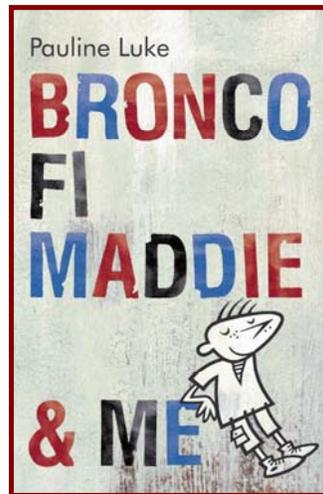


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BRONCO, FI, MADDIE AND ME

Pauline Luke



Teachers' Notes

Written by a practising secondary teacher

ISBN: 978 07022 3601 3 / AU\$16.95

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SYNOPSIS

Four close friends in the middle school of Turra Bend Secondary School take up the challenge laid down by their new, exotic, sparkly, writer-in-residence to find 'magic' in words and 'get your writing out into the public'.

Upset at the thought of their middle school building being torn down and students moved into either a concrete block (like the senior school) or the cream brick nonentity of the junior school, Bronco, Fi, Maddie and Luke decide to make their writing project a protest movement to preserve the old building, Hannah House.

Of course Hannah House is old, cramped and in need of repair, but is it really unsafe and beyond renovation?

The group researches the 'faces' behind the building of Hannah House, collect petitions and organise a march on the town hall. Bronco, a film director in the making, directs a melodrama of those 'faces', blending it with a current affairs type of documentary showing the movement to save the building.

Throughout, Ms Capeddes lauds the written word and inspires the class to write in many different forms.

THEMES

- Writing/language
- Friendship
- Community
- Preservation of history/heritage
- Protest

DISCUSSION/ACTIVITIES:

- Luke has developed a cast of believable characters who are capable of their own little surprises. Choose one or two characters and, from their actions, write a short piece about them. Consider Jason and other secondary characters as well as the four friends.
- Discuss the place of the past in the present. Does the preservation of old buildings within a township add to a sense of continuity and belonging to a place? You could debate the topic 'Preservation or Progress' and whether the two are opposed or can co-exist.
- Discuss the place of protest in society. Is it an essential part of the democratic process, or just a nuisance? Take into account that if there had

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been no protest, the town would have lost an important part of its heritage and corrupt business practices would not have been exposed.

- One magical moment in the book is the viewing of a pod of Southern Right Whales (pp.52-53). Ask students to share a moment when they have experienced a similar sense of wonder at either an animal or a part of the natural environment.
- Discuss the ending. Is it satisfying? Why?
- Discuss an issue in your community that is of particular concern to you/your class/your family or friends. How would you develop an awareness of this issue? What measures would you like to see taken in order to help solve the problem? Who could you write to or speak to about this issue? Make a list.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pauline Luke was raised in the central Victorian city of Bendigo, and lived for several years in Vancouver, Canada where her two sons were born.

She now lives in Melbourne with her husband and White East Highland Terrier Piper.

After graduating from Monash University with a double major in English literature and general and comparative literature, she studied professional and creative writing and editing at RMIT.

Pauline works as a freelance editor and has several non-fiction books published.