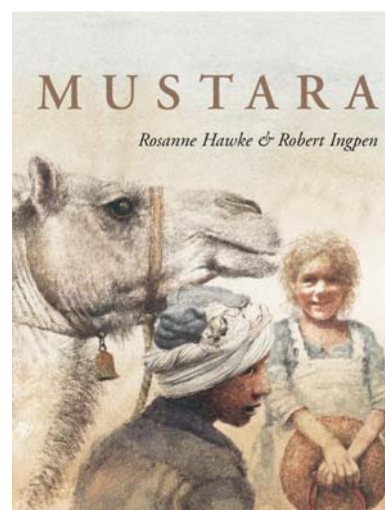


MUSTARA

by **Rosanne Hawke**
&
Robert Ingpen

Picture Book, 0 7344 0899 4



Teachers' Notes

Taj's father is a cameleer who travels with explorers across Australia. Taj desperately wants his camel Mustara to be in one of these expeditions but he is told that Mustara is just too small. Not to be defeated Taj and his friend Emmeline feed and exercise Mustara to help him grow.

But one day a ride on Mustara leads to danger. Taj and Emmeline are in the middle of the desert when a sand storm approaches. How will they survive and how will they get back home? Mustara shelters them from the storm, and rides them back to the station even though the sandstorm has made it impossible to see their tracks. The expedition leader, Mr Giles realizes that Mustara is a very brave camel who can find the camp after a dust storm, which is more important than his size.

Set in 1875 before Ernest Giles' expedition across Australia, Roseanne Hawke has completed a great deal of research to accurately portray the world of explorers, station owners and cameleers. Robert Ingpen's delightful illustrations convey the harsh reality of the Australian desert.

Mustara is a picture book that can be enjoyed on many levels. Younger children will enjoy the heartwarming story of a boy and his camel, while older readers will be able to build on their knowledge of the exploration of Australia from History and SOSE classes.

**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**

Reading the book

These questions are designed to be asked of the class whilst reading the book. The questions lend themselves to class discussion, a more in-depth study of the text and illustrations, and also query assumptions that are made by the reader.

Pages 2 – 3

Taj and Mustara are walking through 'yellow red dust and stones'. What does this tell you about where they are? What country are they in?

Who is Taj? Who is Mustara?

Does the text tell us Mustara is a camel, or do we only assume this because of the illustration?

Pages 4 – 5

What time period do you think this is set?

Do you know any girls who wear aprons over their clothes and ribbons in their hair?

Pages 6 – 7

What is the string? What do you think this means?

What are the differences between the two men on this page? Think about the clothing, skin colour and how comfortable they look.

Pages 8 – 9

Although Taj feeds him Mustara doesn't grow as big as the other camels. Mustara's reaction is to kiss Taj on his head. What do you think the author would like us to understand by this action? Are animals' needs and desires more simple than humans?

Pages 10 – 11

What does the author mean by 'the crow wheels above them?' What does it add to the atmosphere?

Pages 12 – 13

Who is Mr Giles? Is it important for the reader to know who he is to understand the story?

Pages 14 – 15

Taj views the rejection of Mustara as his own rejection; 'No one wants us today'. Has Taj been rejected?

Pages 16 – 17

Compare this image to previous illustrations of the desert landscape. How effectively has the artist given the impression of an upcoming sandstorm?

Pages 18 – 19

Why does Taj know what to do in a sandstorm when Emmeline does not?

Pages 20 – 21

Compare this illustration to the illustration two pages beforehand. How has the artist used techniques to convey the rising up and calm after the storm?

Pages 22 – 3

Taj has faith that Mustara will find the way home. Was his trust in Mustara there all the time?

Pages 24 – 5

Who is Taj talking to when he calls out 'don't forget to tie your ribbons'?
What is the significance of the sunrise on the last page?

Endpapers

Who is walking alongside the camels? Why are they walking? What does this tell you about their role compared to the men riding the camels?

Language

Do you know what these words and phrases mean? Talk about their meanings with the rest of the class, use a dictionary or extra research to find a definition.

spinifex

cameleer

Nunga girls

Hoosta

Simile

Do you know what a simile is?

Here are some examples from *Mustara*:

'like the waves of the ocean'

'the spinifex bushes are little boats blown about'

'sand like a mountain in the sea'

Think about some of the activities you've done today. Can you form a simile to describe your actions?

Onomatopoeia

Have you heard of this phrase? Look up a definition.

'His bell goes *kerlink kerlink*'

Form your own words to describe some of the sounds that occur in *Mustara*.

What would the sandstorm sound like?

What sound would Mustara's hooves make as he walked across the desert?

Further thought

Imagine you are Emmeline and that you must write a letter to your mother explaining what happened when you were lost in the dust storm. Remember that her mother was very concerned Emmeline had her hat on at all time, how would

she feel knowing her daughter was lost in the desert?

On the last page Mustara is selected to go on the expedition because they need a brave camel, even though he is still a little small. Sometimes the most obvious characteristic is not necessarily the most relevant. Discuss

Mustara is based on the real Ernest Giles expedition of 1875. It is both fact and fiction. How much of the story do you think is true? Does it matter that some of the story is fiction?

Research tasks

Mr Giles is Ernest Giles. Who was Ernest Giles?

Where is Port Augusta? Use a map to see where the Ernest Giles expedition traveled.

This story is set in 1875. What else was happening in Australia around that time?

Why were camels used by explorers in Australia?

Why did camels need cameleers to look after them?

About the author

Rosanne Hawke was an ESL/Special Needs teacher and has worked in Pakistan, the United Emirates and Australia. She now writes full time and runs writing workshops for young people in South Australia. Her published works include *he Keeper*, *Sailmaker* (a CBCA Notable Book in 2003), *Wolfchild*, *Across the Creek*, *Zenna Dare*, *A Kiss in Every Wave*, *Borderland*, *The Collector* and *Soraya the Storyteller*, shortlisted for the 2005 CBCA Younger Readers Award. Rosanne lives in Kapunda, South Australia.

About the illustrator

Robert Ingpen has been recognised as a distinguished illustrator for over forty years, widely published throughout the world. In 1986 he became the only Australian ever to have won the Hans Christian Andersen Medal for Children's Literature (Illustration) and he also received the prestigious Dromkeen Medal in 1989. His Lothian books are *The Idle Bear* (1986), *The Age of Acorns* (1988), *The Dreamkeeper* (1994), *The Drover's Boy* (1997), *The Afternoon Treehouse* (1994), *Fabulous Places of Myth* (1998), *Once upon a Place* (1999), *A Bear Tale* (2000), *The Tapestry Story: 150 Years Celebration of the MCG* (2004), and *In the Wake of the Mary Celeste* (2004). Robert lives in Anglesea on the Victorian Surf Coast.