



Some topics to consider while reading *The Garden of Sorrows*:

- Fables
- Identity
- Sorrow and exile
- Death and renewal
- Beauty and melancholy
- Human qualities versus animal instincts

THE GARDEN OF SORROWS

Written by John Hughes

Artwork by Marco Luccio

Fourteen mesmerising fables and the etchings they inspired draw us back to our origins in a garden of sorrow and exile, death and renewal, beauty and melancholy.

In *The Garden of Sorrows*, acclaimed author John Hughes re-imagines a series of fables in which Australian animals take on human qualities, as thief and actor, warrior and poet, farmer and merchant. Accompanied by artist Marco Luccio's darkly wry etchings, this collaboration between two artists is as unique as the stories it contains.

About John Hughes

John Hughes is a Sydney-based writer. His first book of autobiographical essays, *The Idea of Home*, was voted the National Year of Reading 'Our Story' winner for NSW in 2012, and the same year he published *The Remnants* with UWA Publishing to great critical acclaim.

About Marco Luccio

Marco Luccio is a Melbourne-based international artist. As painter and printmaker he has exhibited, lectured and been published in a career spanning over twenty years with thirty-five solo exhibitions and over 150 group and curated shows. His works can be found in major collections around the world including the National Gallery of Australia, the New York Historical Society, the New York Public Library and online at www.marcoluccio.com.



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Discussion Questions

- 1 Traditionally, fables are constructed to teach the reader (and in most cases, the characters) a lesson. What was the underlying lesson or principle in each of these stories?
- 2 How did you react to the character of Kaos and the way that his human qualities evolved in 'The Making of Sorrow'?
- 3 What aspects of identity are explored within the stories? Can you relate to any of the struggles that the characters experience? If so, which ones?
- 4 Did you find yourself sympathising with Hades in 'The Tree of Knowledge'? Did you see through the 'hatred of herself', to the human characteristics of vanity and greed that led to her demise?
- 5 How did the illustrations influence your reading of each story? Did they enhance the imagery of particular animals or landscapes?
- 6 In 'The Making of Time', Trickle learns the 'secret of time'. What does this mean?
- 7 How do the author's descriptions of the Australian bushland and seascapes affect the atmosphere in each story, and the book as a whole? Does this imagery aid the fables in imparting their message?
- 8 Several of the characters embody the underlying qualities of self-involvement and introversion. Does this simply mirror man's qualities of vanity and greed, or is it more complex?
- 9 What are some of the major similarities and differences between the stories? How are the fourteen stories connected, and is there a clear overall message?
- 10 Discuss the significance of the book's title, *The Garden of Sorrows*. How is 'sorrow' depicted in each of the stories?