

# The Grimmelings



AUTHOR

**RACHAEL KING**

SCIS: 5479512

ISBN: 9781991006646

RECOMMENDED FOR: Upper Primary

## SYNOPSIS

*The same evening Josh Underhill went missing, the black horse appeared on the hill above the house.*

Thirteen-year-old Ella knows that words are powerful. So, she should have known better than to utter a wish and a curse on the same day, even in jest.

When the boy she has cursed goes missing, in the same sudden, unexplained way as her father several years earlier, Ella discovers that her family is living in the shadow of a vengeful kelpie, a black horse-like creature.

With the help of her beloved pony Magpie, can Ella break the curse of the kelpie and save not just her family, but the whole community?

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rachael King is a New Zealand author who brings a rich tapestry of storytelling to her works, blending the magical with the everyday. With a background in creative writing and literature, King's narratives often explore the interplay between folklore and reality, creating worlds where supernatural elements seamlessly intertwine with the human experience. Known for her evocative prose and intricate character development, she crafts tales that captivate readers with their enchanting atmospheres and thought-provoking themes.

## STUDY NOTES

### WHILE READING

- An epigraph is the term for a standalone line, quote or paragraph that appears before a novel begins. Read the epigraph written by Nick Cave and discuss the mood it sets before *The Grimmelings* opens. Make a list of the words in the epigraph that created this mood. Is this mood extended by the opening sentence of *The Grimmelings*? Why/ why not?
- Complete the comprehension questions after reading Chapters One and Two:
  - What is the name of Ella's horse?
  - What has Ella lost?
  - What does Ella wish for?
  - What do other people suspect about Ella's family?
  - From what country did Ella's grandmother come?

- How does Ella feel about Josh Underhill going missing?
- Why does Ella’s mother accuse her of being irresponsible?
- How does Grizzly describe the women in their family?
- What sort of stories does Grizzly normally tell her granddaughters?
- Why might Ella think Grizzly’s name ‘suits’ her?
- Authors give readers clues about their characters through their descriptions. From these clues, we can infer things about the characters. Find quotes from Chapters One and Two to support these inferences about Ella and her family. The first one below is an example.
- Authors use descriptive language to help their readers imagine the world the characters are in. This is called setting. A good writer uses a range of sensory details to make their world feel three-dimensional. Find quotes that describe different aspects of the setting while the search party is looking for Josh.
- On pp 100–101, the characters talk about painting their feelings as pictures. Fiona describes what her feelings would look like as a painting. As a class, discuss what you think Fiona might be feeling based on her description. Create a drawing or a painting of what you think Ella feels like in this chapter.
- Ella stayed close to Peedie and Fiona, keeping an eye on them. The Shetland pony walked with his head high like he was on the runway, moving his long black forelock out of his eyes. Fifi stared ahead of her, reins in both hands, and every now and then, when Peedie couldn’t help but give a joyous wee buck, she held his mane.
- Ella stayed close to Peedie and Fiona, keeping an eye on them. The Shetland pony strutted with his head high like he was on the runway, tossing his long black forelock out of his eyes. Fifi stared intently ahead of her, reins in both hands, and every now and then, when Peedie couldn’t help but give a joyous wee buck, she gripped his mane.

The paragraph above, on the right, is taken from *The Grimmelings*, while the one on the left is slightly changed. Compare the two paragraphs and discuss what makes them different. Discussion should centre around the different verbs and the missing adverb. Some prompting questions could be:

- What extra information does the verb ‘strutted’ give compared to ‘walked’?
- What about ‘moving’ compared to ‘tossing’?
- How does the adverb ‘intently’ improve our visualisation of Fiona’s action of staring?

## AFTER READING

- How has Ella changed since the beginning of the novel? What have been the most important events that led to this change? What do we learn about Ella through her interactions with other characters? Which character do you think has the most influence on Ella and why?
- Create an interview with Ella after the children and her father are rescued from the lake. This could be done in the form of a magazine or newspaper article, visual news segment, or a podcast.
- Invite students to arrange key events from the novel into a Freytag’s pyramid structure or a Bildungsroman three-part structure.

AUTHOR OF NOTES  
**CAROLYN WALSH**