



TREASURE IN THE LAKE

JASON PAMMENT

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Recommended for 8 to 12 year olds

Summary

Grand adventures often begin where you least expect. Iris knows this because she's read them all. But when she and her best friend, Sam, stumble upon an unusually dry riverbed on the outskirts of town, they make a discovery beyond anything Iris has read about: a hidden city, lost in time and shrouded in mystery. Storm clouds gather as secrets begin to surface. Can Iris and Sam uncover the truth in time to keep their friendship afloat, or will history repeat itself and pull them apart forever?

'A beautifully drawn coming-of-age adventure story.' Kazu Kibuishi, creator of *Amulet*

'A charming tale of mystery and friendship, and an inspiring introduction for young comics creators.' Shaun Tan, creator of *Tales from Outer Suburbia* and *The Arrival*

'*Treasure in the Lake* is a visual treat, and a heartfelt, rollicking adventure.' Remy Lai, creator of *Pie in the Sky* and *Pawcasso*

Themes

Friendship, adventure, ghosts, time-slip and growing up.

In the author's own words

'The story has a few inspirations. I feel one of the most important ones would be reading about the town of Adaminaby in NSW. It was a small town that was forced to move to make way for a reservoir to service the Snowy River hydroelectric system. Fifty years later there was a severe drought. The water level fell so much that the old town re-emerged. Residents could walk the street, see the remnants of old buildings and reminisce about where they would play when they were little. That idea really captured my imagination!'

- Jason Pamment

Suggestions for Classroom Discussion and Application

Before reading

- Before reading *Treasure in the Lake*, look at the book's cover and consider its title and illustration. Look closely at the upper half of the illustration and describe what you can see? Now look at the lower half and think about how it differs? What mood do the two halves create? What sort of story does the cover make you expect? Will it be a novel or a graphic novel? What specific element or elements on the cover – title, font, colour, perspective, etc. – helped you answer these questions?
- How do the first five pages of the story differ from the rest of the book? Why do you think Jason Pamment chose to start *Treasure in the Lake* this way? In answering this question, think about what you learned about Sam and Iris *before* the main story began. Do you know the name for starting a story like this? [It is a prologue.]
- The golden-brown **colour** of the prologue helps us understand that this scene took place in the past, while the brighter, more varied colours that follow show us the events of the present. What role does colour – or the lack of it – play later in the book when Ben is telling his story?
- **Onomatopoeia** is 'when a word describes a sound and actually mimics the sound of the object or action it refers to when it is spoken. Onomatopoeia appeals to the sense of hearing, and writers use it to bring a story or poem to life in the reader's head'. Examples of onomatopoeia in *Treasure in the Lake* include, *quack*, *clunk* and *bonnnnnng*, to name just a few. Graphic novels feature lots of onomatopoeic words – and these are sometimes handwritten in special lettering, so that the word also looks like its meaning and the sound! Find as many other examples of onomatopoeia in *Treasure in the Lake* as you can.
- The term **panel** is used in graphic novels to describe each sequential image and its accompanying words. Panels are often similar in size but can be bigger or smaller at points as another way to tell the story. Look at the images of Iris, first on page 25 when she is yelling *Muuuum*, and then on the following page when she shouts *WOOOOO!*. Why do think both panels have been made longer than those surrounding them? Can you find other instances where the size or shape of panels tell you something about how a character feels or indicate a dramatic turn in the story? What do the rounded panels on page 35 tell you about who is watching Iris?
- A **gutter** is the blank space between panels in a graphic novel. This space is often, but not always, thin. Gutters may look simple, but they do a very important job because they help us understand when time has passed and things have changed. Look at the two close-up images of Sam on page 38. In one he is looking at the new fish statue with fascination but in the next he is turning away. What happened in the gutter or between the two images? Well, we can guess he remembered that Iris left her house late at night, that she might be in trouble and that he needs to keep searching for her. Can you find other examples where gutters 'fill-in' parts of the story?
- Turn to page 179 and explain how the shape of the **panels** and **gutters** here add to the drama of the scene.

- **Shot size** is the level of detail you include in a panel. Long (or wide) shots include lots of detail and are great for setting a mood but don't always tell the reader where to focus their attention. Close shots, however, include very little detail, but highlight key moments in the story. Turn to page 57 and look at the different shot sizes in the panels. What does the close shot of Iris and Sam's hands tell you, and what does the long shot of them running through the town tell you? Can you find other examples where shot size plays a role in telling the story?
- The **angle** – high or low – in which a shot is shown in a panel also helps tell the story in graphic novels. High angle shots can emphasise a character feeling overwhelmed or powerless, as is the case in the first panel on page 81, where Iris is overwhelmed by the size of the clock face. Low angle shots can have the opposite effect, for instance the first panel on page 73 where Iris is angry with Sam and feels superior to him. Can you find other examples of angles – high or low – telling something about how a character in *Treasure in the Lake* is feeling?
- **Lines and shapes** communicate ideas in graphic novels, too. Turn to page 72 and look at the lines that trail behind Iris as she is fighting with Sam. What do these lines tell us about her movements? Can you find other examples of lines or shapes playing a similar role in the story?
- **Bringing it together:** Now that you know about panels, frames, gutters, shot size, angles, lines and shapes, try creating your own short story in a comic format. The story can be about anything you like, but it should include simple text and feature at least six panels.
- **Discussion questions:** The ending of *Treasure in the Lake* is quite open-ended. That means that it is up to the reader to decide what happened and why it happened. So, here's a few questions to ponder:
 - Did Iris go back in time to meet Lily, or was Lily a ghost?
 - When Iris first finds the chest on page 64, it's empty. But when Lily decides to flee the floodwaters, she fills it with toys. What do *you* think Ben finds in the chest at the end of the story?
 - Did Ben save Lily or did she die in the flood?
 - Was Iris dreaming or did she travel back in time?
 - Would Ben have been able to reach Lily if Iris weren't there?
 - Why are both girls named after flowers?
 - Why does the story end with a young Ben opening the toy box after the old Ben found it in the lake?

Author Background

Since he was very little, Jason Pamment has loved to dream up stories of adventure to vibrant worlds filled with strange and wonderful characters. He's a little taller now and lives in his hometown of Adelaide, South Australia with his wonderful wife, darling daughter and playful pooch. Outside of creating comics, Jason designs award-winning animated films, children's television shows, music videos, commercials and video games. *Treasure in the Lake* is his debut graphic novel.

