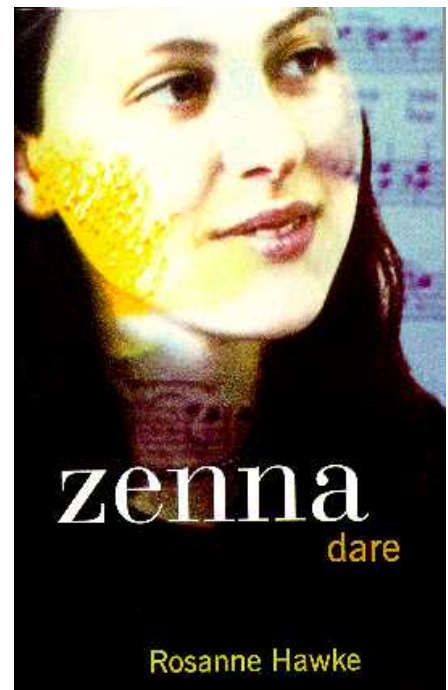


zenna

dare

Rosanne Hawke

Teacher's Notes
Nancy Mortimer



Zenna Dare is an engrossing novel that will appeal to students from upper primary to lower secondary levels. It is the story of Jenefer, in her last year at school and having to leave her friends and familiar surroundings to go with her father, step-mother and step-siblings back to the old family home at Kapunda – built by her ancestors. Jenefer is immediately attracted to the place, and, when she discovers papers hidden away by her great-great-great grandmother 160 years ago, she believes there is a reason for her to be in that place. She meets and has an affinity with Caleb, an Indigenous Australian with whom she shares a lot of her realisations and discovery of who she is and where she belongs. The story is moving and poignant, told in an authentic voice of a maturing teenager. Throughout the course of it there is much to ponder over and consider as issues of great importance are raised. Young people will enjoy the mystery and the piecing together of the puzzle of determining who Zenna Dare really was. Beside this story, there is another of growing up and being aware of how things really are.

**These notes can be photocopied for class use.
They and other resources are available at no charge from the
Lothian Books' website:
www.lothian.com.au**

Opening

- What is the purpose of the *Prelude*?
- Who is the young queen referred to in the *Prelude*?
- What was the reception for Zenna?
- What do the maps add to the story?

The Libretto

- What is a libretto? Why is the name here?
- Who is telling the story?

Tone

- In what vein is the story told?

Plot

There is a main plot and a sub plot for **Zenna Dare**.

- Make a story map of how these two run side by side and where and how they intersect and connect

Title

- Where does the title of the novel come from?

Setting

- Make a list of the different settings for this story
- Jot down the time span that is covered in each

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

- Look at the narrator's picture of the countryside as the family drives to their home in Kapunda and make some observations.
- What is a *slag fence*? (Refer to page 17)
- What is the feature of the house that impresses Jenefer?
- How does her Dad react when Jenefer tells him about the scratching?
- Where does Jenefer get her name from?
- What does Jenefer find? (38)
- Where does she find it?
- How does Jenefer get it open?
- What's inside the box?
- Who are *the conquerors*? (43,44)
- Why is the photo of Zenna Dare unusual?
- What is the story of the Cornish people?
- What story does Caleb tell Jenefer when he pulls over by the pond? (64)

- What did you feel after you had read this passage?
 - What did education do for Gweniver? (74)
 - Make a list of the contents of the box.
 - How were they arranged?
 - What happens when Jenefer and Caleb are eating lunch after visiting the library in Adelaide? (137)
 - What is Jenefer's reaction?
 - How does Jenefer find she is treated when she is with Caleb?
 - In some people's eyes, what does Caleb represent? (141-2)
 - On page 144, Gweniver describes herself as a *caged bird*. Why?
 - Describe Caleb's house and who he lives with.
 - How does Chloe treat Jenefer?
 - What does Caleb say about this? (149)
 - How and why does Jenefer share her findings with Kate and Hamilton? (172)
 - What makes Gweniver finally talk about her past to Redvers Tremayne? (224)
 - What was the final link that provided the proof Jenefer was searching for to establish her theory and enabled her to complete the whole puzzle? (266)
 - What does Aunt Dorie bring when she comes to Steffi's party? (274-5)
- What type of story is ***Zenna Dare***?

Vocabulary

- What is a manse? (23)
- What do the following words mean? Look at them in context: *slightly mollified* (29), *rankles* (32), *platonic* (44), *camaraderie* (45), *placated* (80), *pique* (82), *sardonic* (114), *baleful* (127), *moiety* (151), *conservatories* (181), *serendipity* (204), *transcriptions* (274)
- What is a *non-conformist*? (163)
- Jot down and look up in the dictionary any words that you are not familiar with

Characters

- Make a list of the characters that appear in the story.
- Do a character study of Jenefer, stating her age, position, family background, her attitude, her relationship with her father and Steffi, what she is like as a person, something of how she operates and what she feels strongly about.
- Do a pen sketch of Caleb, touching on his background, his beliefs, his personality and any other features you found out about him from the story.
- Who are Kate and Hamilton? Write a short piece on each, stating as much as you can about them - their personalities and traits, habits and talents.
- Do a profile of their father, covering his salient features.
- Write an outline of Steffi
- Who is Sher Khan? What part does he play in the story?
- Who is Aunt Dulcie? (25)
- Who is Aunt Dorie?

- Who is Richard Drew? What is his role in the story?
- What are Gweniver's feelings about him? (There is one reference on page 114)
- What is a lute?
- Why is it significant in the story?
- Do a pen portrait of Redvers Tremayne.
- Who is Roswyn? What does the name mean?

Conclusion

- What is a *Postlude*? What purpose does it serve in the novel?
- Make some comments on how the story ends.

CRAFT OF WRITING

Look at the many components that comprise this novel and how they are arranged.

- Make a list of the different portions and what each contributes to the overall novel.
- Look particularly at the quotation by Jeanette Wormald at the beginning and make some comments

You too, could make use of different sources to tell a story

The author uses intricate details to establish a picture of a place or person.

- Find some examples and examine them.
- Look at the way this story is told, in the first person narrative, and what it allows the writer to divulge to the reader.
- Try to assess how the author establishes atmosphere, particularly of foreboding

The author uses alternates, parallels, contrasts, and comparisons in her story.

- Find an instance of each of these and look at the effect each has.

Symbols such as the rose occur throughout the story.

- What is the purpose of symbols? Can you identify others?

Consider how the author tells Gweniver's story – there are many hints and allusions to keep the reader wondering and guessing until the final piece is placed in the puzzle and Zenna Dare's identity is confirmed. By this method readers can draw their own conclusions while they read.

The house becomes quiet 'like an aviary after dark' (24)

I hear a rip, 'like old autumn leaves that snap in your hand (39) are vivid word pictures

Rosanne Hawke uses language to convey apt images that are succinct yet effective: for instance, *satisfied clutch (19) uncurling.. interest (21)*

Find other examples and try to emulate such crisp language in your own writing

Design

Look at the way the novel is set out.

- What marks the breaks? How are different type and print used in the book?
- What are they designed to do?

Humour

- Find parts of the story that you found amusing or funny and say what the effect of these was as you were reading

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

- Look at the way in which families operate.
- Look at the relationship between the different members of the family and make some observations.
- What is the attraction of Jenefer for Caleb?
- What is the attraction of Caleb for Jenefer?

There are numerous places where the reader sees how Jenefer is feeling.

- Find some of these and study them

Discussion

Talk about the following topics and concepts, using the novel as a starting point:

- reconciliation, stereotypes, secrets, dreams, other dimensions, ghosts, superstitions, fate, motivation, understanding, instinct, adaptation, sharing, the imagination, friends, feelings, destiny, intuition, dreaming, special, forgiveness, respect, generalisations, guilt, blame, fault, change, passion, hopes, hands, love, obsessing, communication, knowledge, jealousy, links, choices
- The Stolen Generation
- Talk about the word *sorry*
- Talk about intolerance, bigotry and prejudice and how these are perpetuated.
- Discuss the importance of belonging and knowing who you are and where you've come from.
- Look at the question of who is responsible for the Aboriginal people: Caleb says: *Your mob kicked us off our land, took away what we believed in and left us with nothing*"
Jenefer replies: *But it wasn't me*. Refer too to page 150 and other places where this question is mentioned.
- Discuss the importance of being able to look at things differently from time to time.
- Look at the methods Jenefer uses to unravel the mystery of Zenna Dare.
- Discuss the idea of things coming full circle

There are many wise words and concepts in ***Zenna Dare*** by Rosanne Hawke

- Find some that interest you and talk about them

Writing

- Compile your own family tree

- What is Kapunda like? Write about the differences between life in the city and life in the country.
- *We are all 'immigrant Australians':* Comment
- Who was *Zenna Dare*?
- Write about what it would be like to be an immigrant
- Towards the end of the novel. Jenefer says there is: - *a new picture forming in my mind about being Australian that I have to come to terms with: that all aussies weren't always fair, decent and sticking up for the underdog.*
Comment
- *It makes me wonder if we see the same thing when we look at it, and I think we look too much at the differences.* Do you agree?

Research

- Study the *Acknowledgements* at the beginning of the story and the *Sources* at the conclusion of the novel to get an idea of how much work the author has done to research this story.
- Using a computer, research your own family history.
There are also programs that can be used for this purpose.

About the author

Rosanne Hawke lives in Kapunda, South Australia. The discovery of an ancient portrait among her mother's things was the inspiration for this story.

Her books for young readers include: ***The Keeper, Sailmaker*** and ***a Kiss in Every Wave.***

Zenna Dare is her fourth novel for young adults