



RECOMMENDED FOR

Lower secondary
(ages 12+)

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KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** Humanities and Social Sciences
- **General capabilities:** Literacy, Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social Capability, Ethical Understanding, Intercultural Understanding

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- Investigate historical, geographic, civic and economic concepts and ideas
- Develop critical and creative thinking

THEMES

- The making of the modern world
- The Industrial Revolution
- Progressive ideas and movement
- The Australian/Asian relationship
- Empires and colonisation
- Nationalism
- Historical questions and research
- Primary and secondary sources

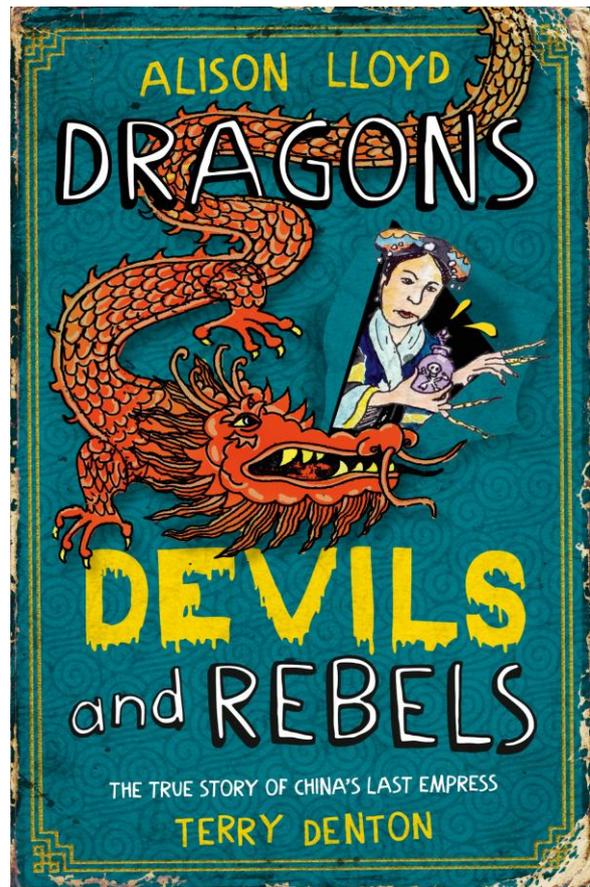
PUBLICATION DETAILS

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Dragons, Devils and Rebels: The true story of China's last Empress Alison Lloyd and Terry Denton

PLOT SUMMARY

For anyone who likes their history funny, gruesome, action-packed and thrilling – the true page-turning story of the end of the Qing empire.

When an unknown girl marries the Emperor of China, can she take control and stay in power? Could you? Imagine you were faced with: DRAGONS, Emperors who had run China for two thousand years, DEVILS, strange foreigners invading with guns and ships, and REBELS, Chinese bandits and warriors with supernatural powers...

Enter the dragon empire and explore the epic, true story of Empress Cixi. By the creators of *Wicked Warriors* and *Evil Emperors*.

The book is an accurate historic account of the early modern period, told in a highly entertaining yet informative manner.

Rather than bogging students down in heavy and complicated historic facts, Alison Lloyd's text is broken down into small areas of interest, full of anecdotes, questions and primary source quotations to help bring the information to life and make it more accessible to young readers. Useful hints on the pronunciation of difficult and important Chinese names and terms and definitions of key words litter the text, again increasing its accessibility.

Terry Denton's illustrations depict the information in humorous cartoons adding interest and entertainment that keeps even the most reluctant History students entertained.

This book lends itself well to teaching not only this period of History, but examining a number of History skills and issues, essential for the study of any topic. It provides an excellent tool to increase students' enthusiasm in the subject whilst also increasing their historical knowledge.

With the emphasis in the National Curriculum on Asian History, it is good to have such a user-friendly text available. Many of the skills and issues that arise during this book will also lend themselves to an examination of issues in European history.

The book would make an excellent reference for the in-depth investigation of an Asian society included in Year 9 History in the National Curriculum. Further information on bibliographic sources is available on www.alisonlloyd.com.au



ABOUT THE CREATORS

Alison Lloyd started learning Chinese in school because it was a challenge, then later went to live in China for two years – she was living there when army tanks rolled in to suppress the student movement in 1989. Alison loves history - both the big sweep of events and the little details of how people lived. That's why she wrote her first novel *Year of the Tiger*, and its sequel *Battle of the Jade Horse*. She is also the author of the CBCA shortlisted non-fiction - *Wicked Warriors and Evil Emperors* - and the Letty books in the Australian Girl series. Before she was a writer, Alison worked for the Australian Government, in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Alison lives in Melbourne with her family.

Terry Denton is a household name as the illustrator of the Storey Treehouse series of books and is among Australia's busiest literary creative forces. As an illustrator he has worked for Australia's best authors and as a writer he has created 20 books of his own. His recent work for Penguin includes The Bumper Books series and *The Worm Who Knew Karate*. His love of China began when he first tasted dumplings at the local Yum Cha restaurant. His love of history began with the 'thousand year old' eggs.

AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

At our family dinner table, there's a 'no-go' conversation zone. Not if we want to eat in peace and harmony, that is. Cross a certain line – then the sirens will blare, and red lights flash in my spouse's eyes. He grew up in China, and even though he's been in Australia over twenty years, some parts of his outlook on the world are deeply ingrained. Including an irascible touchiness about China's territorial integrity.

He isn't the only one. Why else would China's leaders risk international conflict over sandbars in the South China Sea? Why be so trenchant about Tibet? When I worked in the Foreign Affairs and Trade, I remember a meeting in which my boss got a tongue-lashing from a Chinese diplomat over some little label on a map, buried deep in the back pages of an Australian government publication.

What does this have to do with *Dragons, Devils and Rebels*, a children's book, you might wonder? A lot really. Sometimes readers ask why I like to write about history. I answer that the past is so rich in the beautiful and the bizarre, and it reveals the heights and depths of humanity. More, I think history matters. It isn't dead. The past forms our present. As I was researching *Dragons, Devils and Rebels*, I had little flashes of insight into the thinking of my spouse and others. Moments when I thought for example, 'so that's why education is so valued in China...'

The story of Cixi, Empress Dowager extraordinaire, would be interesting just for itself – how a woman in one of the most patriarchal and repressive cultures on earth became the last true ruler of the Qing dynasty, and held onto power by means fair and foul. Hearing a radio interview of her latest biographer Jung Chang gave me the idea for this book. Further research led me into the weird, wonderful and well-documented world of the nineteenth century – including missionary diaries, Confucian readers for girls, accounts of bandit kidnappings, and the collection of the imperial palace museum.

Cixi's life is also the story of how China was dragged into the modern era. People in China have not forgotten the ignominy of the unequal treaties, nor the inglorious defeats at foreign hands. In 2013, a sign at the ruins of the Summer Palace, destroyed by the British and French in 1860, read 'Do not forget our national humiliation.' For all I know it's still there. Defensive national pride goes a long way to explaining the Chinese government's military muscle-flexing. And my husband's hot-button response when Hong Kong or Taiwan is mentioned at the dinner table.

Yes, it's strong stuff for kids. But then so are the many books on Australia's involvement in war. China's history is just as quirky, impressive and tragic. In our global world, I'd suggest it matters just as much. As I concluded when I got to the end of writing *Dragons, Devils and Rebels*, 'the Sons of Heaven are gone. So are the wild, weird rebels and the sailing ships loaded with opium. The last Empress is a memory. But the new dragon empire is going strong.'

WRITING STYLE

- What is the writing style the author has used? What perspective is the story told from? What are the characteristics of the narrative voice? How is the information structured? What is another way this story could have been told? Compare and contrast to another history book you have read.
- How do the primary and secondary sources in the breakout boxes contribute to the telling of the story? What do they add to the reading?
- How does the book's title relate to its content? What does it refer to?

KEY STUDY TOPICS

Primary and Secondary Sources

- Discuss the difference between primary and secondary sources.
- What are the benefits and weaknesses of a primary source? What are the benefits and weaknesses of a secondary source?



- As you read the book, identify the information as either a primary or a secondary source.
- How do the primary source inserts (poems, quotations, letters, etc) add interest and authenticity to the book.
- What is the context in which the quotes were written? Use your research skills to find out something more about one of the authors quoted. What was their cultural background? What was their interest in China and their motivation – what were they hoping to achieve with this quote?

Storytelling

- Choose an incident in the story and write it from a different perspective – choosing an historical character mentioned in the story.
- What does the cover tell you about the tone and content of the book?
- Tell the History of the Qing Dynasty in a series of 12 Terry Denton style illustrations that summarise the key points.
- Choose one of the historical stories in the book
- to rewrite into a script for a play, then act it out.
- Draw your own cartoon to illustrate one of the stories or information sections of the book.

Reading a map

- Examine the world map at the beginning of the book
- By studying the geographic features of the land, make a list of the strengths and weakness of each of the empires at the time. (Consider location, climate, location of mountains and seas, etc)

Identity

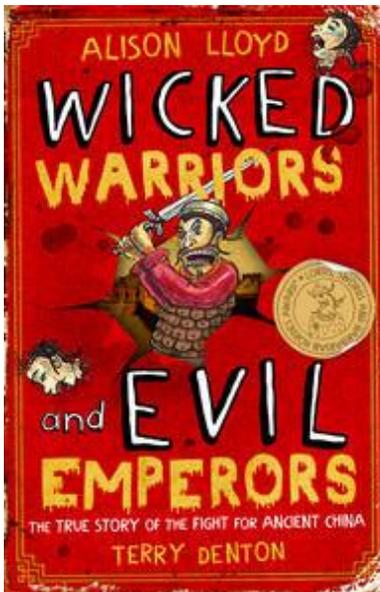
- During this period, what did it mean to be 'Chinese'? How might different people answer that question depending on their cultural background, gender, class, wealth or other factors? How might two real-life characters in this story see their identity differently?

Constructing a timeline

- Examine the timeline in the book. Choose another country and period of history that interests you and construct a timeline from research.



FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA



Wicked Warriors and Evil Emperors: the true story of the fight for ancient China by Alison Lloyd and Terry Denton

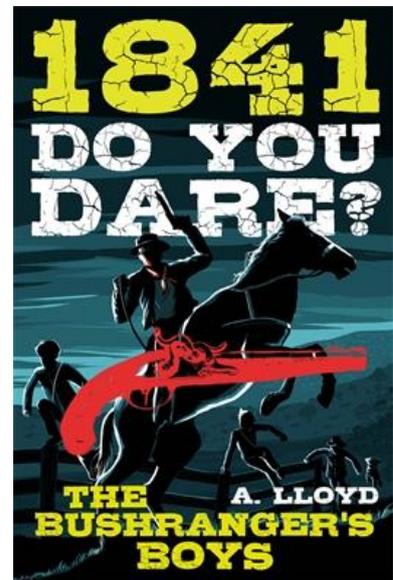
For anyone who likes their history funny, gruesome, action-packed and thrilling – the true page-turning story of China's first emperor.



Do You Dare: Eureka Boys by P Matthews

Do you dare . . .
Join a rebellion?
Stand up to a bully?
Risk your life for a friend?
It's an adventure in Australian history.
Do You Dare?

An exciting, action-packed adventure set in 1854.



Do You Dare: The Bushranger's Boys by A Lloyd

Do you dare . . .
Confront a bully?
Steal to protect someone?
Hide a bushranger?
It's an adventure in Australian history.
Do You Dare?

An exciting, action-packed adventure set in 1841.

ORDER FORM

| TITLE | AUTHOR | ISBN | SCHOOL YEAR | RRP | QUANTITY | TOTAL |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|-------------|---------|----------|-------|
| Dragons, Devils and Rebels | Alison Lloyd and Terry Denton | 9780143309048 | 10+ | \$16.95 | | |
| Wicked Warriors and Evil Emperors | Alison Lloyd and Terry Denton | To come | 10+ | \$16.95 | | |
| Do You Dare: The Bushranger's Boys | A Lloyd | 9780143307563 | 8+ | \$14.99 | | |
| Do You Dare: Eureka Boys | P Matthews | 9780143308454 | 8+ | \$14.99 | | |
| Mysteries: Diamond Jack | Mark Greenwood | 9780143309260 | 8+ | \$12.99 | | |
| The Burnt Stick | Anthony Hill | 9780140369298 | 7+ | \$16.99 | | |
| Once | Morris Gleitzman | 9780143301950 | 8+ | \$16.99 | | |
| TOTAL | | | | | | |

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