



TEACHERS' RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Upper Primary
(ages 10–13)

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THEMES

- Friendship
- Differing perspectives of war
- Growing up
- Coping with change
- Making a difference
- History
- Family relationships

PREPARED BY

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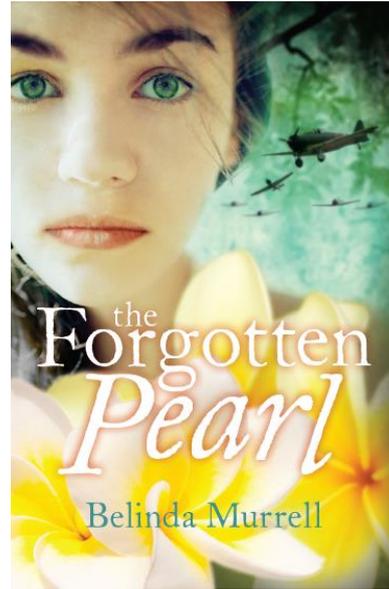
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The Forgotten Pearl

Belinda Murrell

PLOT SUMMARY

When Chloe visits her grandmother, it unleashes a flood of memories, not discussed for seventy years. Chloe could never have imagined how close the Second World War came to destroying her own family so many years ago. Could the experiences of another time help Chloe to face her own problems?

In 1941, Darwin is a remote outpost in the far north of Australia – a peaceful paradise far from the war. Poppy is a mischievous, fun-loving girl, with a menagerie of unusual pets. Her life seems perfect but when Japan attacks Pearl Harbor, then Australia, Poppy's world is torn apart. Everything she holds dear is threatened – her family, her neighbours and her friends Jack and Maude. Her brother Edward is taken prisoner-of-war. Her home town becomes a war zone, as the Japanese raid over and over again, on their relentless march south. Australia is under the looming threat of invasion.

Terrified for their lives, Poppy and her mother flee to safety in Sydney, only to find the danger follows them there. Poppy must face her war with courage and determination. Will Poppy and her family survive the war? Where is the forgotten pearl? Will her world ever be the same again?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Belinda Murrell has worked as a travel journalist, technical writer, editor and public relations consultant. Her overseas adventures inspired her work as a travel writer for the *West Australian* newspaper and *Out & About With Kids* travel magazine.

Her work has also appeared in the *Sun Herald*, *Sunday Telegraph* and *Sydney Morning Herald*. While Belinda studied Children's Literature at Macquarie University, her passion for children's books was reignited when she had her own three children and began telling and writing stories for Nick, Emily and Lachlan.

Belinda's books include the Sun Sword fantasy trilogy, Scottish timeslip tale *The Locket Of Dreams*, French Revolution timeslip tale *The Ruby Talisman*, Australian timeslip tales *The Ivory Rose* and *The Sequin Star*, and Australian historical tales *The Forgotten Pearl* and *The River Charm*. Belinda also writes the Lulu Bell series for younger readers, about friends, family, animals, and growing up in a vet hospital.

Belinda is also an author ambassador for Room to Read and Books in Homes.

AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

Belinda says:

When my family spent eighteen months travelling around Australia, we spent about three months in the Top End of the Northern Territory, including Darwin. During this time we stayed on vast, remote cattle stations, and visited some incredibly beautiful places. As well as the sheer beauty of the Territory, we were overwhelmed by its history. Despite studying Australian History while I was at university, I had very little knowledge of the bombing of Darwin during World War II and how close the war actually came to Australia's shores.

As a family we explored many of the World War II historic sites in the Northern Territory from air strips, bomb craters and bunkers to the deeply moving Adelaide River War Cemetery where over 400 Australians are buried who died defending our country. The youngest was only 16 years old. The adjoining civil cemetery has the graves of many civilians who died during the bombing raids on Darwin, including six women who worked at the Post Office.

As we travelled, we came to realise that not only Darwin but many other Australian towns including Broome, Townsville and Katherine had been attacked, with hundreds of people killed. Later in the trip we visited the War Museum in Canberra and saw the remains of the Japanese midget submarines which had invaded right into the heart of Sydney Harbour.

And as we travelled we heard so many stories of life in Australia in those perilous years. It was these stories of ordinary women, men and children, and how they tackled the difficult challenges of these extraordinary times, which I found so fascinating,

It was these stories and adventures which inspired me to write the story of Poppy and The Forgotten Pearl.

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. What do you know about World War II?
2. Do you know any stories about the experiences of your relatives in World War II?
3. How do you think WWII affected Australian families?
4. What does the cover tell you about the book? What kind of planes do you think are depicted on the cover?

THEMES

- Friendship
- Differing perspectives of war – soldier, child, nurse, doctor, wireless operator, prisoner-of-war, Japanese internee
- Growing up – finding your voice, finding what is important to you and standing up for what you believe in
- Coping with change – resilience, leaving home, starting school, starting a new life, friends and family going away, grief
- Making a difference – an individual can make a difference to their lives, and the lives of others
- History – World War II, the bombing of Darwin and the Japanese invasion of Sydney Harbour, women's involvement during the war and the changing role of women in Australian society
- Family relationships



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What do you think is the most important theme of the book? Find examples of scenes and quotes in *The Forgotten Pearl* which explore this theme. How is this theme relevant to you and your own life?
- In *The Forgotten Pearl* there are many letters and stories from different characters, which give their perspective of what is happening to them during the war. Make a list of characters and summarise some of their experiences, feelings and contributions.
- Do you think Poppy changes through her adventures? How does she alter? Brainstorm some of the ways Poppy changes throughout the book.
- What kind of film do you think *The Forgotten Pearl* would make? Brainstorm ideas, including: cast, setting, key scenes, style and genre.
- Brainstorm some of the roles that women and children played on the Home Front during the war. What do you think life would have been like for your family if you lived during the war now?

ACTIVITIES

Sharing Stories

Interview a relative, such as a grandparent, about their experiences during World War II. Do they have any mementoes such as photos, medals, letters or artefacts to show you? This interview could be recorded on video or audio to share with other members of the family or your class. Remember to ask for permission before sharing stories with others as some memories are private.

Collage

Create a collage using words and images and that represent one major theme of *The Forgotten Pearl*.

Letter writing

Pretend you are a character in the book and write a letter explaining what you have experienced. How do you feel? How has your life changed? How can you make your letter as interesting as possible for your reader?

Newspaper report: Living in Australia during World War II

Write a newspaper report describing what life is like for families in Australia during World War II. Consider food, work, clothes, lifestyle, entertainment and changes to society. Include quotes from fictional characters to give differing points-of-view and find images on the internet to illustrate your story.

Setting

The first part of the narrative is set in and around Darwin. Describe the setting, including the year, season and weather, Poppy's home and the township itself, the cultural and historical background, and the emotional atmosphere. Find paragraphs from the book to support your descriptions, highlighting the ways in which the author has used figurative language to create character or setting.

Covers

Analyse elements of the cover design and comment on what makes them effective. Consider colour, font and images in your discussion. What is the significance of the girl, the planes, and the frangipani flowers, for instance? What images would you have chosen to put on the cover of *The Forgotten Pearl*?

Excursion

Visit a war memorial or museum near you to find out more about how war affected the people in your local area, and see mementoes and artefacts from the various wars Australia has been involved in.



ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
The Forgotten Pearl	Belinda Murrell	9780857986962	4-7	\$17.99		
The Locket of Dreams	Belinda Murrell	9780857986955	4-7	\$17.99		
The Ruby Talisman	Belinda Murrell	9780857986948	4-7	\$17.99		
The Ivory Rose	Belinda Murrell	9780857986986	4-7	\$17.99		
The River Charm	Belinda Murrell	9780857986979	4-7	\$17.99		
The Sequin Star	Belinda Murrell	9780857986931	4-7	\$17.99		
The Lost Sapphire	Belinda Murrell	9781925324112	4-7	\$17.99		
TOTAL						

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