



TEACHING NOTES



Flying Blind

By Rosanne Hawke

ISBN: 9781761110399

Reading Level: 14+ years

Musical 15-year-old Essie is missing her dad; her friend at school is treating her strangely and a new boy with an army of siblings moves into their coastal town from the Outback.

If this isn't enough to deal with, a junior lifesaver sweeps her out of the sea when she's hightailing it to the shore after sighting a fin. It was a dolphin after all, so she wasn't really in trouble.

Does that mean he likes her?

Sometimes searching for significance and trying to fit in will lead to blind loyalties before we can recognise our true friends.

Themes

- Manipulative friendships • Identity and Belonging/Coming of age • Cornish-Australian culture
- Resilience • Father-daughter relationships • Music • Faith

Discussion Questions & Classroom Activities:

THEMES

Manipulative Friendships

1. Research the term 'gaslighting'. From your research how can you tell Essie is being gaslit by Chloe? Give at least 3 examples from the text.
2. Does Essie know she is being gaslit? Why or why not?
3. How does Essie find out about gaslighting? What does she do about it?
4. What would you do now if you discovered you were in a manipulative friendship?

Friendships and personal growth

1. Does Essie have any of these character or personality traits: Kind, naïve, emotionally immature, spiritually immature, loyal, confident, confused, gentle, wise, resilient, critical, tries to fit in, hiding who she really is, self aware?
2. Choose a few of these, or add some of your own, and show from the text where she has these (or doesn't have them) and how they affect her life during the story.
3. What would you say is Essie's major redeeming feature? Would it be her major flaw? How does she grow or overcome this by the end?
4. Why doesn't Essie see in the beginning who her good friends are? What changes her point of view about friends?
5. Why is Jowan or Beth a good friend for Essie?
6. Why do you think Essie was taken in by Ryan? Do you think Chloe had anything to do with it?
7. Who helps Essie and who hinders her in her personal growth?
8. Why do you think the author included the scene including the heaps of ladybirds caught in a storm? What could Essie learn from the resilience of the ladybirds?

Cornish heritage and faith

1. Does Essie's Cornish heritage affect her character, family life or friendships?
2. Why does Essie hide her faith?
3. How does Essie's involvement in youth group and The MAD Café help toward her spiritual and emotional growth?
4. Would you say a lack of emotional maturity will affect spiritual maturity? How does Essie become more emotionally mature? Does her spiritual maturity follow?

Father-daughter relationships

1. Why does Essie need a more affirming relationship with her father? What do you think of her father's comment that if he had been spending more time with her she wouldn't have fallen for a punk like Ryan. [We would need the page number for this and the final edited words when the book is finished being edited etc.]
2. Why is the father-daughter relationship important to teenaged girls?

Language

1. Choose a motif or metaphor from *Flying Blind* and show how the author uses this in the text to portray emotion or clarity or beauty. For example: swans are a motif in the story – show how they are used and how does this enhance the reader's experience?
2. Birds and flying are used as metaphors and in dreams – why do you think some of these instances are included? The sea and clouds are often used as images. Find images like this and try writing some of your own.
3. What does this statement finally mean for Essie: Sometimes you can't fly by yourself? What does it mean for you?

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

ACEEN004	ACEEN005	ACEEN007	ACEEN009
ACEEN011	ACEEN018	ACEEN020	ACEEN021
ACEEN022	ACEEN024	ACEEN025	ACEEN027
ACEEN028	ACEEN034	ACEEN035	ACEEN038
ACEEN039	ACEEN040	ACEEN041	ACEEN042
ACEEN043	ACEEN044	ACEEN059	ACELA1550
ACELA1551	ACELA1552	ACELA1553	ACELA1556
ACELA1557	ACELA1560	ACELA1561	ACELA1562
ACELA1566	ACELA1564	ACELA1569	ACELT1633
ACELT1635	ACELT1636	ACELT1637	ACELT1640
ACELT1641	ACELT1643	ACELT1644	ACELT1771
ACELT1772	ACELT1773	ACELY1742	ACELY1743
ACELY1744	ACELY1745	ACELT1774	ACELT1814

***Flying Blind* would fit as extension reading with the Year 9 The Rite Journey –Transforming Today's Teens educational program in Christian/church schools (<https://theritejourney.com>).**

About the Author

Rosanne Hawke is an Australian author of over thirty books, among them Zenna Dare and the Beyond Borders series. She writes of belonging & identity, cultures, faith, courage and hope. Rosanne's work has been Shortlisted or Notable in Australian awards, including the CBCA and Caleb Awards, and was the of winner of the 2012 Adelaide Festival Children's Literature Award for Taj and the Great Camel Trek. Her Cornish themes books, *The Messenger Bird*, *Across the Creek* and *Wolfchild* were awarded in Cornwall.

Rosanne was an aid worker In Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates for ten years and has taught Creative Writing at Tabor Adelaide since 2006. She has a PhD in Creative Writing and has written *Riding the Wind: Writing for Children and YA* based on her writing and teaching life. She is a Varuna, May Gibbs, Asialink, and Carclew fellow. She is also the 2015 recipient of the Nance Donkin Award for a woman author who writes for children, a bard of Cornwall, and lives in rural South Australia in an old Cornish farmhouse with underground rooms.

For more information about Rosanne, visit her [website](#) and [Facebook](#) page.



Author Note

When I sent my YA novel called *The Last Virgin in Year 10* to Rhiza Edge to see if they'd republish, the publisher said to rewrite and update it, then they'd see. What transpired defies definition. I found the story needed a major upgrade and the only way I could do it was to bring in a new main character, a new setting and new motivations. I also changed a few of the other characters so much they need new names. They weren't the same people. It became the story of 15-year-old Essie who is missing time spent with her dad, trying to navigate a strange new friendship with Chloe which becomes manipulative. Gaslighting is a confusing form of manipulation where one person tries to control another, often so they feel safe themselves.

There is also the boy Essie has a crush on and a new guy from the Outback who has so much in common with Essie that they start a band. I think it's important that young people see the signs of manipulative friendships so that they will be able to look after themselves and make boundaries about other people's behaviour. I also think it is important to realise when a person you may want to spend time with is not going to be a good friend for you. It takes Essie a long while with a few hard encounters to realise who her true friends are. Throughout, she tries to get time with her over-worked father. I also believe that father-daughter relationships are very important for girls to feel confident in themselves.

Essie learns that sometimes you can't fly on your own. I learned that to rewrite a novel can turn into writing an entirely new novel that is probably only inspired by the previous one. Or is it an adaption of the previous one? Either way, I hope readers enjoy *Flying Blind*, a fresh, different take on an older novel which I've had joy in deconstructing and creating anew.