

The **BRAINWAVES** Club

Term 2 2021: The Tolkiens - Years 5 and 6

Venue: Alphington Grammar School

Term Fee \$285

All Hail the Hero Quest: Myths, Monsters and Mystery!

What is a 'hero'? That's the question writers have been asking themselves from the very beginnings of literature, and the answers they've given us in their stories have been spectacular, scintillating, inspiring – and surprising! Is real heroism to do with the paths you take? The choices you make? The goals you set? The person you are... or are about to become?!

Discover the nature of heroic characters and their amazing tales and journeys that changed fiction forever: our own hero quest will cross continents and the boundaries of fantasy, charge back into history, and leap forward to contemporary fiction. Every step of the way we'll be poring over pages, relishing writing challenges, and venturing forth to share our ideas, opinions and stories in creative camaraderie! Pens at the ready, as this unique literary adventure inspires fierce, fascinating, funny and fulfilling writings of our own...

Requirements: Come armed with a copy of the text for each week and a well-stocked pencil case!

Meeting 5: Villains and Villainy: Facing *The Final Problem*!

Maybe we can only define heroes by their opposites, though? Perhaps we need darkness to enjoy light, evil to understand good, and villains in order to appreciate heroes! One of the greatest literary detectives of all time and his arch-enemy have become the epitome of this clash of morality: let's investigate how to create an antagonist for our own fictional hero, and uncover the secret to their definite differences... and their strange similarities!

Requirements: Read the Sherlock Holmes' short story *The Final Problem* by Arthur Conan Doyle: why do you think Professor Moriarty has had such an influence on bad guys in fiction?

Meeting 6: Refusing Fairytales: Rebellion in *Howl's Moving Castle*?!

So far on this reading and writing odyssey we've explored stories with familiar archetypal characters and familiar formulaic plots... but it's when books *refuse* to live up to our expectations that they become even more momentous and memorable! Diana Wynne Jones has a genius for tweaking, twisting and upturning old stories and stereotypes in her novels, and the hero of this tale is quite unique in literature! For us, that means it's time for wild imagination and writing innovation: now we know the rules, let's break 'em!

Requirements: Read Diana Wynne Jones' novel *Howl's Moving Castle*: how many deliberate refusals to follow hero quest 'rules' can you find?

Meeting 7: On the Dark Side: *Artemis Fowl's* Dilemma...

What happens when your protagonist objects to being 'good'?! Writers often complain about their characters misbehaving and refusing to be written in the way they should, but stories (and readers like us) totally love difficult, dangerous and unpredictable anti-heroes like *Artemis Fowl*. Why are they so appealing? Why are they so hard to write? Are they really as opposed to being heroic as they think they are?!

Requirements: Read *Artemis Fowl* by Eoin Colfer and simply ask yourself: *is he a hero?*

Meeting 8: There and Back Again: Illuminating *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief*!

We've travelled nearly 3000 years on our hero quest, and have arrived back in the middle of a popular recent series that you may already have read and loved! Thing is: does it now remind you of something too? Heroes searching for their identities, exotic locations and dastardly villains, a quest cycle and a new spin on familiar literary devices... Like every good hero, we come back home to find modern fiction is still reimagining, reinventing and revitalizing the hero quest – and now we can too!

Requirements: Read *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan: what does it have in common with Homer's *Odyssey* from the very first week?!

About the Presenter

Kim teaches English literature and creative writing to university and high school students, and drama and theatre skills to both adults and kids all over Melbourne. She has run book clubs and cabarets, performed Shakespeare and written sonnets, dabbled in Dickens and is best buddies with the Brontes, and while she loves a ripping good yarn, she is still convinced *everything* we get to read and write in our lives is always a thrilling new adventure!