



TEACHERS' RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Upper primary and lower secondary

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KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English, Humanities and Social Science
- **General capabilities:** Literacy, Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social Capability, Ethical Understanding, Intercultural Understanding
- **Cross-curriculum priorities:** Sustainability

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- Discussing natural disasters and the environment
- Exploring a rural Australian setting
- Examining relationships, resilience and community
- Learning about a historic event

THEMES

- Bushfires, protection, fear, animals/pets, belonging, community, family issues, danger and escape, helping others, forgiveness, courage, grief, hope, resilience

PREPARED BY

Penguin Random House Australia and Justin D'Ath

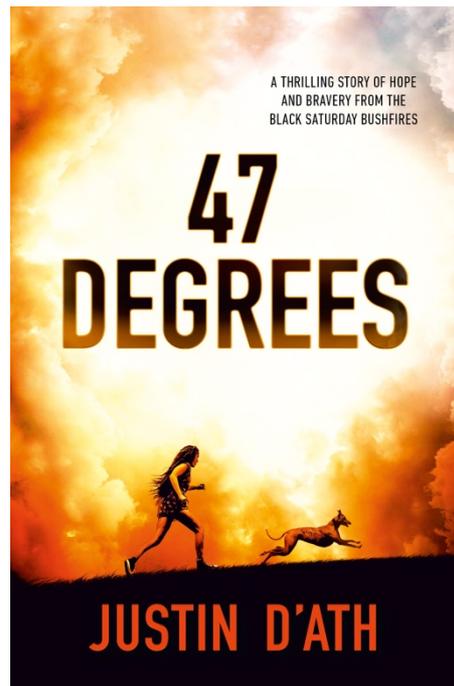
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47 Degrees Justin D'Ath

PLOT SUMMARY

A fast-paced and poignant novel of survival by Justin D'Ath that draws on his own experience of escaping the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires.

Zeelie wonders if they're in danger.

When temperatures soar to 47 degrees one hot summer day, 12-year-old Zeelie hopes the nearby bushfires everyone's talking about aren't heading towards her family's new home. What will they do if the wind changes direction? What about their belongings and their beloved pets? And why hasn't her mum and brother returned from Melbourne?

Nothing can prepare Zeelie for what's to come.

REVIEWS

'An action-adventure that rings with truth, *47 Degrees* is also a story about courage, empathy, the importance of family and communities, and how the worst times can bring out the best in people. A fantastic read for ages 10 and up. 5 stars.'

Junior Books+Publishing

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Born in New Zealand, Justin D'Ath was one of twelve children. He came to Australia in 1971 to study for missionary priesthood but after three years, left the seminary in the dead of night and spent two years roaming Australia on a motorbike! Whilst doing that he began his writing career contributing pieces for motorbike magazines.

He published his first novel for adults in 1989 and this was followed by numerous award-winning short stories, also for adults. Justin has worked in a sugar mill, on a cattle station, in a mine, on an island, in a laboratory, built cars, picked fruit, driven forklifts and taught writing for twelve years. He wrote his first children's book in 1996 and to date he has published over 50 books. He has two children, six grandchildren, and two dogs.

AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

From Justin:

On Black Saturday – 7 February 2009 – much of Victoria was devastated by the worst bushfires in recorded history. 173 people lost their lives that day, and more than 2000 houses burned down. Mine was one of those houses. Even so, I consider myself lucky – I might have lost my home and nearly all my possessions, but I lived to tell the tale.

This book is fiction. Zeelie and her family are products of my imagination. But much of what happens here is based on what happened to me. I have even included my house – only in these pages it's not mine, it's where Zeelie and her family live. The dogs are real too. Holly and Fly were part of my family, but for the purposes of this novel I placed them in Zeelie's care. At the time of the bushfires we had a third dog, an old golden retriever whose owner was overseas; I put him in the book too. I also gave Zeelie a horse; and a father who, like me, had a fire plan that didn't work when the wind changed, the power failed and the temperature soared to 47 degrees.

I thought this would be a difficult book to write, it would force me to revisit some of the most confronting moments in my life. But thanks to Zeelie, I found the journey engrossing, rewarding and deeply satisfying. Of all the characters I have created in 30 years as an author, Zeelie is my favourite. I hope you liked her, too.

P.S. Zeelie took good care of my dogs. Fly, a puppy in this book, is now 10 years old at the time of publication. We live by the sea and go walking on the beach every day.

PRE-READING

Questions

1. Are you familiar with the tragic events that occurred on Black Saturday – 7 February 2009?
2. What is a fire plan? Do you live in an area where a fire plan is needed?
3. Does your school have a bushfire evacuation plan or any other type of evacuation plan?
4. Why do schools and workplaces participate in evacuation drills?
5. Why do you think it's necessary for the emergency services to impose a fire ban in some instances? What's the difference between a partial or full fire ban? Are there places that have a permanent fire ban?

Activities

1. Visit www.myfireplan.com.au to view their recommendations for planning an evacuation if needed.
2. Discuss why a fire plan is essential for many people who live in remote or rural communities in Australia and the 'stay or go' theories.
3. Watch the 'Prepare. Act. Survive.' campaign video from NSW RFS or a similar video from CFA Victoria. What are the key points students take from this video?

KEY STUDY TOPICS

The Australian Environment

Questions

1. How does the author describe the Australian landscape in this novel? What words and images does he use to paint a picture of the setting?
2. When the author describes the many trees, leaves, dry bark and bracken on the property, how does this build the tension for what's to come?
3. What other hints does the author give that perhaps the approaching fire will be disastrous for Zeelie and her family?
4. The temperature on this day hit 47 degrees. Have you ever experienced extreme temperatures such as this? Have you ever experienced temperatures below zero?
5. Zeelie keeps thinking about something her mother says on the phone in Chapter 1: 'Unless the wind changes.' Why is wind such a vital element when it comes to the danger a bushfire might pose? What other things can contribute to a bushfire?



Activities

1. Study the map at the beginning of the book. How large is the area that was affected by the fires on Black Saturday?
2. Research the statistics on extreme temperatures (highs and lows) in your town/city and also in other parts of the world. Use a graph or map to present your findings.

Bushfires**Questions**

1. What are the technological difficulties that Zeelie and her father come up against that hinder their ability to fight the fire? For example: electricity/generators, mobile phone reception, landline phone access, radio or other communication devices.
2. What advances in technology since 2009 might help with fighting fires, communication and access to affected areas?
3. What might cause a bushfire?
4. What are the best ways to prevent a bushfire from happening or to get it under control?
5. Have you ever seen a bushfire either in person or on TV/in a movie?
6. Zeelie and her father come across various people helping others in the community: police officers, SES workers, shopkeepers, volunteers, other government workers, people from the army. Discuss the role of each of these groups and how they assist Zeelie and her family. How would Zeelie's experience differ if there weren't these people and support services available?
7. Do you know of anyone who volunteers in a capacity similar to the SES or within the community? Why are these roles significant for any society to thrive?

Activities

1. Create a visual representation of what you think it would be like to be confronted by a bushfire. The piece could be a photo, short video, artwork, collage, sketch or other visual piece.
2. Discuss how Indigenous Australians have been using fire safely for thousands of years in the Australian bush. Research the ways in a fire can rejuvenate certain plants/trees and the benefits of controlled fires for some areas to prevent more dangerous conditions from occurring.

Koru

Zeelie wears a greenstone *koru* necklace given to her by her Maori great-grandmother, *Karani Taimana*.

Questions

1. What does the *koru* pattern look like?
2. What does it symbolise?
3. Do you have a piece of jewellery or a special item that has been given to you by a member of your family? Why is it important to you?

Activities

1. Write a letter to a friend telling them about your special item, how it came into your possession and what it means to you.
2. Research the *koru* symbol and present to the class your findings about its appearance in various aspects of the Maori culture.
3. Discuss other symbols that may be important in other cultures.

Animals

Zeelie loves to take care of animals and is especially attached to her horse Rimu, the family dogs Fly and Holly and the neighbours' dog Atticus.

Questions

1. Why do you think animals are such an important part of the story?
2. If you were Zeelie, how do you imagine you would feel leaving Rimu behind when evacuating?
3. Do you think it's important for any fire plan to include the evacuation of animals or should humans be the priority? What might be some of the restrictions around evacuating pets and cattle during a natural disaster?
4. How do you think Zeelie felt when she discovered a goldfish was alive in her neighbours' pond at the end of the story? Why is this symbol of survival significant?

Activities

1. Research how people can help animals during a natural disaster. Organisations such as WIRES and RSPCA have programs to support injured animals.
2. Present to the class a selection of news stories about animals surviving natural disasters and discuss why these types of stories are prominent in the media.

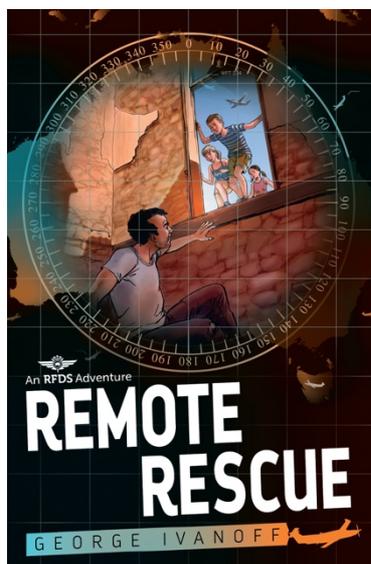


WRITING STYLE

1. The story begins on the day of the fire, with action and tension from the outset. Why do you think the author chose to structure the story in this way?
2. The book is broken into three parts. How is each part different in terms of pace or structure? For example, is there more dialogue in one section? Are the sentences shorter during an action scene?
3. During a fire, many of the senses are overloaded with different smells and sights. What words or sentences does the author use to convey these things that the reader can’t see or smell? Why is this important to include in the story?
4. How does the language differ in the scenes between Zeelie and Cody compared to earlier in the book? How does the author show different relationships between Zeelie and her parents, brother, friends?
5. How does the author create a sense of hope at the end of the story, even though Zeelie and her family have suffered through a terrible tragedy? Why is the theme of hope significant at the end of the story?



FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA



*Royal Flying Doctor Service,
Book 1: Remote Rescue*
by George Ivanoff

Why this story? Read it as another example of an Australian story in a rural setting.

A high-octane adventure series for children written in partnership with the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

An isolated location and last-minute complications put this rescue in danger!

Sam, Dawson and Emma are taking a road trip with their dad along the dusty Oodnadatta Track. They stop at Farina, an old ghost town full of crumbling buildings – perfect for a game of tip. But as they run through the ruins, their dad seriously injures his leg and it's up to the kids to find help. They manage to call the Royal Flying Doctor Service, but the situation is so bad it's up to Dawson to administer first aid to his dad until the aeromedical retrieval team arrives.

Teachers' resources available.



The Fighting Stingrays
by Simon Mitchell

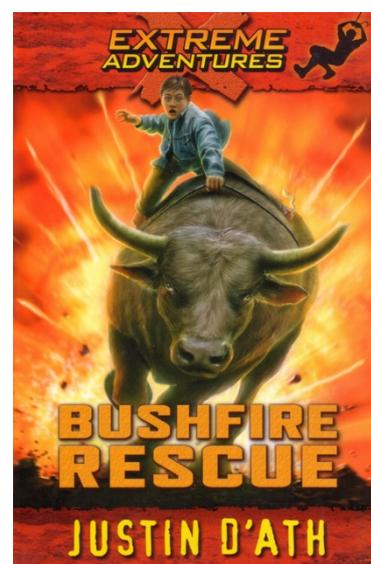
Why this story? Read it as another example of a historical fiction story.

Winner of Young People's History Prize, NSW Premier's History Awards, 2018

What would you do if you were told your best friend is now the enemy?

Charlie, Masa and Alf are best mates – loyal and adventurous. They're the Fighting Stingrays. In between school, swimming and fishing on idyllic Thursday Island, they have a ripper time role-playing bombing missions and other war games. But when Japan enters World War II, the Fighting Stingrays are told that one of their own is now the real-life enemy. Drawn into a dangerous game of cat and mouse in the Torres Strait, their friendship and loyalties are tested as the threat of invasion looms closer.

Teachers' resources available.



Bushfire Rescue
by Justin D'Ath

Why this story? Read it as another example of an action/adventure story.

'Help me!' I gasped. 'My name is Sam Fox and I'm trapped in a truck ... There's a bushfire all around me!'

It's the holidays and Sam Fox has gone to the high country to stay with his grandparents. While trying to stop cattle rustlers from stealing a stud bull, an injured Sam is isolated in the mountains during a horrific bushfire. To survive, he must rely on his courage; ingenuity, and the help of Chainsaw – a mad old rodeo bull!

An action-packed rollercoaster ride, *Bushfire Rescue* is the second book in a thrilling adventure series!



ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
<i>47 Degrees</i>	Justin D'Ath	9780143789079	5-10	\$16.99		
<i>Bushfire Rescue</i>	Justin D'Ath	9780143302209	5-8	\$14.99		
<i>Royal Flying Doctor Service, Book 1: Remote Rescue</i>	George Ivanoff	9780857988768	5-8	\$14.99		
<i>The Fighting Stingrays</i>	Simon Mitchell	9780143784104	5-9	\$17.99		
TOTAL						

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