's a difference between hiding the truth for a good reason or telling lies for any other reason? Do you think there's a difference between lies and secrets? Discuss.

PERSEVERANCE

1. The boys undertake a long and frightening journey but know that if they give up they will never have what they truly long for. List some reasons why they shouldn't give up. Have you ever given up and later

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wished that you hadn't?

2. Make two lists for Garlan that show examples of him giving up and of him persisting. Do the same for Cadell. Compare the characters and discuss who is most likely to achieve what he sets out to and consider why this may be so.
3. Moon cycles and the rules for people living on the road means the boys must always be one step ahead and thinking about what they will do next. Find two examples within the text that show Garlan is thinking ahead.

LONGING

1. Garlan longs to be able to sing without having to hide it. Why do you think this is? Would you feel the same if you weren't ever able to hear music or song? Discuss.
2. Besides wanting to sing, Garlan longs for a home and family. When he and Cadell end up living on the road, he feels that it's vital he and Cadell stay together. By the story's end, he changes his mind about this. Write a sentence or two that explains why he's done this.

FREEDOM

1. Many people in the Kingdom of Elatha believe they have all that they need in life. Some, however, believe that they don't. List reasons why some people may believe they have all they need. Then list reasons why some people may feel they don't have all they need.
2. Look up the meaning of utopia and dystopian. Use these definitions to list arguments that could be used to debate the following statement: The Kingdom of Elatha is a dystopian world. Remember that you need arguments both for and against the statement.
3. Both the Kingdom of Elatha and the Other Side only allow those living on the road only a limited stay in one location. Do you think this is denying freedom or an acceptable necessity that allows for maintaining a suitable of law and order?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

CREATE YOUR OWN VERSE

Pages 123 and 169 contain short verses from songs that are sung in the story. One is about leaving home, and the other is about returning home.

- Consider the references and how they connect with the concept of 'home.'
- Create your own verse that uses four lines and has home as the central theme.

MAP DRAWING

Garlan views a map in the story and the storyline has the two boys taking a journey.

- Draw a map that represents the map Garlan sees OR draw a map that shows their entire journey throughout the story.

CREATE A JOURNEY

- After drawing a map for a journey, with the route to take to get to the haven, what dangers they might find along the way.
- Create a story for your map, your world, and the journey.

DESCRIBE & COMPARE

The author intentionally chose not to provide much physical description of characters. This allows for a reader to imagine the characters in whatever way they wish.

- In groups, choose a character and have each member of the group make a list of what they think this character looks like.
- Compare the lists and discuss the differences.
- Do you think physical descriptions are needed or do you think it's best to let readers create their own visual? Discuss.

KINGDOM EXPLORATION

The story includes two different kingdoms, each with their own history, culture and crest.

- Design a royal crest for both kingdoms. Think about what to include in each crest and what colours might capture the feel of each kingdom. (Consider that Elatha's crest may have changed once music and song was outlawed.)
- In the process remember to review what the story tells us about each kingdom. Are there any other inferences you can make from what is told to us about each kingdom? Write up a description on each kingdom to put beside the royal crest.

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RESEARCH ON BANS

Music is banned in one of the kingdoms. Consider the banning of aspects of culture in a country.

- Why might a government or head of state ban music, art, or something else?
- Look into the bans on different cultural aspects in countries like Russia and China. What effect does this have on the people living there?
- What other things are banned in those countries? Consider history, folklore, news, social media.

FAMILY BONDS

What brings you and your family together? In the book, the family bonded over music, singing together and creating special moments. Consider what you and your family do to bond, and what you enjoy most about it. What other things could you do as a family? Why are moments like this special? Why did the brothers miss these moments when they no longer had their parents?

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

CURRICULUM V9

YEAR 5

English

AC9E5LE02 - present an opinion on a literary text using specific terms about literary devices, text structures and language features, and reflect on the viewpoints of others

AC9E5LE03 - recognise that the point of view in a literary text influences how readers interpret and respond to events and characters

AC9E5LY05 - use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring and questioning to build literal and inferred meaning to evaluate information and ideas

AC9E5LY01 - describe the ways in which a text reflects the time and place in which it was created

HASS

AC9HS5K07 - how citizens (members of communities) with shared beliefs and values work together to achieve a civic goal

AC9HS5S01 - to develop questions to investigate people, events, developments, places and systems

YEAR 6

English

AC9E6LY05 - use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring and questioning to build literal and inferred meaning, and to connect and compare content from a variety of sources

AC9E6LA02 - understand the uses of objective and subjective language, and identify bias

AC9E6LY01 - examine texts including media texts that represent ideas and events, and identify how they reflect the context in which they were created

HASS

AC9HS6K06 - the key institutions of Australia's system of government, how it is based on the Westminster system, and the key values and beliefs of Western democracies

AC9HS6S01 - to develop questions to investigate people, events, developments, places and systems

YEAR 7

English

AC9E7LE02 - form an opinion about characters, settings and events in texts, identifying areas of agreement and difference with others' opinions and justifying a response

AC9E7LE03 - explain the ways that literary devices and language features such as dialogue, and images are used to create character, and to influence emotions and opinions in different types of texts

AC9E7LE05 - identify and explain the ways that characters, settings and events combine to create meaning in narratives

AC9E7LE06 - identify and explain how literary devices create layers of meaning in texts including poetry

History

AC9HH7S01 - to develop historical questions about the past to inform historical inquiry

AC9HH7S07 - to explain historical interpretations about significant events, individuals and groups

Civics and Citizenship

AC9HC7K04 - how Australia's secular democracy and pluralist, multi-faith society draws upon diverse cultural origins, including Christian and Western heritage, distinct First Nations Australian histories and cultures, and migrant communities

AC9HC7K05 - how values based on freedom, respect, fairness and equality of opportunity can support social cohesion and democracy within Australian society

AC9HC7S01 - to develop questions to investigate Australia's political and legal systems, and contemporary civic issues

AC9HC7S03 - to analyse information, data and ideas about political, legal or civic issues to identify and explain differences in perspectives and potential challenges

YEAR 8

English

AC9E8LE03 - explain how language and/or images in texts position readers to respond and form viewpoints

AC9E8LY01 - identify how texts reflect contexts

AC9E8LY05 - use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring, questioning and inferring to interpret and evaluate ideas in texts

AC9E8LE04 - identify intertextual references in literary texts and explain how the references enable new understanding of the aesthetic quality of the text

AC9E8LY03 - analyse and evaluate the ways that language features vary according to the purpose and audience of the text, and the ways that sources and quotations are used in a text

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AC9E8LA02 - understand how layers of meaning can be created when evaluating by using literary devices such as simile and metaphor

AC9E8LA03 - explain how texts are structured depending on their purpose and how language features vary, recognising that some texts are hybrids that combine different genres or elements of different genres

AC9E8LY04 - analyse how authors organise ideas to develop and shape meaning

Civics and Citizenship

AC9HC8K05 - how culture and religion may influence individuals' and groups' perceptions and expressions of citizenship and their actions as citizens

AC9HC8S03 - to analyse information, data and ideas about political, legal or civic issues to identify and explain differences in perspectives and potential challenges

AC9HC8S04 - to explain the methods or strategies related to making decisions about civic participation

YEAR 9

English

AC9E9LA08 - analyse how vocabulary choices contribute to style, mood and tone

AC9E9LA02 - understand how evaluation can be expressed directly and indirectly using devices such as allusion, evocative vocabulary and metaphor

AC9E9LE04 - analyse texts and evaluate the aesthetic qualities and appeal of an author's literary style

AC9E9LY01 - analyse how representations of people, places, events and concepts reflect contexts

AC9E9LY03 - analyse and evaluate how language features are used to represent a perspective of an issue, event, situation, individual or group

AC9E9LA01 - recognise how language empowers relationships and roles

AC9E9LE03 - analyse how features of literary texts influence readers' preference for texts

AC9E9LE05 - analyse the effect of text structures, language features and literary devices such as extended metaphor, metonymy, allegory, symbolism and intertextual references

Civics and Citizenship

AC9HC9S03 - to analyse information, data and ideas about political, legal or civic issues to identify and evaluate differences in perspectives and interpretations

AC9HC9K05 - how and why individuals and groups, including community, religious and cultural groups, participate in and contribute to civic life in Australia and to global citizenship