

TEACHER'S NOTES

Akarnae

by Lynette Noni

ABOUT THE BOOK

With just one step, sixteen-year-old Alexandra Jennings' world changes – literally.

Dreading her first day at a new school, Alex is stunned when she walks through a doorway and finds herself stranded in Medora, a fantasy world full of impossibilities.

Desperate to return home, she learns that only a man named Professor Marselle can help her... but he's missing.

While waiting for him to reappear, Alex attends Akarnae Academy, Medora's boarding school for teenagers with extraordinary gifts. She soon starts to enjoy her bizarre new world and the friends who embrace her as one of their own, but strange things are happening at Akarnae, and Alex can't ignore her fear that something unexpected... something sinister... is looming.

An unwilling pawn in a deadly game, Alex's shoulders bear the crushing weight of an entire race's survival. Only she can save the Medorans, but what if doing so prevents her from ever returning home?

Will Alex risk her entire world – and maybe even her life – to save Medora?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lynette Noni grew up on a farm in outback Australia until she moved to the beautiful Sunshine Coast and swapped her mud-stained boots for sand-splashed flip-flops.

She has always been an avid reader and most of her childhood was spent lost in daydreams of far-off places and magical worlds.

She was devastated when her Hogwarts letter didn't arrive, but she consoled herself by looking inside every wardrobe she could find, and she's still determined to find her way to Narnia one day.

While waiting for that to happen, she creates her own fantasy worlds and enjoys spending time with characters she meets along the way.



CLASS DISCUSSION

Open a discussion with your class by using some, or all, of the following questions:

1. What do you think about the author's portrayal of the International Exchange Academy and Akarnae? Compare Alex's first impressions of the two academies. Why do you think the author does this? Consider the way(s) in which she portrays the students, the buildings and the staff.
2. The Akarnae school motto is "Strength in weakness. Victory in surrender. Life in death" (page 27). What do you think this means?
3. The classes offered at Akarnae differ from what's offered in regular schools. Which class would you most like to attend? What potential do you think you'd be placed in, and why?
4. Think about the ways in which Akarnae sorts its students into classes. Do you think this system would work in your school and why? What are the advantages and disadvantages?
5. According to Darrius, "the Library often teaches through challenges" (page 163). How does the Library teach Alex?
6. Alex finds great strength in her friendship with Bear and Jordan during her first year at Akarnae. Discuss how the two boys helped Alex adjust to and thrive at Akarnae. Imagine how different life would have been if they hadn't been so welcoming.
7. The author uses choice as a plot device when Alex has her first conversation with the Library: "You have a choice to make, Alexandra" (page 296). Think about what this choice means for Alex and how it influences the remainder of the story.
8. Consider the antagonist of the story, Aven. Why do you think the author introduced him when she did? What conclusions can you draw about his background and plans for the future?

WRITING ACTIVITIES

Where would you end up?

Lynette Noni herself says that she modelled *Akarnae* off a combination of Narnia and Hogwarts, with elements of the X-Men thrown in. If you could create a world to step through a doorway to, what would it be like?

What's your gift?

Do you think there's such a thing as a good or bad 'gift'? Why? If you could have any gift, what would it be and why?

The sentient library

Akarnae has what is known as a "sentient library," meaning that the library has a consciousness that can interact with people and things as it pleases. Inside the library there are many hidden mysteries accessible only to the Chosen One, who is Alex. If you were to stumble upon a room in the library, what would you want it to be like?

Choices

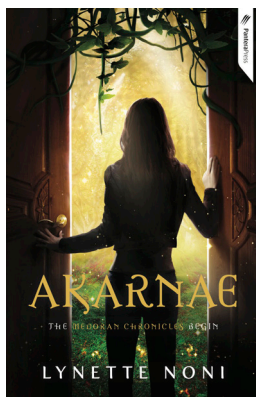
Imagine what might have happened had Alex made a different choice in the cavern and returned home. Write an alternative ending in which Alex is not around to save D.C.. Get creative!

COVER

The cover of a book can say a lot. What does the cover of *Akarnae* say to you?

The cover has often been referred to as a "girly"-looking cover. Why do you think this is and do you agree?

Knowing that people from the age of 8 through to their 90s have read *Akarnae*, redesign the cover to appeal to everyone, no matter their age or gender.



SETTING

The setting of a book refers to the place and time in which the story is set. Use the following graphic organiser to help locate and sort through the information about the setting in *Akarnae* and respond to the statement: *Akarnae* is set in a fantasy world.

Graphic Organiser Hints:

- Where = where is Akarnae located? Think of the landscape and landmarks, and buildings.
- When = when does Alex attend Akarnae? Think of the seasons and school year.
- Who = who does Alex meet? Think about the types of people Alex meets, are they all human?
- What = what is Akarnae? How is it set out in terms the layout?

Where	When
Who	What

Drawing Activity:

Create a map of *Akarnae*, with key landmarks easily identified.

SYMBOLISM

In *Akarnae* there are a number of symbols, discuss what the following symbols represent and whether they are integral to the story or not. Are there any symbols in *Akarnae* that are not listed below?

- The doorway into Medora
- The sentient library

THEMES

1. The dedication for *Akarnae* sets the main theme for the novel: embrace the wonder. What message do you think the author is giving to their readers? Use evidence from the book to support your statements.
2. Other themes that are prevalent in the novel are: Choices, challenges, and will. Discuss the way in which these themes are represented and how they influence the characters and storyline.

CHARACTER TRAITS

Below is a list of character traits often found in stories. Using 5 different colours, go through the list and circle or highlight any themes that you think match:

1. Alex
2. Bear
3. Jordan
4. DC
5. Aven

Justify your choice for at least two character traits for each character.

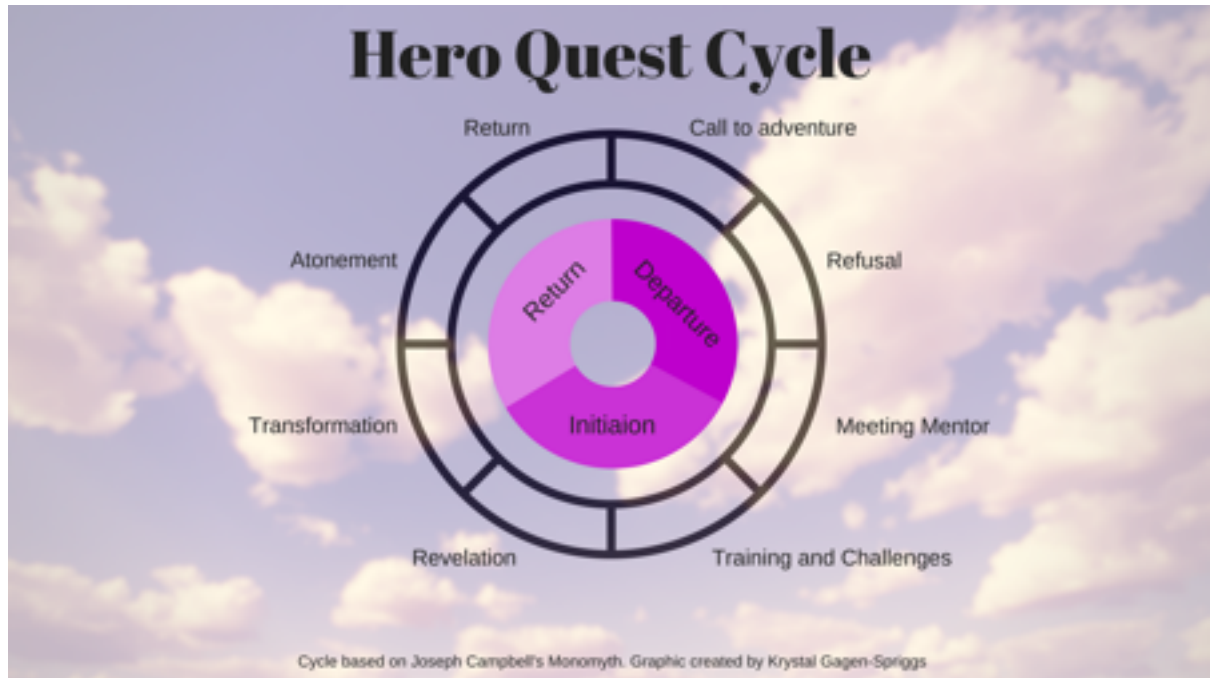
Do you think there are any character traits that are in the story that are not on this list? What are they? Justify your reasoning.

Generous
Honest
Loyal
Loving
Kind
Sincere
Self-controlled
Peaceful
Faithful
Patient
Determined
Persistent
Adventurous
Fair
Cooperative
Tolerant
Optimistic
Spiritual

Dishonest
Disloyal
Unkind
Rude
Disrespectful
Impatient
Greedy
Abrasive
Pessimistic
Cruel
Merciless
Narcissistic
Obnoxious
Malicious
Petty
Quarrelsome
Selfish
Unforgiving

Confident
Persuasive
Ambitious
Resourceful
Decisive
Authoritative
Enthusiastic
Bold
Playful
Active
Silly
Affectionate
Funny
Talkative
Smart
Shy
Impatient
Stubborn

HEROES QUEST CYCLE



Fantasy novels often follow the Hero Quest Cycle, as defined by Joseph Campbell. The above graphic is a simplified version of the cycle. Using the graphic above to guide you, write a PEEL paragraph that either proves or disproves the following statement:

Lynette Noni's Akarnae follows the Hero Quest Cycle as outlined by Joseph Campbell.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

PEEL Paragraph resources:

- Prezi by Jeremy Hart
- Virtual Library
- Best Custom Writing

Joseph Campbell's Monomyth resources:

- Joseph Campbell Foundation
- Science Fiction Writers Workshop
- What makes a hero? TED Ed

Infographic software:

- Canva
- Infogram
- Piktochart
- Venngage
- Adobe Spark

FURTHER READING

- *Whisper* (Whisper) by Lynette Noni
- *The Wishing Spell* (Land of Stories #1) by Chris Colfer
- *The Trials of Morrigan Crow* (Nevermoor #1) by Jessica Townsend
- *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (Harry Potter #1) by J.K. Rowling
- *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (The Chronicles of Narnia #1) by C.S. Lewis
- *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief* (The Percy Jackson Series #1) by Rick Riordan
- *The Iron Trial* (Magisterium #1) by Holly Black and Cassandra Clare

FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.PanteraPress.com.au

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