



# THE RED BRIDGE

Written & Illustrated Kylie Dunstan

Published by Windy Hollow Books 2011

## Teachers' notes

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*The Red Bridge* is the story of a young girl who has relocated to an Asian city with her family. It tells of her bewilderment or 'culture shock' when faced with all the differences in her surrounds and how she slowly overcomes this with time and friendship.

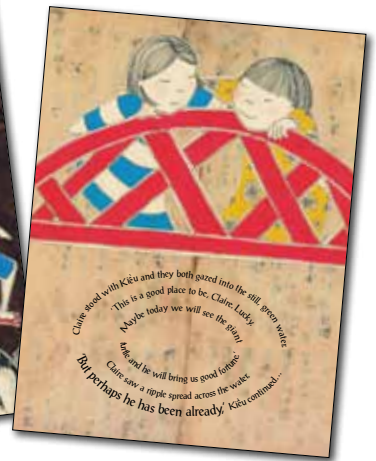
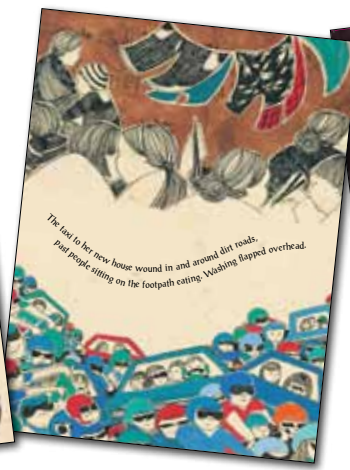
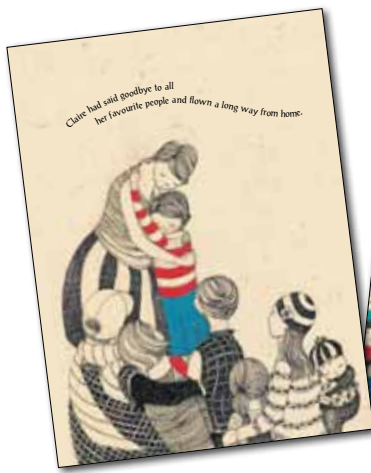
At the beginning of the story Claire is sad, lost and alone. She has had to leave everything that was familiar and adjust to a new culture which at first seems frightening. Throughout the book Claire gains confidence in her new world learning her way around her neighbourhood, how to eat the unfamiliar foods and finally making a new friend.

*The Red Bridge* is based on the authors experience in relocating to Hanoi, Vietnam, with her family. She wanted to convey the sensory overload experienced during those first few weeks in a new country. The design of the illustrations undulates through the book as though the character is caught up in the flow of this densely populated Asian city.

The illustrations were achieved using mixed media and collage. The images were drawn with ink pen, and coloured with either pen or gouache. These were then cut out and arranged on the background. The buildings and walls were made from old books found in shops in Hanoi.







### Before Reading

What knowledge does the reader bring to the book? What clues can you get from the cover as to where the book may be set?

Do you know anything about Vietnam?

### After reading

Claire's family have moved to a new country.

Why might they have moved there?

Why do people go and live in other countries?

There are many Vietnamese people living in Australia. Why do you think they came here?

### Change

In *the Red Bridge*, Claire has to cope with change.

When was a time that you had to cope with change e.g. moving house, moving school, new teacher etc? What were your feelings? What things made the change easier?

What were some of Claire's feelings?

How does the author convey Claire's feelings?

How do Claire's parents help her cope with the change?

How do you think Claire's new friend may feel if she came to Australia? What may be some of the things she may find unusual or different?

### Friendship

Claire has no friends in the new country?

How might she make friends?

What do you think some of the differences between Claire and her new friend might be?

Have you ever been somewhere new where you had no friends?

How did you make friends?

### Vietnam

What does the book tell us about Vietnam?

What are some of the foods that are different for Claire?

Have you ever eaten Vietnamese food? Do you know what some of the main ingredients are?

### Illustrations

How do the illustrations reflect the different culture?

What are some of the differences between an Australian city scene and the pictures we see in the book of Hanoi?

Red is a dominant colour in the book. Why do you think that is?

