

Teacher's Notes



Jane Doe and the Quill of all Tales

Written by Jeremy Lachlan

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Ages 11+, grades 5+

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- Learning areas: English
- General capabilities:
 - ACELT1612
 - ACELT1614
 - ACELT1620

THEMES

- Power
- Responsibility
- Identity
- Good and evil
- Fate and destiny
- Bravery

SYNOPSIS

Jane Doe returns in *Jane Doe and the Quill of All Tales*, the third book in Jeremy Lachlan's popular, action-packed series.

Jane has brought her dad back from the clutches of the Spectre, fallen in love with Violet, and figured out how to control at least some of the powers gifted to her by her makers, the gods Po, Aris and Nabu-kai.

But when a mysterious assassin from an Otherworld attacks her, Jane is drawn into an adventure that will push her powers to the brink. After the attack, Jane, Violet, Aki and Winifred Robin journey through the Manor to Vahru, where they confront the High Priest of a cult that is determined to find the Phantom Quill, a lost relic with the power to reveal the future, but which could bring destruction to all the worlds.

The more Jane uses her powers, the more she feels herself losing control. And the odds are stacked against her – at every turn, Jane discovers that the High Priest is one step ahead. If she could get the Quill, Jane could see the future – but at what cost?

Jane Doe and the Quill of All Tales is a gripping adventure that explores power, corruption, and the lengths people will go to just to get what they want.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jeremy Lachlan was born and raised in Griffith, country NSW, Australia. He is a former bookseller who now calls Sydney home.

His debut novel, *Jane Doe and the Cradle of All Worlds*, was the 2019 Australian Book Industry Award winner for Book of the Year for Older Children, and he once took home \$100 in a karaoke competition, of which he's equally proud.

Jeremy came up with the idea for *Jane Doe* while lost in the Cairo Museum.

THEMES

In *Jane Doe and the Quill of All Tales*, Jane is forced to consider the cost of knowledge and power as she undertakes a quest to retrieve the Phantom Quill, a relic originally said to have been destroyed by explorer Horace Hollow. The quill holds the power to reveal the future (as well as melt the brains of anyone who gets too close).

When Jane is fighting off the first assassin, Winifred Robin warns her that 'the Quill can provide the answer to every question. The path to every victory. In the right hands, yes, a force for good, but in the wrong, make no mistake: you will face an all-knowing, all-powerful adversary nigh impossible to defeat' (p88-89). As the story unfolds, Jane is faced with a number of ethical dilemmas, where she must weigh up saving those she loves against the risks of allowing the High Priest to succeed.

Discuss the following questions in relation to themes of power, fate and sacrifice:

- Does Jane have free will in the story, or is her destiny pre-determined?
- How does Winifred's presence disrupt fate?
- Does Jane make the right choice when she chooses to save her friends rather than destroy the Quill?
- Should Jane keep the Quill or destroy it? What are the risks of both decisions?

WRITING STYLE

The *Jane Doe Chronicles* are action-packed adventures that read like an *Indiana Jones* movie, with a touch of the myth and mayhem of *Percy Jones* or *Artemis Fowl*.

Discuss the genre conventions of action and adventure novels. Make a list of some of the expectations readers have about this genre and discuss how they're met (or not) in the book. What kind of ending do we expect from an adventure series?

One of the elements found in a lot of action and adventure writing is the cliffhanger, which is when the writer finishes the end of the chapter when something exciting is *just* about to happen. Does Jeremy



Lachlan do this in *Jane Doe*? Does he do it in every chapter? Discuss how cliffhanger endings work to keep the reader interested.

COMPREHENSION

- What powers does Jane have? Where do they come from?
- Why is Jane unable to forgive the townspeople for their behaviour towards her?
- What are the 'Three Laws' that Atlas asks Jane to recite at the one-year anniversary of the Battle of Bluehaven? What is their significance?
- Does Jane control who is able to enter the Manor? Who does?
- Hickory wants Jane to seal both entrances to the Manor – why? Why doesn't she want to? Discuss the pros and cons of both sides of their argument.
- How would you describe Jane's relationship with her friends? How do they influence her decisions throughout the novel?
- What does Jane notice about Winifred's aura when they're inside the Manor? Why is this strange?
- Jane is betrayed by a number of people in the book that she thinks she can trust. Whose betrayal is the most significant? Why do you think this?
- The High Priest argues that Nabu-kai was betrayed by Po and Aris, not the other way around. Do you agree? Why/why not? Are any of the gods truly trustworthy? Discuss your answer.
- Violet says to Jane that 'knowledge is power, and power's corrupting' (p204). What does she mean by this? Do you agree with her?
- When Jane decides to let Nabu-kai go rather than killing him (and Winifred), do you think she's made the right decision? Why/why not?
- Where do you think Jane has ended up?

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

1. The book ends with Jane gone and Winifred/Nabu-kai free. In small groups, make some predictions about what you think will happen in the next book in the series. Use one of these predictions to write chapter one of the next book.
2. Imagine yourself in Jane's shoes – you've got the weight of the whole world on your shoulders and you don't know who you can trust. Choose a scene in the book and write a diary entry from Jane's perspective, trying to capture what she must be thinking and feeling at that time.
3. How would you sell this book to someone else? Make a poster, or a book trailer, or write a review to promote the book. Think about the elements of the book that you liked, and how you'll convince a new reader to pick it up.
4. Most stories, but particularly adventure/quest stories, will have an **inciting incident**, which is the thing that happens at the beginning of the story to trigger the protagonist's quest. What is the inciting incident in *Jane Doe*? Make a list of some inciting incidents from other stories you've read. Come up with a character of your own, and quickly brainstorm what a normal day might look like for them. Now write an inciting incident that sends them on an unexpected adventure.



5. Draw a map of the Manor, and the Otherworlds mentioned in the book, and use it to map out all of the major events in the story.

RELATED READING

Jane Doe and the Cradle of All Worlds by Jeremy Lachlan

Jane Doe and the Key of All Souls by Jeremy Lachlan

Mister Monday by Garth Nix

Amari and the Night Brothers by B B Alston

