

Chepstow School Reading at Home

Reading 1: Reading of The Walled City by Ryan Graudin with prompt questions

Tip for parents: This extract is really gripping and is based on true events. There is plenty of opportunity to research the book and complete writing and reading tasks around it. This is a short section of a longer book if your child loves it and wants to read more, they can find it online to order. It can be read as a fast-paced escape story or with older children you could discuss some of the darker criminal themes. Check out page 4 to see if you find the word used by a character inappropriate; you may want to blank it out depending on the age of your child.

Reading: The Walled City [click here](#)

Jin hides under the radar, afraid the wild street gangs will discover her biggest secret: Jin passes as a boy to stay safe. Still, every chance she gets, she searches for her lost sister....

In this innovative and adrenaline-fueled novel, they all come together in a desperate attempt to escape a lawless labyrinth before the clock runs out.

Context

Kowloon Walled City was a largely ungoverned, densely populated settlement in Kowloon City in Hong Kong. Originally a Chinese military fort, the Walled City became a district after the New Territories were leased to Britain by China in 1898. Its population increased dramatically following the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong during World War II. By 1990, the walled city contained 50,000 residents within its 2.6-hectare (6.4-acre) borders. From the 1950s to the 1970s, it was controlled by local triads and had high rates of crime. In January 1987, the Hong Kong municipal government announced plans to demolish the walled city. After an arduous eviction process, demolition began in March 1993 and was completed in April 1994. Kowloon Walled City Park opened in December 1995 and occupies the area of the former Walled City. Some historical artefacts from the walled city, including its yamen building and remnants of its southern gate, have been preserved there.



Real image of Kowloon Walled City

Thinking Questions

You may want to discuss these answers with a parent/carer/ peer or write down your answers.

1. Some readers describe Jin as 'clever, cunning and fearless'. Do you agree? Explain why.
2. The opening of the chapter states 'There are three rules of survival in the Walled City: Run fast. Trust no one. Always carry your knife.' What did you think of this opening? Did it give you a clue to what the story would be about and the genre it is?
3. Why do you think Jin is disguising herself to look like a boy?
4. Some readers state 'Jin is so clever at avoiding the gangs because she knows the Walled City so well.' Do you agree? Where in the passage tells you this?

Research further

You may be inspired by this story and want to challenge yourself by completing some of the tasks below.

1. Research the facts of Kowloon Walled City and create a presentation about it.
2. Write the next instalment to the story as if you are Mei Lee, Jin's sister. You could imagine she is trapped in a dark room in the Walled City writing a diary.
3. Create a character for fierce and brave Jin.
4. Check your local online library or book shop to get a copy of the full book to read.

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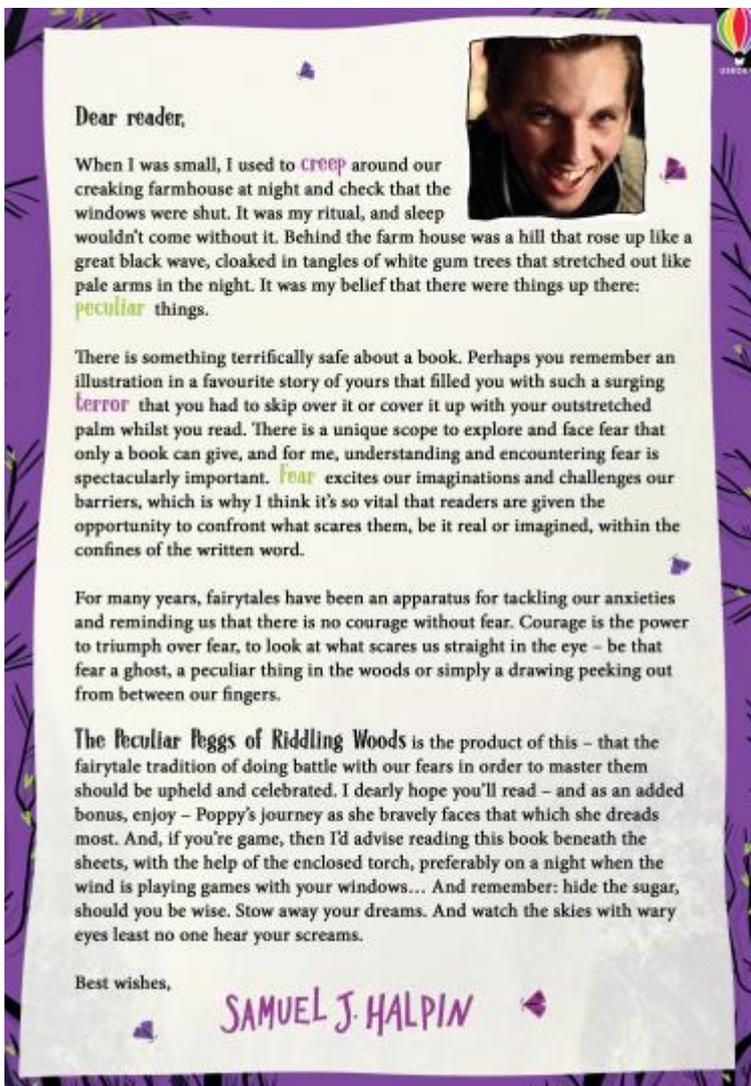
Reading 2: Reading of The Peculiar Peggs of Riddling Woods by Samuel J Halpin with prompt questions

Tip for parents: This extract is a bit simpler than the previous read. There is plenty of opportunity to research the book and complete writing and reading tasks around it. This is a short section of a longer book if your child loves it and wants to read more, they can find it online to order or in the library. It can be read as a mystery or gothic novel and can also be a way to think more about the genre of mystery fiction but also write about the natural world.

Reading: The Peculiar Peggs of Riddling Woods [click here](#)

This is the story of a sleepy town called Suds. A place where stories fill the air of children who keep turning grey and disappearing without a trace...

Poppy and Erasmus are certain there's something peculiar going on in Suds, and they're determined to unravel its secrets. But when they discover the answers might lie in the dark and twisting woods, can they find the courage to creep inside and solve this riddling mystery?



A letter from the author to readers

1. Why does Halpin, the writer, write about the things we fear the most?
2. Halpin believes fear is a good thing because when we have the courage to confront our fears, we become stronger. What are you most afraid of? How could you overcome this?
3. Halpin is inspired by fairy tales and his own childhood memories. Which fairy tales do you know that also show someone overcoming fear?
4. Halpin states 'There is something terrifically safe about a book.' What do you think this means?

Thinking Questions

1. Why do you think Samuel J. Halpin chooses to weave Gran's story in and out of descriptions of Poppy making a cup of tea? How does this provide a contrast?
2. How does Samuel J. Halpin create a sense of mystery or suspense in this extract?
3. Is there any information that Gran withholds from Poppy? Why is this effective?
4. How does Poppy feel in this extract? How does Samuel J. Halpin make the reader share the same point of view as Poppy?

Research further

You may be inspired by this story and want to challenge yourself by completing some of the tasks below.

1. This book is gothic and has elements of a fairy-tale. Research these two genres and make a presentation on both.
2. What do you think will happen in the story next? Write your own next instalment.
3. The story is set by a mysterious forest. Draw your own mysterious forest and then write your own description of this place.

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Reading 3: Reading of Seafire by Natalie C. Parker with prompt questions

Tip for parents: This extract is really gripping and is the beginning of an adventure novel. There is plenty of opportunity to think about how the writer builds tension and makes us feel empathetic for the main character. This extract can be read as an adventure story with a fearless heroine, but you can also discuss more complex ideas like oppression and tyranny. The setting of this book is also interesting and could be a great stimulus for research or writing. This book is the first in a trilogy and can be bought online or found in the library.

Reading: Seafire [click here](#)

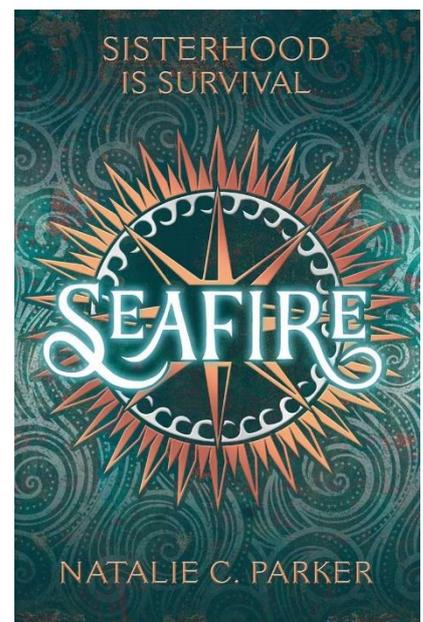
After her family is killed by corrupt warlord Aric Athair and his bloodthirsty army of Bullets, Caledonia Styx is left to chart her own course on the dangerous and deadly seas. She captains her ship, the Mors Navis, with a crew of girls and women just like her, who have lost their families and homes because of Aric and his men. The crew has one mission: stay alive and take down Aric's armed and armoured fleet.

But when Caledonia's best friend and second-in-command barely survives an attack thanks to help from a Bullet looking to defect, Caledonia finds herself questioning whether to let him join their crew. Is this boy the key to taking down Aric Athair once and for all...or will he threaten everything the women of the Mors Navis have worked for?

Thinking Questions

You may want to discuss these answers with a parent/carer/ peer or write down your answers.

1. Dystopia is a genre of novel where the story is set in an imagined society where there are hardships and often science-fiction or futuristic elements. Where do you notice elements of dystopian fiction in this extract?
2. Caledonia must decide when it's best to follow the rules and when it's best to ignore them. And often there aren't easy answers. Have you ever been in this position? How did you deal with it?
3. In this book there is an all-girl crew on the ship. Why do you think the writer decided to write the book this way?
4. A review of this book said "In these turbulent times, Seafire gives teens just what they need: A reminder that with unity and courage, they can rise up and ultimately change the world'. Do you agree? What are your thoughts on this?"



Research further

You may be inspired by this story and want to challenge yourself by completing some of the tasks below.

1. This book is dystopian fiction. Research further other books that fall into this category and make a presentation on the elements of this genre.
2. If you were going to write the next chapter, make a mind map of what you would include in your version of the story.
3. Write a diary entry from the point of view of Caledonia after the attack. Now try and re-write it from the perspective of the Bullet.
4. A student said, 'I gasped when Caledonia was attacked, I did not see it coming as the Bullet seemed trustworthy'. Did you feel the same or different?
5. Often in adventure novels the main character is male, the writer wanted to ensure the fierce fighter was female to show readers that boys and girls are capable of exactly the same things. What are your thoughts on this?

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Reading 4: Reading of Lady Mary by Lucy Worsley with prompt questions

Tip for parents: *This extract is based on Tudor History; it narrates Tudor History from a young Mary Queen of Scots. Lucy Worsley is a famous historian and draws on historical sources to build this children's book. This reading is an excellent introduction to The Tudors. Children may want to explore The Tudors further and do some projects on the back of this read.*

Reading: Lady Mary [click here](#)

Thrilling, dramatic and touching, this is the story of Henry the Eighth and Catherine of Aragon's divorce as you've never heard it before - from the eyes of their daughter, Princess Mary.

More than anything Mary just wants her family to stay together; for her mother and her father - and for her - to all be in the same place at once. But when her father announces that his marriage to her mother was void and by turns that Mary doesn't really count as his child, she realises things will never be as she hoped.

Things only get worse when her father marries again. Separated from her mother and forced to work as a servant for her new sister, Mary must dig deep to find the strength to stand up against those who wish to bring her down. Despite what anyone says, she will always be a princess. She has the blood of a princess and she is ready to fight for what is rightfully hers.

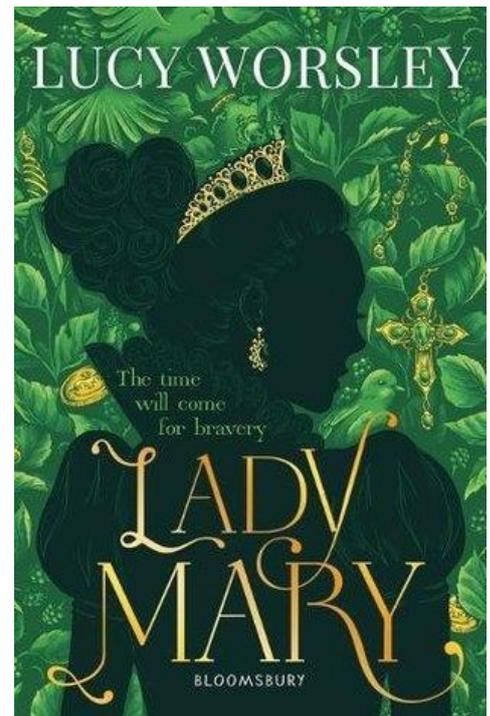
Context

The Tudor period occurred between 1485 and 1603 in England and Wales and includes the Elizabethan period during the reign of Elizabeth I until 1603. The first Tudor Monarch was Henry VII followed by his son Henry VIII. Henry VIII made many changes to religion in England and the way many people lived. He is known for having 7 wives, some of which he divorced or beheaded. His children, Elizabeth, Mary and Edward all went on to be monarchs in later life.

About the author

Lucy Worsley, OBE is a British historian, author, curator, and television presenter. Keep an eye out for her work on BBC.

Worsley is Chief Curator at Historic Royal Palaces but is best known as a presenter of BBC Television series on historical topics, including *Elegance and Decadence: The Age of the Regency* (2011), *Harlots, Housewives and Heroines: A 17th Century History for Girls* (2012), *The First Georgians: The German Kings Who Made Britain* (2014), *A Very British Romance* (2015), *Lucy Worsley: Mozart's London Odyssey* (2016), *Six Wives with Lucy Worsley* (2016), *American History's Biggest Fibs with Lucy Worsley* (2019), and *Royal History's Biggest Fibs with Lucy Worsley* (2020).



Thinking Questions

1. Life seems very different for Mary as a young girl in the Tudor time. How is it different?
2. How would you describe Mary's character?
3. What are some of the difficulties and daily activities you have every day? How do these compare to Mary's?
4. A student reading this said, 'Mary has too much responsibility for an 11-year-old'. Do you agree?

Research further

You may be inspired by this story and want to challenge yourself by completing some of the tasks below.

1. Visit YouTube and look at the Horrible Histories channel. You can watch videos on the life of Mary Queen of Scots and the rest of the Tudors.
2. Watch the clips on Tudor History on BBC history and make a presentation to show your parents or peers. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zynp34j>
3. Mary grows up to become an extremely famous Queen who burns a lot of people at the stake. Write a diary entry from Mary 10 years after this extract (she would be 21). You could use your research online to help write the diary.
4. This scene takes place at Greenwich Palace where Henry VIII and Elizabeth I were born. Research this palace, which is very close to us, and make a fact sheet about it (<https://www.rmg.co.uk/discover/explore/greenwich-and-tudors>)