

## The Pull of the Moon

By Pip Smith

### Synopsis

When a fishing boat overloaded with refugees is torn to pieces off Christmas Island, thirteen-year-old Coralie witnesses the unfolding tragedy. Having locked eyes with a frightened Iranian boy during the storm, she is unable to shift her feelings of helplessness and guilt. Haunted by agonising pleas from the sea, Coralie is desperate to do whatever she can, with or without her father's consent.

Amidst the turmoil, the migratory patterns of the island's wildlife continue as millions of red crabs march their way towards the ocean, turtles lay their eggs before heading for foreign waters and elusive whale sharks decide whether to make an appearance. But their survival is challenged at every turn, with invasive newcomers and environmental changes threatening their very existence.

Set against the backdrop of a community grappling with detention centres and media scrutiny, asylum seekers desperate for understanding and the complexities of human relationships, *The Pull of the Moon* is a thought-provoking and important story about family, death, grief and humanity. Powerfully told, its beautiful imagery and symbolic integration of nature result in a deeply moving and evocative novel.



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### Themes

- Asylum seekers; refugees
- Christmas Island
- Fear
- PTSD
- Migration; Animal Migration
- Death; Grief
- Courage
- Relationships
- The Moon
- Iran



### About the author

Pip Smith was named an SMH Best Young Novelist of 2018 for her debut novel, *Half Wild*, which was shortlisted for the Voss Literary award, the Davitt Award, and longlisted for an ABIA Best Debut Fiction award. Her poetry collection, *Too Close for Comfort*, won the inaugural Helen Ann Bell award, and her first children's picture book, *Theodore the Unsure*, was selected by the International Youth Library Foundation as a White Raven book of 2020. Her picture book, *To Greenland!* was published through Scholastic in April 2022. She teaches novel-writing for the Faber Writing Academy, where she also works as manager.

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## Primary links to the Australian Curriculum

English

Years 8 to 10

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### Writing Style

*The Pull of the Moon* is a YA novel written from a range of third person perspectives, including Australian, Iranian, human and non-human. Coralie lives with her environmentalist mother and dive-instructor father, although her island life is far from idyllic. With phosphate mining and the appearance of barbed wire-encased *reception centres*, Christmas Island has become anything but paradise. Added to this are Coralie's feelings of alienation as her small group of friends moves overseas for school. Disenchanted and struggling with her mental health, Coralie's mother embarks on a lengthy expedition, leaving Coralie even more disconnected. When *The Janga*, a fishing boat carrying 89 refugees, is smashed against the cliffs during a vicious storm, Coralie witnesses everything. Traumatized but determined to help in any way she can, Coralie promises a young Iranian girl, Zahra, that she will search for her lost brother. Cleverly structured around the phases of the moon and the migratory patterns of sea creatures and birds, the novel addresses complex issues of asylum seekers, people smugglers, detention centres, government policies and public perceptions. As such, *The Pull of the Moon* lends itself to rich discussion around a range of humanitarian and political issues, inviting readers to learn and engage in important topics at an age-appropriate level. Original and evocative figurative language is used extensively throughout the text, as are various extended metaphors and symbols that connect the story's themes. Certain scenes are vividly described and confronting, but necessary for the story to have its intended impact. Some explicit language is also used. Powerful themes of cultural understanding, acceptance and belonging are pitched against the backdrop of policies and practices driven by fear, populism and greed. *The Pull of the Moon* is suitable for readers aged 13+.

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### Study notes

- Before reading, examine the cover and blurb of the novel. What do you know about Christmas Island and its contentious detention centres? What clues do we get from the cover as to the themes of this story? What are you wondering? Locate Christmas Island on a map and view images online to help contextualise the setting.
- As a class, discuss the quotes at the start of the text by Ada Limón and Rainer Maria Rilke. Return to this discussion once you have finished reading. How do these lines connect with the story?
- In the opening chapter of *The Pull of the Moon*, we are told that Christmas Island is "a restless, shifting place" (p1). In what ways is evident in the novel? What is it that "the crabs and the birds and the whale sharks knew" (p1) that readers come to understand later?
- Discuss the mood of the opening chapters of *The Pull of the Moon*. How has the author used language features to create this mood? How are readers able to relate to Coralie? Why are such connections important in the opening paragraphs of narratives?
- Examine the symbolism of the "60 million red crabs [that] move from their rainforest burrows, down to shake their eggs into the sea [while] whale sharks cruise by to eat those eggs" (p1). Later, we read that: "Now the moon, buried somewhere behind the grey clouds overhead, was getting fatter every night, just as billions of red crab larvae were beginning to grow legs. At the next new moon the night would be dark, and in the morning, the cliffs would be painted red with baby crabs." (p121)

- To help visualise this migration, view the following clips. Compare these films with the description of this process in the text (see *Rivers of Blood*):
  - What are 100 MILLION Crabs Doing Here? | The Trials of Life | BBC Earth  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yo7Rpr\\_xyOU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yo7Rpr_xyOU)
  - The Story Behind the Red Crab Migration on Christmas Island  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FOrQc3lxiBQ>
- Discuss how this motif is used throughout the text.
- How does the excerpt below reflect the circular structure of *The Pull of the Moon*?
  - "Ants devour fallen chicks that never learned to fly and return them to the earth that would once again become the walls of the burrows of crabs...The moon runs rings around the Earth and the island creeps towards the Java trench, one centimetre closer every year" (p1).
- Using the description of Coralie's sand box on p2, create your own model of Christmas Island that represents the events that take place in *The Pull of the Moon*.
- After reading the first chapter, make predictions about the relationship between Coralie and her mother. Use evidence from the text to support your thinking.
- Why might the story begin with Coralie meeting her counsellor? How does she feel about this session? How do we know? What is the significance of the story ending with the same time setting with which it begins?
- What role do bats play in *The Pull of the Moon*? How does the possible discovery of a pipistrelle offer Coralie a glimmer of hope for the future? How is this connected to the continued search for survivors?
- Explain what Coralie means when she says, "You'd think being stranded in the middle of the Indian Ocean would protect you from the outside world, but the world always found a way of getting in" (p7). Make connections to the themes of migration, media coverage and asylum seekers.
- Throughout *The Pull of the Moon* are references to the Chinese population who were treated so poorly on Christmas Island. Why has this detail been included in the text? How does it connect to the themes of the story?
- Why does Coralie's mum say that "invasion and death" are connected somehow (p7)?
- What does Coralie's mum mean when she says the bats are like politicians (see p8)?
- What do you think of Ahmed's idea of there being no money in the world (see p16)? Explain his thinking.
- What does Coralie's mum mean when she says, "men, childbirth and disease" were to be feared in the old days (p17)? What has changed since then? What has not?
- In relation to the themes in *The Pull of the Moon*, discuss the following excerpt:
  - The moon was still up, and it felt strange to be sitting on one corner of a triangle created by Sun—Moon—Earth. One hot rock, one cold rock, one halfway between. Like Past—Future—Present (pp 17–18).
- Why does Coralie wonder if her comment about the moon being the "earth, but in the future, when all the trees and animals have gone" prompts her mum to "leave for good" (p18)? Is she correct? Discuss.
- On assembly, the principal says, "we should all remember these kids [haven't] chosen to be here, or at least come the way they did, so everyone should give them a fair go" (p26). Write a newspaper article that helps communicate this thinking more broadly.
- Describe the first day of school for the boat people kids. Why are they accompanied by guards? Why do you think they don't seem very happy about the food and clothes they've been given? Why do you think "the boat people kids were brought to school sometimes, and sometimes they weren't" (p29)? Why does Coralie wonder if "they [were] disappointed by her island" (pp29–30)? What do you think they would miss from their homelands?

- Coralie's mum worries that she perceives herself as "unpopular" (p32)? Is she unpopular? Why is this of concern to Hannah? Discuss.
- Why does Coralie's mum see her life as "a dead end" (p38)? How might Coralie feel about this comment? What clues are there that Coralie's mum is struggling? Why does Coralie feel like she's "not magnetic enough" to hold her mother close (p40)? Discuss the symbolism of the moon's magnetism evident in this comment.
- Re-read the passage on p44 in which "the traces of the colonial world" are depicted. Explain what these traces are and the impact of colonialism on the history of Christmas Island.
- How does Peggy's description of the detention centre on p48 change your perceptions of asylum seeker policies? How are Coralie's views changing?
- Coralie overhears her mum describe her as "weird" (p55). In the role of Coralie, write a journal entry upon hearing this.
- Why, when the journalists visit, do they see the "mining junk" rather than the natural beauty of the island (p65)? Why are they more interested in the boat on the horizon? How does Coralie's dad feel about this? Why does he feel this way?
- The opening chapter of *New Moon* is narrated from a frigatebird's point of view. How does this change in perspective help broaden the storytelling in *The Pull of the Moon*?
- What are the costs, financial and personal, of those travellers coming by boat to Australia (see p73+)?
- In the role of Maman, write a series of journal entries about boarding the boat with your family.
- Complete a Y chart to capture what you would see, hear and feel on the boat journey from Indonesia to Christmas Island. Using these ideas, write a piece of description about this experience.
- How do you think Farzan, the traveller's agent, feels about his role in the people smuggling business. How do we know (see p78)?
- Explain the symbolism of Ali's homing pigeon, Harun. What is the connection between Harun and later, Robin? How is Harun being kept in his cage a metaphor for asylum seekers detained in detention centres (see p81)? Why is Ali unsure whether he wants a pet pigeon?
- Describe Ali's relationship with Maman Bozorg. What is the importance of the book she gives to him, *Shannameh* (see p91+), in which "all the smaller stories grew from one proud, straight trunk like branches on a cypress tree" (p92)? How does this reveal the difficulties of leaving one's homeland and the importance of maintaining the integrity of cultural identity?
- Baba Bozorg had been imprisoned for being an apostate – a godless person (p97). How does this detail help explain Baba's need to leave Iran?
- How can the turtle hatchlings digging their way out of the sand be likened to the asylum seekers struggling for survival (see pp109–110)?
- As the boat crashes upon the cliffs, Coralie awakes to the keening of women: "Help us, please help us" (p110), which haunts her throughout the remainder of the story. Discuss how the author has used this refrain to frame the narrative.
- Discuss the language features that create such a vivid depiction of the storm that destroys the boat.
- After the storm, why do Ahmed's green eyes "[glint] like leaves in the rain" (p118)?
- Ahmed and Coralie play a game of Utopia (see pp120–121). Add to their list or start a new list that you feel would help improve society.
- What role does Ahmed play in the story? How does he help Coralie? How does he provide a conduit between Coralie and her mum? How would the text be different without him?
- Discuss the symbolism of the beach being covered with "little sticks of bleached white coral" that looks like it's "made of the broken pieces of an alphabet that no one knew how to read any more" (p125). What do you think the beach is trying to say?

- In the role of Coralie, imagine you have been able to reach your mum by phone after the events of the boat crash. Share this conversation in a dramatic piece.
- As the novel progresses, the author includes information about the political landscape at the time of the boat crash and what public sentiment was like at the time. Below is a collation of some of these attitudes. Discuss these perspectives as a whole class:
  - Why didn't they apply for visas like everyone else? Mum would have answers. p129
  - Mum would say, "If there is one thing Australians are scared of it's a man with no job." p130
  - She said a boat person was a person like you and me, and not a wealthy migrant trying to dodge the queue. p130
  - Most kids felt sorry for the boat people. Some kids were angry with them for putting their own lives at risk and demanding that the Australians put theirs at risk as well. Basically, everyone sounded like a tape recording of their parents. p137
  - But what Coralie wanted to know was why the refugees felt they had to come by boat in the first place. p137
  - "Let me try another way. Was there any good reason why your brother-in-law's family couldn't apply for Australian residency from Iran?" "You tell me," she said. "Where is the Australian Embassy in Tehran?" Kate made a sympathetic face. "I'm sorry. If he hadn't come by boat—" "No!" Zanamou Negar shouted. "If you had made the process easier, he wouldn't have had to come by boat." (pp 213–214)
- Using the sources below, explore the story of the *MV Tampa* (also see p131). How and why did this become a "pantomime for the press"? Why did the captain honk out a signal: "never again" (p131)?
  - ['Tampa affair' | Australia's Defining Moments Digital Classroom | National Museum of Australia](#)
  - [The Tampa affair, 20 years on: the ship that capsized Australia's refugee policy | Australian immigration and asylum | The Guardian](#)
- Why, after the boat crash, does Coralie say to her dad, 'I wish you were dead' (p134)? How does he deal with this? How does the boat crash impact their relationship?
- How do we know how different groups of residents from Christmas Island feel about the boat crash? Give evidence from the text to support your ideas.
- What must it have been like for Coralie's dad to go diving for the missing refugees? What impact does this have on him?
- Why, if Ahmed was also a boat person, does he "do my job [and]...stay out of trouble" (p142)? Why does this frustrate Coralie?
- What connections can be made between the following excerpt and the themes of *The Pull of the Moon*: "A horrible thought began to gather in her mind like a monsoon cloud: What if you died without ever feeling safe at night? What if you never found home?" (p146)
- Why has the giant trevally that eats the fledgling been included in the text (see p149)? How is this used to help bring the story to its conclusion?
- In the role of Zahra, write a series of journal entries about your experiences on Christmas Island. Include your interactions with various people in the community.
- In what ways is Zahra courageous? Why does her bravery start to "[peel] back like the lid on a tin to reveal a ringing panic" (p180)?
- Reread the passage on p185 in which Zahra questions why birds can fly "wherever they wanted... yet people locked each other up when they went places they weren't supposed to? And why weren't they supposed to come here?" What point is she making about equitable access to freedom and safety?
- After the boat crash, why is Coralie so angry with her dad? How would you describe their relationship? How do you think this will develop in coming years?



- How do you think Ray feels about his new job as a guard at the Reception Centre? How would Hannah feel about this? What about Coralie?
- Why does Coralie feel "she was the apple and Mum was the tree and it was impossible to fall far enough away" (p205)? Have you ever felt this way about your own similarities with your parents? Share in a reflection.
- How does Zahra view Zanam Negar's story of coming to Australia? Why is this character included in the story? Why does she say, "the right question is, why should anyone have to wait ten years to enjoy a life that others are born into by chance?" (p213)?
- Reread Zanam Negar's speech on p215. How does this inform your ideas about refugee and asylum seeker policies? Share in Circle Time.
- Coralie thinks about "how plants and birds must have a pretty good sense of humour. They were always making a joke of the lines humans drew between places" (p221). Discuss.
- Discuss the symbolism of the "brown booby chicks...waiting for their parents" on p223.
- Why does Baba say to Ali that he has to let Zahra go (p238)? At which point did you realise that Ali did not survive the boat crash?
- What are apogees and perigees? Why have these chapters been given these titles?
- Discuss Saira's comment that "the whole world could be one home, and all the different countries merely rooms" (p246). Write and deliver a public speech about this premise.
- Why, when seeing the whale shark calf all alone, is Hannah unable to move (p250)?
- In what ways is the whale shark a representation of Hannah? What is the significance of Coralie swimming with the whale shark?
- With reference to the relationship between Coralie and her mum, discuss the following question: "What should the girl say to the woman that would make the woman stop breaking her heart over and over again" (p273)? How does Coralie navigate the complexity of this relationship?
- How does telling her mum about the boat crash help Coralie (see p275)? In pairs, recreate this scene in a short performance.
- Respond to the lingering question: "was there more we could have done" (p279)?
- In the role of Coralie, write a letter to Zahra in her new home in Sydney.
- Discuss the closing line of *The Pull of the Moon*: "The more still Coralie was, the more she noticed. The more she noticed, the louder the island became. It roared" (p281). What do you think the island was saying?
- After completing the text, reread *A Roost and a Refuge* starting on p1. What connections can you make to this chapter upon this second reading? Discuss the text's circular structure, starting and finishing with this chapter in January 2011. How has Coralie grown and changed from the beginning to the end of the novel? Why is it often necessary to revisit certain passages from texts to make full meaning of the story?
- How does the lack of blood as Ali slips through the broken glass foreshadow what happens in *The Pull of the Moon*?
- In the role of Coralie, write the email to your mum that you are finding so difficult to compose.
- Which of Hannah's values are evident in Coralie's character? How are these similar and different from those values she has inherited from her dad?
- Why do you think Hannah is reluctant or unwilling to stay on Christmas Island?
- What impact does the phosphate mining have on Christmas Island? Find out more about about its ecological consequences. Time permitting, write an exposé to share your findings.
- How does the author use birds throughout *The Pull of the Moon*? Use evidence from the text to support your thinking.
- What role do characters like Matt and Peggy play in *The Pull of the Moon*? Why include characters like these?

- Explain the relationship that Coralie develops with Zahra. Make predictions about how this relationship may grow in the future.
- Choose a scene from *The Pull of the Moon* to illustrate such as the migration of the red crabs or one of the jungle scenes. Use the figurative language in relevant passages to help bring this scene to life.
- Discuss the open-endedness of *The Pull of the Moon*. Write the next part of this story.
- How is the migration of the turtles used as an extended metaphor in *The Pull of the Moon*?
- In what ways is *The Pull of the Moon* a coming-of-age story?
- Using the phases of the moon as a guide, create a timeline of events in *The Pull of the Moon*.
- Consider using the following picture books as companion texts to *The Pull of the Moon*:
  - *The Island* by Armin Greder (Allen & Unwin)
  - *My Name is Not Refugee* by Kate Milner (Barrington Stoke)
  - *Out* by Angela May George (Scholastic Australia)
  - *A True Person* by Gabian Marin (New Frontier Publishing)
- Discuss the use of figurative language in *The Pull of the Moon*. How does this further engage readers with the characters, settings, and events of the text? Examples include:
  - It's more like the surface of the moon: phosphate dust swirls above bald craters and is blown about by road trains hurtling at speed from the mines (p1)
  - The trauma counsellor stood on the other side, hands perched like spiders on the perspex walls of her tiny plastic world (p2)
  - Her voice designed to cling, like a web (p2)
  - if she looked up and caught the counsellor's eye she'd see herself reflected back, some lost 14-year-old girl suspended upside down in the black camera of her pupil (p2)
  - She stood—paralysed—and focused on the sand so hard it nearly melted into glass (p2)
  - Coralie's neck started to prickle with sweat (p3)
  - They were light as matchboxes, small as thumbs (p7)
  - The bats' vanishing act spread like a disease (p8)
  - The driveway was sealed and black and so new you could almost feel the heat radiating off the asphalt and through the closed door of the car (p11)
  - They continued on at snail's pace (p11)
  - Slow-moving trucks shifted mountains of dirt from one corner of the vast moonscape to the other (p11)
  - An island pockmarked with phosphate mines (p11)
  - Tightly coiled rolls of barbed wire that lay on the ground like brand new slinkies (p12)
  - Ahmed leaped out of the ute and wielded his bat detector like a lightsabre (p13)
  - The road was grey-white dust (p14)
  - The light got through and was held in the leaves like a magic spell (p14)
  - Her breath flew up into her chest with excitement (p14)
  - They reached the time of dusk's derangement (p14)
  - Pigeons purred and Abbott's boobies bleated like sheep playing oboes in the trees (p14)
  - The trees became hairy with lichen and moss (p14)
  - Light still hit the high prongs of tall dead trees like memories of lightning (p14)
  - Mum and Ahmed bulldozed their way through the undergrowth. But Coralie was scared she'd get cut by a pandanus leaf edged like a bread knife. (p14)
  - Mum moved through the jungle like a loose electrical cable stuffed into khaki shorts and T-shirt (p15)
  - Ahmed looked like he'd fallen out of a 1970s Indonesian funk band and landed in the jungle...all calm curves and effortless cool (p15)

- Five glossy swiftlets raced each other to the dead tree that clawed at the fingernail moon (p16)
- There were no sounds left but the kiss of geckos and the rustle of leaves in the wind (p16)
- He was actually smiling at Mum's reflection, held, like a butterfly, in the glass (p17)
- They sat in silence as the sun lifted its bulk behind them and set the sea alight with the day (p17)
- The lake-still sea (p23)
- The water smacked her in the back when she broke the surface. Then she sank in slow-mo, her babyish body curled up like she was back in the womb, bubbles roiling around her... She was as silent as a turtle, as slick as a fish. (p23)
- The peaches went down her throat like sea slugs escaping down a drain (p26)
- The boat people kids were walked into the assembly hall like celebrities flanked with bodyguards (p26)
- They had broad chests, and muscles that swelled like papayas beneath the sleeves of their T-shirts (p27)
- Apples, too. Shiny and red as cricket balls. (p28)
- The bell cracked the back of their awkward silence (p29)
- Coralie's plate looked like an island, the noodles plopped on top like a seething mass of wolf snakes (p32)
- She was wearing so much makeup her face couldn't move without cracking (p33)
- A soprano voice floated up like a bubble, the notes as clear and proud as the glass on the Club's trophy cabinets (p34)
- Coralie felt an old familiar terror rise like acid in her tummy (p36)
- If the dead never left, they'd be packed on this tiny island like anchovies in a tin (p37)
- Coralie's heart was thumping like a rabbit held tight (p39)
- The last thing Coralie saw as she closed her eyes was the out-of-place moon—a white sponge dab in a wash of afternoon blue (p39)
- Mum still had her eyes closed and was laughing and kicking like a baby in a bassinet (p39)
- A truck hurtled past and made the air so thick with dust it seemed like they were driving inside a cloud (pp41-42)
- She'd once found [a centipede] sneaking through her house at night, its yellow legs undulating across the kitchen floor as if practising piano on the tiles (p44)
- Coralie felt as cosy as a possum in a pouch (p46)
- The jungle loomed all around, black and impenetrable as deep space (p46)
- Her dark eye makeup ran in rivulets down her cheeks (p47)
- The fire fizzed and cracked like the cackle of the dead (p49)
- The bowl was as white as his zinc-smeared head, and his beard was speckled with mince that the stove had spat in his face (p53)
- Spume and rain pounded the car roof like fists (p57)
- Christmas. It seemed about as far away and imaginary as a reindeer flying through the clouds. (p59)
- Dad's bald head still slathered in zinc cream from yesterday's dive glowing like a jellyfish in the dim moonlight (p61)
- Above and between all these machines, bright green rainforest frothed like a science experiment (p65)
- The line between sky and sea was a blurry grey (p67)
- Where clouds gathered above the island, a Christmas Island frigatebird was riding a thermal current like an elevator (p71)
- Ali clutched Maman's hand and felt it go slimy and hot like a steamed fish (p74)



- Two furrows were etched between his eyebrows, cut deep like he'd been marked with the claws of a bird (p75)
- The long shape of an island lying like a sick dog in the sea (p76)
- They found a spot under the railing where the bow rose up, and huddled together like cats in the rain (p76)
- He sat perfectly still as if Baba's hands were nothing more dangerous than a cosy jacket (p80)
- The house looked like it was dozing with one eye open (p83)
- Harun circled back around and returned, flapping his wings so close to Ali's face it was like being smothered with a burst pillow (p85)
- No one spoke to her for fear she would grumble like a thundercloud and rain abuse on everyone's heads (p89)
- Maman Bozorg's snores started up like a tractor bogged in a gravel pit (p92)
- The man stopped talking and slipped away like an eel (p94)
- Baba's will was as strong as a boulder falling from the top of a hill (p99)
- But when the plane lifted off the ground his stomach stayed behind as if it were made of concrete (p103)
- The waves cracked against the cliffs like whips (p105)
- The ocean was furious. Waves tall as houses pounded the cliffs and surged back out to sea with so much force the water in their wake frothed and roiled like suds in a washing machine. (pp112-113)
- They must have been in the cabin, bobbing like apples in the swell (p117)
- She'd fallen apart like a baby (p118)
- Her feelings seemed separate to her mind somehow and churned in her belly like the sea (p119)
- The earth after rain smelled metallic (p122)
- A navy ship lurked out in the deep water like a shark (p122)
- The computer mouse nudged up from beneath a blanket of Dad's papers like a mushroom under leaf litter; circles of mould floated in a mug of cold tea like miniature blue waterlilies. (p133)
- It jumped from mouth to mouth like lice on the heads of kindy kids (p138)
- He fell apart like a buttery cake (p146)
- The smell of diesel wrapped him in its chemical embrace (p150)
- He writhed like a worm pulled out of the earth (p150)
- Spiderwebs more elaborate than cathedrals held moonlight that would otherwise be lost between leaves (p156)
- Twenty red crabs were marching across the road, as slow and purposeful as a homeward-bound infantry battalion (p158)
- Coralie and Robin reached Dolly Beach just as the sun began to melt its butter light across the sea (p159)
- Dangling fig tree roots quivered over the black entryway like untrimmed nose hairs (p160)
- The wailing had probably been nothing more than the wind playing the limestone like a flute (p164)
- Birds twitched and squeaked like bath toys in the trees (p165)
- The white flesh came out as easily as a knife from its sheath (p170)
- The silence in the room made Zahra's skin prickle (p185)
- She poured the red gloop into a microwave-safe bowl and zapped it until the Glad Wrap opened like mouth ulcers (p191)
- He smoothed his eyebrows with the heels of his hands as if stroking two hairy, bucking caterpillars, willing them to be calm (p192)

- Dad's eyes ... were deep brown and melted, choc gelatos in the rain (p198)
- The smell of burning rubber hovered in the air like a hawk (p201)
- Dad's electric toothbrush buzzed like a wasp trapped in the bathroom down the hall (p206)
- She flipped onto her belly and reached her leg out like a hungry tentacle (p206)
- Ahmed flipped and scrambled for an opening in the sheets like an exposed worm yanked out of the soil (p207)
- Her heart felt like it had been eaten alive by crazy ants (p207)
- But the loudest sound of all was that wail—help us, please help us—rising like a siren into the night (p208)
- She knew she'd reached the cliffs by the saplings that were bowed in prayer with their backs to the ocean breeze (p221)
- A huge wave rose up like a volcano erupting in fast forward (p224)
- They looked like big blocks of moon rock that had been cut out of the sky with a serrated knife and left to sit on the ground exactly where they fell. (p229)
- The whirr of crickets started up like a rusty old generator (p229)
- The full moon made the camp look like the set of a silent movie (p230)
- Her dried-out tongue grew fat and wet again, like a desiccated slug come back to life (p232)
- The moon continued to cast its silver spells over the leaves (p233)
- The moon continued to rise, dragging shadows across the forest floor like a gunman with his victim by the hair (p236)
- A grand old house painted yellow and white stood proud and firm as a lion (p237)
- Thoughts gushed like a geyser (p247)
- Coralie couldn't walk to the supermarket or ride her bike to the Cove for a swim without making people's heads swivel like fibreglass clowns at a funfair (p254)
- The Galapagos Islands looked like the corroded black snaggleteeth of a long-dead sea monster (p256)
- He was grinning like a kid at a cake shop (p261)
- Swimming alongside the gills, Coralie caught a blast of warm water, like exhaust from a vent on the side of a bus (p261)
- 'They're so thick the roads look like rivers of blood' (p268)
- Coralie rode home from the trauma counsellor's office through streets banked with straggling baby crabs, heaped like bright red snow on the edge of the tar (p271)
- Coralie could just make out Ahmed's white ute doing laps of the tarmac with his butterfly net hanging out the window like a dog catching the wind in its mouth (p280)

## Primary links to the Australian Curriculum

### Year 8 English

#### Language

##### sub-strand: language for interacting with others

- recognise how language shapes relationships and roles (AC9E8LA01)
- understand how layers of meaning can be created when evaluating by using literary devices such as simile and metaphor (AC9E8LA02)

##### sub-strand: text structure and organisation

- explain how texts are structured depending on their purpose and how language features vary, recognising that some texts are hybrids that combine different genres or elements of different genres (AC9E8LA03)
- understand how cohesion in texts is improved by strengthening the internal structure of paragraphs with examples, quotations and substantiation of claims (AC9E8LA04)

##### sub-strand: language for expressing and developing ideas

- understand and use punctuation conventions including semicolons and dashes to extend ideas and support meaning (AC9E8LA09)

#### Literature

##### sub-strand: literature and contexts

- explain the ways that ideas and points of view may represent the values of individuals and groups in literary texts, drawn from historical, social and cultural contexts, by First Nations Australian, and wide-ranging Australian and world authors (AC9E8LE01)

##### sub-strand: engaging with and responding to literature

- share opinions about the language features, literary devices and text structures that contribute to the styles of literary texts (AC9E8LE03)
- explain how language and/or images in texts position readers to respond and form viewpoints (AC9E8LE03)

##### sub-strand: examining literature

- identify intertextual references in literary texts and explain how the references enable new understanding of the aesthetic quality of the text (AC9E8LE04)
- analyse how language features such as sentence patterns create tone, and literary devices such as imagery create meaning and effect (AC9E8LE05)

##### sub-strand: creating literature

- create and edit literary texts that experiment with language features and literary devices for particular purposes and effects (AC9E8LE06)

#### Literacy

##### sub-strand: texts in contexts

- identify how texts reflect contexts (AC9E8LY01)

##### sub-strand: interacting with others

- use interaction skills for identified purposes and situations, including when supporting or challenging the stated or implied meanings of spoken texts in presentations or discussion (AC9E8LY02)

##### sub-strand: analysing, interpreting and evaluating

- use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring, questioning and inferring to interpret and evaluate ideas in texts (AC9E8LY05)

##### sub-strand: creating texts

- plan, create, edit and publish written and multimodal texts, organising and expanding ideas, and selecting text structures, language features, literary devices and visual features for purposes and audiences in ways that may be imaginative, reflective, informative, persuasive and/or analytical (AC9E8LY06)
- plan, create, rehearse and deliver spoken and multimodal presentations for audiences and purposes, selecting language features, literary devices, visual features and features of voice to suit formal or informal situations, and organising and developing ideas in texts in ways that may be imaginative, reflective, informative, persuasive and/or analytical (AC9E8LY07)

##### sub-strand: word knowledge

- apply learnt knowledge to spell accurately and to learn new words (AC9E8LY08)

## **Year 9 English**

### **Language**

#### **sub-strand: language for interacting with others**

- recognise how language empowers relationships and roles (AC9E9LA01)

#### **sub-strand: text structure and organisation**

- examine how authors adapt and subvert text structures and language features by experimenting with spoken, written, visual and multimodal elements, and their combination (AC9E9LA03)

#### **sub-strand: language for expressing and developing ideas**

- identify how authors vary sentence structures creatively for effects, such as intentionally using a dependent clause on its own or a sentence fragment (AC9E9LA05)
- analyse how vocabulary choices contribute to style, mood and tone (AC9E9LA08)

### **Literature**

#### **sub-strand: literature and contexts**

- analyse the representations of people and places in literary texts, drawn from historical, social and cultural contexts, by First Nations Australian, and wide ranging Australian and world authors (AC9E9LE02)

#### **sub-strand: engaging and responding to literature**

- present a personal response to a literary text comparing initial impressions and subsequent analysis of the whole text (AC9E9LE02)
- analyse how features of literary texts influence readers' preference for texts (AC9E9LE03)

#### **sub-strand: examining literature**

- analyse texts and evaluate the aesthetic qualities and appeal of an author's literary style (AC9E9LE04)
- analyse the effect of text structures, language features and literary devices such as extended metaphor, metonymy, allegory, symbolism and intertextual references (AC9E9LE05)

#### **sub-strand: creating literature**

- create and edit literary texts, that may be a hybrid, that experiment with text structures, language features and literary devices for purposes and audiences (AC9E9LE06)

### **Literacy**

#### **sub-strand: texts in context**

- analyse how representations of people, places, events and concepts reflect contexts (AC9E9LY01)

#### **sub-strand: analysing, interpreting and evaluating**

- analyse and evaluate how language features are used to represent a perspective of an issue, event, situation, individual or group (AC9E9LY03)
- analyse the organisation of ideas in paragraphs and extended texts, and evaluate its impact on meaning (AC9E9LY04)
- use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring, questioning and inferring to compare and contrast ideas and opinions in and between texts (AC9E9LY05)

#### **sub-strand: creating texts**

- plan, create, edit and publish written and multimodal texts, organising, expanding and developing ideas, and selecting text structures, language features, literary devices and multimodal features for purposes and audiences in ways that may be imaginative, reflective, informative, persuasive, analytical and/or critical (AC9E9LY06)
- plan, create, rehearse and deliver spoken and multimodal presentations for purpose and audience, using language features, literary devices and features of voice such as volume, tone, pitch and pace, and organising, expanding and developing ideas in ways that may be imaginative, reflective, informative, persuasive, analytical and/or critical (AC9E9LY07)

## **Year 10 English**

### **Language**

#### **sub-strand: language for interacting with others**

- understand how language can have inclusive and exclusive social effects, and can empower or disempower people (AC9E10LA01)
- understand that language used to evaluate, implicitly or explicitly reveals an individual's values (AC9E10LA02)

#### **sub-strand: text structure and organisation**

- analyse text structures and language features and evaluate their effectiveness in achieving their purpose (AC9E10LA03)

#### **sub-strand: language for expressing and developing ideas**

- analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of particular sentence structures to express and craft ideas (AC9E10LA05)
- analyse how meaning and style are achieved through syntax (AC9E10LA06)
- understand how authors use and experiment with punctuation (AC9E10LA09)

### **Literature**

#### **sub-strand: literature and contexts**

- analyse representations of individuals, groups and places and evaluate how they reflect their context in literary texts by First Nation Australian, wide-ranging Australian and world authors (AC9E10E01)

#### **sub-strand: engaging with and responding to literature**

- reflect on and extend others' interpretations of and responses to literature (AC9E10E02)
- analyse how the aesthetic qualities associated with text structures, language features, literary devices and visual features, and the context in which these texts are experienced, influence audience response (AC9E10E03)
- evaluate the social, moral or ethical positions represented in literature (AC9E10E04)

#### **sub-strand: examining literature**

- analyse how text structure, language features, literary devices and intertextual connections shape interpretations of texts (AC9E10E05)
- compare and evaluate how "voice" as a literary device is used in different types of texts, such as poetry, novels and film, to evoke emotional responses (AC9E10E06)
- analyse and evaluate the aesthetic qualities of texts (AC9E10E07)

#### **sub-strand: creating literature**

- create and edit literary texts with a sustained "voice", selecting and adapting text structures, literary devices, and language, auditory and visual features for purposes and audiences (AC9E10E08)

### **Literacy**

#### **sub-strand: texts in context**

- analyse and evaluate how people, places, events and concepts are represented in texts and reflect contexts (AC9E10LY01)

#### **sub-strand: analysing, interpreting and evaluating**

- analyse and evaluate how language features are used to implicitly or explicitly represent values, beliefs and attitudes (AC9E10LY03)
- analyse and evaluate how authors organise ideas in texts to achieve a purpose (AC9E10LY04)
- integrate comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring, questioning and inferring to analyse and interpret complex and abstract ideas (AC9E10LY05)

#### **sub-strand: creating texts**

- plan, create, edit and publish written and multimodal texts, organising, expanding and developing ideas through experimenting with text structures, language features, literary devices and multimodal features for specific purposes and audiences in ways that may be imaginative, reflective, informative, persuasive, analytical and/or critical (AC9E10LY06)
- plan, create, rehearse and deliver spoken and multimodal presentations by experimenting with rhetorical devices, and the organisation and development of ideas, to engage audiences for different purposes in ways that may be imaginative, reflective, informative, persuasive, analytical and/or critical (AC9E10LY07)