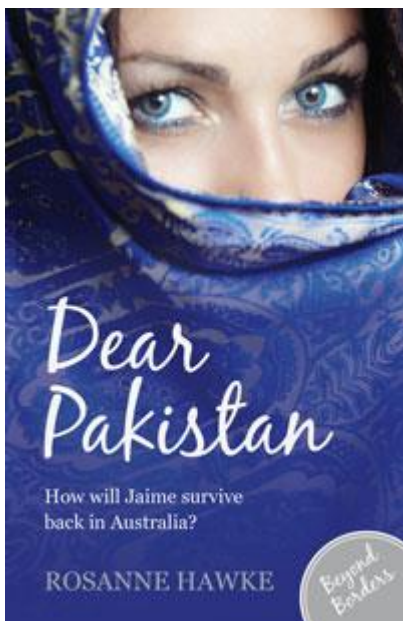




Rhiza Press

Teaching Resources



Dear Pakistan

Rosanne Hawke

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Reading level: Young Adult

About the Author	page 2
Introduction/Story Summary	page 3
Key Learning Areas	page 4
Values Addressed/Themes	page 4
Related Text/Resources	page 5
Discussion Questions	page 6
Writing Exercises	page 7

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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY



Rosanne Hawke is a South Australian author of 25 books. She lived in Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates as an aid worker/missionary for ten years. Her books include Zenna Dare, Marrying Ameera and The Messenger Bird, winner of the 2013 Cornish Holyer an Gof Award for YA & Children's Literature. She is the 2015 recipient of the Nance Donkin award and teaches Creative Writing at Tabor Adelaide.

Even when I was little I would run around with a jotter and a pencil, trying to write a story but not knowing how to spell anything except Dick, Dora and cat. My mother used to get me to tell stories. A lot of my stories were just in my head, for being the youngest and living in the country didn't bring many opportunities for an audience. I was born in Penola, in South Australia. We had a sheep farm there until I was six, then we moved to a property in Central Queensland. I went to school with only one teacher in Banana, a little country town named after a bullock. If a friend came to visit we would write clues for treasure hunts or pretend we were characters from films.

My first short story was published in the Moura State School magazine in 1967. At 14, I moved back to South Australia and attended Gawler High School where I won an Arts Scholarship to complete Years 11 and 12. I started a romantic novel when I was 17 but I burnt it later.

I loved teachers' college, studying education, art, music, literature and history. But it wasn't until I was working (for ten years) in the Middle East and Pakistan, teaching ESL, bringing up kids, when I started to write seriously. My kids loved the stories I told and one night after telling a story, my daughter asked me to write it down.

I am a writer, teacher, writing workshop facilitator, and on occasions, a story teller for children. I can provide a wide variety of presentations for schools from KG to high school; or for libraries, and clubs such as Rotary or youth groups.

I have a PhD in Creative Writing from the University of Adelaide and am Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing at Tabor Adelaide, South Australia, a Christian accredited tertiary institution. I have researched Cornish Identity in Australian Children's Literature.

INTRODUCTION

I moved to Central Queensland as a teen, and when I returned to Australia after ten years in the Middle East, I suffered the same displacement I had felt when younger. My teenage children who grew up in Pakistan felt the same displacement in Australia when we returned, like square pegs trying to fit into round holes. Our experiences inspired the writing of *Dear Pakistan*. This is a book about a ‘third culture kid’, sixteen-year-old Jaime Richards, who is returning to her parents’ culture after being brought up in Pakistan.

PLOT SUMMARY

Jaime has lived most of her life in Pakistan and learned to follow the rules of Sharia law well. When she returns with her family to Australia to attend high school, she feels as if she is on a different planet. She doesn’t fit in at school, or understand cultural cues about how to dress, what to say and how to cope with boys asking her out. She even loses her right to wear a nose pin. It takes Danny Dimitriadis to help her settle in but his interest in her goes beyond friendship and she is unable to cope with his expectations.

When she meets Yasmeen, a Pakistani-Australian girl, Jaime feels safe in Yasmeen’s family life and becomes more involved in the Pakistani scene in Adelaide. Yet she finds the conflicting values of the two cultures confusing. Jaime writes a journal called ‘Dear Pakistan’ and then a story to sort out her feelings. Finding a lost Afghan boy makes her realise how she has been idolising Pakistan and the past, thus blinding her to the positives in Australia.

She is becoming to accept the Australian way of life when a racial riot almost undoes the progress she has made. However, her faith and strength of character help her not lose the valuable ground she has gained. At the end of the year, Jaime is invited by the Student Council to speak at a school event because they think she’s ‘a gutsy babe with something cool to say’.

KEY LEARNING AREAS

Asian content, e.g. Pakistan, Afghanistan
Diversity
Cultural studies & Cultural identity
National identity: What is an Australian?

VALUES AND THEMES

Search for cultural identity
Third culture kids
Cross cultural living; fitting into a society
Culture shock/stress
Culture clash and changing culture stress to a gift in fitting into different cultures at once.
Learning to adjust in new cultures as well as in one's own.
Pakistani and Australian culture
Racism, prejudice, the exclusion of others
Multiculturalism

RELATED TEXT/RESOURCES

Black Beyond Borders. (2016). Passing the Torch. Retrieved from <http://voices-blackbeyondborders.com/passing-the-torch>

Courty, Audrey. (2012). At Home Abroad. Retrieved from <https://audreycourty.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/focus-intl-schools-v2-dragged-1.pdf>.

Mitchener, James.R. (2016). Third Culture Kid Life. Retrieved from <https://thirdculturekidlife.com/tag/cultural-identity>.

Quick, Tina L. (2010). *The Global Nomad's Guide to University Transition*. Great Britain: Summertime Publishing.

NOTE: A book for students who have been living outside their passport countries but are either returning "home" or transitioning on to another host country for college/university. It addresses the common issues students face when they are making the double transition of not only adjusting to a new life stage but to a cultural change as well.

TCK World. (2016). TCK World: The Official Home of Third Culture Kids. Retrieved from www.tckworld.com.

Van Reken, Ruth & Pollock, David. (2009). *Third Culture Kids: The Experience of Growing Up Among Worlds*. Boston, MA: Nicholas Brealey.

NOTE: Examines the nature of the TCK experience and its effect on maturing, developing a sense of identity and the process of adjusting to repatriation. It explores the personal challenges that TCKs experience, from feelings of rootlessness and unresolved grief to struggles with maturity and identity.

Cross Cultural Activities

<http://wilderdom.com/games/MulticulturalExperientialActivities.html>

<http://www.culturalexchange.nsw.edu.au/media-library/exchange-via-online-gaming>

<https://www.teachervision.com/teacher-resources/printable/33631.html>

Information about **Pakistani customs** can be found on the author's website at www.rosannehawke.com and images of Pakistan can be found at www.pinterest.com/rosannehawke.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What would be the hardest part for you about moving countries?
2. How does Jaime's experience show an outsider's view of 'normal' culture?
3. Do you think Jaime's story can show mainstream people problems in their culture and sharpen their perceptions? Explain.
4. How do Jaime's experiences, while settling into Australia, question contemporary Australian youth culture?
5. What do you think makes a person Australian? Do you feel Australian?
6. What is the purpose of the 'Dear Pakistan' entries?
7. Why was Jaime so upset about the nose pin?
8. Why does Jaime find aspects of Western culture so difficult? For example, relationships with boys.
9. What are the different ways that Danny and Blake help Jaime?
10. What does Jaime experience with the Greek and Pakistani families that she doesn't experience with Anglo-Australians?
11. Why did Jaime feel differently by the end? What changed?
12. Research third culture kids or trans-culture kids (TCK). How does Jaime identify as a TCK? Here is a quote to start with:

A Third-Culture Kid (TCK, also known as Trans-Culture Kid) is "an individual who, having spent a significant part of the developmental years in a culture other than the parents' culture, develops a sense of relationship to all of the cultures while not having full ownership in any. Elements from each culture are incorporated into the life experience, but the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar experience.
-- David Pollock, Interaction Director (<http://www.tckinteract.net/TCKschools.html>)

13. The universal search for identity is heightened for young people who have lived in more than one culture. How is Jaime's search for identity complicated?
14. Have you ever felt excluded? When does Jaime feel like this?
15. What other characters in *Dear Pakistan* have a problem with cultural stress? Which ones have managed to deal with it and how?
16. Research racial violence in Australia, e.g. the 2005 Cronulla riots. Why do you think this happens and how could it be stopped?
17. It seems that people who are different (Jaime with her nose pin; Andrew being clever; Shehzad and his brown skin) are often treated badly. Why does this happen and what are your thoughts on 'difference'?
18. Literature can help readers to walk in other people's shoes. Do you think this can contribute to harmony and tolerance in society?
19. Do you think fiction can give young people, and especially TCKs, a chance to process and talk about their emotions? How?
20. Research a country you would like to visit or live in. How would you plan to make your transition as smooth as possible?

WRITING EXERCISES

1. How would you describe the style of writing Hawke has used for Jaime's story?
2. Discuss the use of first person point of view. Why do you think the author used it in *Dear Pakistan*? Try rewriting a few paragraphs in third person POV. Which do you prefer for Jaime?
3. Do you like Jaime as a character? Rosanne Hawke uses mind maps to get to know her characters and she also seeks to know everything she can about her characters, even what is in their pocket and especially what her characters want the most. How do you think this could help develop a plot?
4. Make a graph of the important events in *Dear Pakistan*. Does the tension gradually build? What happens at the climax? How is the story resolved after that?
5. Find some metaphors or similes. These are usually in Jaime's voice. Do you learn more about Jaime from them?
6. Are there any moments of humour? How does this help you to relate to Jaime?