



The Tunnel of Dreams

BERNARD BECKETT

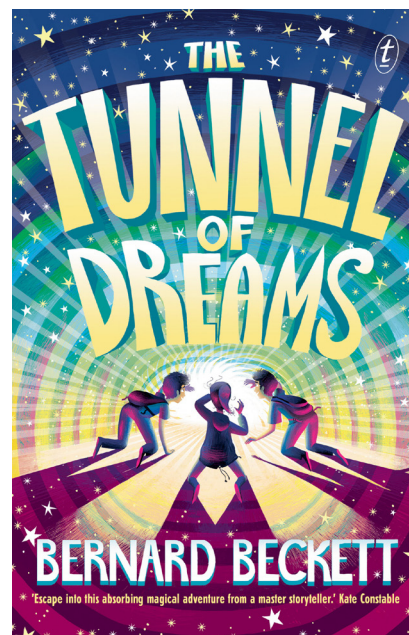
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Fiction

RECOMMENDED READING AGE: 8+

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CURRICULUM GUIDE

The following teaching guide has been designed to embrace shared curriculum values. Students are encouraged to communicate their understanding of a text through speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing and representing.

The learning activities aim to encourage students to think critically, creatively and independently, to reflect on their learning and connect it to an audience, purpose and context. They encompass a range of forms with a focus on language, literature and literacy. Where appropriate, they promote the integration of ICT and life skills.

SYNOPSIS

When Arlo and Stefan sneak out of their rooms to investigate a mysterious light in the abandoned house down the road, they don't know what to expect. Certainly not Alice, or the magical tunnel that opens only in the presence of identical twins on the night of a full moon. Alice leads Arlo and Stefan through the tunnel to another world, where her own identical twin is held captive.

Jackie is imprisoned in a cage, hung high in a huge tent and guarded by the Royal Guard. Freeing her seems impossible, but Alice has an equally impossible plan—Stefan will enter the three-week competition to join the Royal Guard, and when he succeeds, sneak Arlo and Alice in to help him rescue Jackie. But the competition is fierce, and not everyone is who they seem. Stefan and Arlo will have to learn how to survive this new world fast to have any hope of escaping it!

The Tunnel of Dreams is a book about loyalty, courage, and persisting in the face of insurmountable odds.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bernard Beckett is the author of eleven books, most of them for young adults. He has won numerous awards including the 2010 Prix Sorcières, the Esther Glen Award from the NZ Librarian's Association and the *NZ Post* Book Award for his novel *Genesis*. *The Tunnel of Dreams* is his first middle-grade novel. Bernard lives with his family in Wellington, New Zealand.

BEFORE READING

1. Read the blurb of the book as a class. The book is described as a 'fantasy adventure'. What kind of story is this? What other fantasy adventure stories have you read? Talk about what we mean by a book's genre. What other genres can you think of? Make a list of predictions and expectations you have about the book based on its genre, and mark off any you get right as you read!
2. One of the themes in the book is loyalty. What does it mean to be loyal to someone? Is it always a good thing to be loyal? Write about a time when you've stayed loyal to someone, even though it was hard. (If you can't think of a time, it's ok to make one up!)
3. Why do you think the book is called *The Tunnel of Dreams*? Where do you think the tunnel will lead? Draw a picture or write a description of what you imagine Arlo and Stefan might find at the end of the tunnel.

WHILE READING

1. 'As far as they could tell, Arlo and Stefan Feeny were entirely normal boys.' (p. 1). Do you think this is true? What is the first sign that their entirely normal life is about to become entirely un-normal?
2. Why does Alice trick Stefan and Arlo into going through the tunnel? What is so important to her that she is willing to put them in danger? What would you have done in her situation?



3. Where does the tunnel take them? Find three things that tell you something about the world they have arrived in.
4. In Chapter 10, Joan gives Arlo the chance to ask three questions. Are the questions he asks her wise or foolish? What would you have asked in his position? Do you believe that he can trust her to help him? Why?
5. What does Haven want? Where does his power come from?
6. When Arlo sees Jackie, trapped, he makes a silent promise to save her. Is it his responsibility to help her? Why do you think he decides to stay, even though it's dangerous? Are some promises more important to keep than others? Is it ever ok to break a promise?
7. What are the rules of the competition to join the Royal Guard? Do Stefan and Harriet follow the rules? Is it every ok to break the rules for a good reason? Who gets to decide the reason?
8. Why doesn't the real Will want to become a Royal Guard? Have you ever felt that you had to do something to make someone else happy?
9. What would you pack for an adventure like this one? Why? What does Alice make Arlo and Stefan bring?

AFTER READING

CHARACTER

1. When Stefan first meets Malcolm Strawbridge, Harriet explains that he's 'this year's favourite. And a bully too, just like his sister was.' (p. 27). Is Malcolm really a bully? Why does he behave like one? How does Stefan cope with Malcolm's bullying? What else can you do if a bully targets you? Is it ok to bully someone, or make them feel bad, even if you don't really mean it?
2. Do you trust Alice? Why doesn't she tell Arlo and Stefan everything at the beginning? How do your feelings towards her change during the story? How do you know if you can trust someone or not?
3. Joan tells Arlo, 'Not everybody you have met on this adventure is exactly as they seem.' (p. 161) What does she mean? Who is she talking about? Are there any other characters who surprise you in the book? Have you ever trusted someone who wasn't what they seemed?
4. When Alice first leads Stefan and Arlo through the tunnel, she drip feeds them information. But as she grows to trust them, and realise that she needs their help to save Jackie, she is more open, and values their ideas. Do good leaders tell people what to do, or do they take advice from the people they trust? Why do you think this? How else does Alice demonstrate strong leadership qualities in the story?

STYLE AND STRUCTURE

1. 1. Opening lines. What makes a good opening line? What does a good opening line do? What does it tell you? Is the opening line of the book, 'As far as they could tell, Arlo and Stefan Feeney were entirely normal boys.' a good one? Why/why not?
2. Descriptive images can help to create other worlds. This is a part of the world building that writers do, particularly in fantasy novels, to create the world of the story. The tent made of a 'dirty white canvas that throbbed yellow from the fires within' (p. 19) is one image. Can you find three others that capture the world of the story? Try to create your own descriptive images, using something familiar as inspiration. A strong image will draw a clear mental picture for the reader. Can your classmates guess what you're describing without you telling them?

THEMES

Friendship

1. Find examples of the following in the book:
 - A friendship being tested
 - Someone doubting a friend
 - An act of true friendship
2. Trust and cooperation are important elements of friendship. When Alice trusts Arlo enough to involve him in her rescue plan, it is evidence that they have become genuine friends. What other examples of trust and cooperation can you find in the book? What other qualities are important to successful friendships?
3. Name something you couldn't have done without one of your friends. Write a letter to your friend thanking them for helping you and telling them what their help meant to you.

Courage

1. What does having courage mean to you? Find a scene in the book where one of the characters is afraid of doing something, but they do it anyway. What are they afraid of? Why do they show courage? Have you ever been in a similar situation?
2. Does all courage look the same? Alice, Stefan, Arlo and Harriet all have moments where they need to show courage. What do they do? Why do they do it? How does it show courage?
3. Not all courage happens individually – we all need someone to help us feel brave sometimes. When Stefan and Arlo realise that they can read each other's minds, they feel braver. 'Whatever happened, they would have each other.' (p. 18) Why does this make them braver? Find another scene in the book where having support helps someone to show courage. Write about a time that a friend's support has helped you to be brave.



Magic

1. 'Why should children work hard to learn the ways of love and kindness and understanding, when technology could get things done more easily?' (p. 55) In what ways are magic and technology similar? Why do you think they might be incompatible?
2. Arlo and Stefan need to learn magic to help Alice and Jackie, but it is their persistence, loyalty, cooperation and determination to do the right thing that makes them succeed. How does magic act as a metaphor for these qualities in the story? Have you ever had a routine or lucky charm that you thought you needed to succeed?
3. How do Arlo and Stefan react when they first discover the magic in the world on the other side of the tunnel? Imagine that you've discovered that you can read minds, or fly. What would you do?

RESPONDING

1. Go through chapter one and make a list of all of the words in the chapter that make it eerie or unusual. Find antonyms for each of these words and rewrite the story using the antonyms instead. How do word choices change the way you feel when you read the chapter?
2. Plenty of fantasy stories come from real-world problems and ideas. All you need to do is look at the world you live in and ask some 'what if' questions. For example, perhaps the author of the book looked at an empty house and asked 'what if I saw a light through that window?' What other 'what if' questions do you think the author might have asked himself? Write a page that describes a normal day in your life. Now make a list of five 'what if' questions that you could use to make the day magical, or otherworldly. Write the first chapter of your story.
3. Adventure stories need to be many things—exciting, scary, sad, suspenseful, happy, etc. As a class, make a list of words that you might use to describe the way a story makes you feel. Use them to map your emotional responses to the story. Are some feelings stronger than others? Mark these as high points. Compare your emotional responses to the book to your classmates. Why do you think readers have such different experiences of the same story?