

# Wylah the Koorie Warrior #1: Guardians

AUTHORS

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Upper Primary



## SYNOPSIS

Wylah is brave, clever and strong-willed, and all her best friends are giant megafauna animals. But she isn't a warrior. Not yet, anyway.

Then comes the day when her family is stolen by the dragon army, and her life is forever changed. She must find the courage to set out on a journey to save them.

What will it take for Wylah to become a warrior, like her Grandmother before her?

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jordan Gould is a Peek Whurrong man from Warrnambool, Victoria. He performs Welcome to Country ceremonies at corporate and private gatherings. He is passionate about teaching and talking to groups about culture, language and reconciliation.

Richard Pritchard—a New Zealand-born Samoan man—has had a dream of writing books since he was a teenager. His passion for visual storytelling has led him to work in graphic design, film, animation, commercials and video games.

## STUDY NOTES

- Examine the book's cover carefully, including its images, colours, font, text and framing. Using these as clues, see if you can answer the following questions:
  - Where might this story be set?
  - How would you describe the girl, Wylah (pronounced Wheel-la)?
  - Why might she be described as a Koorie Warrior?
  - What sort of a story do you expect this will be? Choose one or more words to describe the genre of the story you think you are about to read: adventure, fantasy, comedy, informational, biographical, historical, mystery, science fiction.
- The authors have included an Acknowledgement of Country before the story begins and a Welcome to Country on the page featuring the 40,000-year-old map of Australia. What is the significance of both statements and how does an Acknowledgement of Country differ from a Welcome to Country?
- Can you see anything unusual about the map of Australia at the opening of the story? (Hint: Papua New Guinea and Tasmania are attached to Australia.)

- Answer the following comprehension questions after reading the corresponding chapters:

### Chapter One

- What sort of art will Wylah teach to the children?
- Why is Wylah nervous about teaching the young children?
- Kamba and Kapa are two blind baby giant k.....
- Woo is Wylah's pet tiger d.. and Kinpa her pet p.....
- Who is the Koorie Warrior when the story begins?

### Chapter Two

- A wuurn is a home in Wylah's Peek Whurrong language. True or False?
- What are the three things Wylah and her friends pack to teach the art class?
- Why are Wylah and Yahpuurn friends?
- Where is Wylah's 'quiet sacred place'?
- Marntaro is a swamp cow. True or False?

### Chapter Three

- Wuurns often have woven baskets or eel traps hanging off them. True or False?
- The Peek Whurrong word to greet people is n.....
- The children refer to Wylah's Grandmother as Auntie because they are all related to her. True or False?
- How do the children make ochre paste?
- Why is paint and painting so important to Wylah and her family?
- Wylah's animals are larger (or are likely to grow larger) than their modern cousins. Visit the Australian Museum's website to research megafauna to answer the following questions:
  - What does the term megafauna mean?
  - Name three different types of megafauna that once roamed Australia.
  - When did they live in Australia?
  - Why did megafauna become extinct?
- Wylah's quest involves finding and uniting five guardians and their totems. Make a list of each guardian's name, the totem in which it resides and the animal it manifests itself to be when called upon to protect its people. If you had to choose between one to protect your family, which would you choose and why?
- Wylah fondly remembers drinking honey water and eating warm bread with her Grandmother, while her father taught her to set eel traps and Pippy teaches her 'fly fishing'. These foods are known as Bush Tucker because they are native to Australia and consumed by First Nations people. Research three other types of Bush Tucker and create a poster that includes:
  - a description of each food or drink
  - a map of Australia showing where each is found
  - illustrations or photos of each type
  - simple recipes for their use.
- Create a poster for your classroom featuring all the Peek Whurrong words you found in the story and their meanings in English.
- 'There are many benefits of what we bring: knowledge, medicine, tools. All we ask in return is for you to obey our every command.' (p 58) Do you agree that Wylah's friends and family are in need of these things and that their lives would be improved by their contact with Livingstone and Frye? How might this scene be used as an example of what really did happen when First Nations people first met Europeans in 1788?
- "So, who owns this place?" Jayden asks. "Owns? What do you mean?" Merri replies.... "...The land owns us."(p 120) How do Wylah and Merri's ideas about ownership differ from that of most non-Indigenous people in Australia today. Which idea do you think is better for Australia?
- "Wylah, this is your destiny now. Your path is to save our children. Bring back our people, restore the village and feed those smelly animals." She smiles at me, her eyes gleaming. "You are our only hope, my brave and beautiful granddaughter. You can do this, you can save our people, Wylah, the Koorie Warrior. Rise up, rise up within."

(p 44) Does this scene remind you of anything you've seen on a screen or read in a book before? Have you heard of a theory called the Monomyth (or Hero's Journey)? It says that many stories from around the world fit one simple pattern: a hero is forced out of their normal world to go on a quest, along the way encountering fabulous forces until they win a decisive victory. They then return to their world with new powers or wealth. The films in the Stars Wars series, for instance, fit this pattern. Can you come up with other films or books that follow this same pattern?