

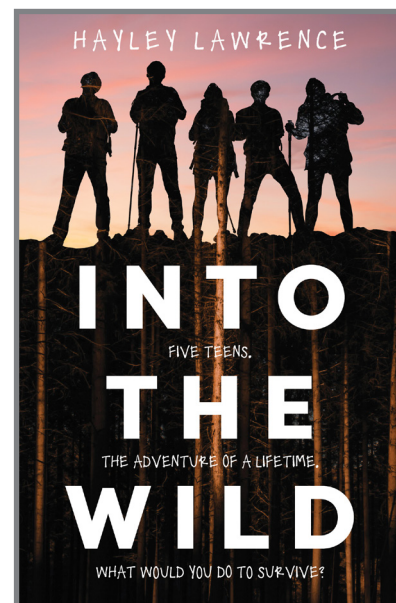
Into the Wild

AUTHOR

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SYNOPSIS

There are places in the world so remote that if you get lost, you may never be found.

Olive, Ted, Knox, Birdie and Silas enter a challenge to survive in the wild, without technology.

Working as a team, they must read maps, build fires, camp and trek through the most dangerous of terrain, in sub-zero temperatures.

But when the teenagers are split over a decision to climb a dangerous rock, disaster strikes. And in their quest for survival, one of them makes an unforgivable choice. With catastrophic consequences.

Nobody is blameless. And they may not all make it home. But those who do, may never forgive each other.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hayley Lawrence has been writing since she learned to hold a pencil. She is currently a lawyer in coastal NSW, where she lives with her five beautifully wild daughters. Hayley's work is haunted by the stories she encounters as a lawyer, through her daughters and in the incredible people who lay their souls bare to her. Hayley's novels have won fellowships and been shortlisted for the Vogel Literary Award. Her novels have also received critical acclaim with the Children's Book Council of Australia, including an Honour Book Award in 2023.

STUDY NOTES

- Before reading the story, discuss the book cover and title. Some things to include in your discussion might be:
 - Where do you think this book is likely to be set?
 - What genre do you think this book is likely to be?
 - Based on the cover artwork, how do you interpret the meaning of the title *Into the Wild*?
 - What are the different components of the cover artwork, and how have they been combined?
 - What is the impact of the cover artwork on the viewer? What messages does it share about the novel?
 - Read the text on the front cover that is in a smaller font. What does it tell you about the setting, genre and plot of the novel?
 - Read the text on the back cover of the book. What have you learnt from this text that you hadn't already hypothesised based on the front cover title and artwork?

- After reading the first chapter of this novel, what do you now know about where and when it is set? As a class, discuss what the author reveals to the reader over the course of these first few pages, and hypothesise as to why they have chosen to open the action of the novel with a retrospective first-person reflection using direct address. In small groups or pairs, create a dot-point summary of the key information regarding plot, characters, location, setting, etc. that has been conveyed to the reader.
- Discuss the author's choice of first person to narrate the first chapter, and identify some of the different reasons an author might have for choosing to tell a story, or part of a story, from a first person perspective. Consider some of the key pieces of information that have been conveyed about the narrator, and their relationships and interactions with the other characters in the novel. What have we also learnt about how matters will resolve for this specific character, as well as for the other characters more generally? What do we now know will happen in the novel, and why might an author choose to structure a narrative this way?
- As a class, discuss the different ways in which an author can choose to structure a narrative. Consider the impact of having a chronologically straightforward narrative, as compared to one that uses retrospective contemplation, flashbacks and other temporal convolutions. Include in your discussion a brief consideration of how alternating between different points of view, while simultaneously switching between first and third person, all within a chronologically complex narrative structure, has an impact on the reader's experience of the story overall.
- As you read each chapter or section, identify both from whose perspective the action is being related, and whether the author is using first or third person to do so. Note this information down in a table with a row for each chapter or section, one column for the identity of the viewpoint holder, one column for the choice of first or third person and a final column for the temporal location.
 - In pairs or small groups, use your completed tables to help create an annotated map or timeline of the narrative structure of the novel.
- Compare and contrast the experiences of two of the five main characters over the course of the novel. Focus on both the extrinsic experiences (what happens to them and what they do), and the intrinsic experiences (how they felt about events and how these feelings prompted their decisions and choices). Use evidence from the text to support your assertions.
- In the context of the novel, where do the lines between interest, passion and obsession lie, and why is it important to recognise within ourselves when we are crossing from one to another?
 - To what extent were the tragic events during the novel the direct result of an interest or passion slipping over the line into an obsession?
- Are there any examples of a character's obsession resulting in a positive outcome for them and/or others? As a class, discuss this topic and attempt to identify at least two instances of an obsession being the direct antecedent of a positive outcome.
- Explore the theme of how the overlap and intersection between personal interest, passion and obsession can affect attitudes and decision making processes. How do the relationships between characters drive this process, or how are they driven by it? Analyse the existence of a shift from interest to passion, and/or passion to obsession in relation to at least three of the characters in the novel, including specific examples from the text that demonstrate each of your chosen characters evincing at least two of the above mentioned states.
- If you live close enough, visit the Blue Mountains. Visit and/or view as many of the places and landmarks mentioned in the novel as you can. After your visit, discuss just what the impact of viewing the bushland where the novel is set had upon your understanding of events.
 - If you live too far from the Blue Mountains to visit in person, source and view as many video essays and photographs of the region as you can. Visit an area of bushland or a national park local to where you live, and go for a day hike. Upon your return to class, discuss the difference between where you live and the wild places of the Blue Mountains, and of what growing up hiking near Katoomba would be like compared to growing up where you live.
- Discuss what it would be like to hike eighteen kilometres through mountainous bushland in a day while carrying a heavy backpack. Do you think that it was sensible for the five young people in the novel to attempt the hike? Why/why not and in what ways? What might they have chosen to do differently that could have averted the tragedy?
- What are some of the positive outcomes of the hike for each character at the end of the novel?

- How much water does an individual need to have available to drink in a day? How much would this weigh?
- Choose one of the European explorers mentioned in the novel, and research them further. Write a one to two page report sharing the key findings from your research.
- Compare and contrast Silas' perspective on hiking to Ted's. Whose perspective do you see as better? Include specific examples from the text to support your assertions.
- At what point, chronologically, in the overall narrative was the very first paragraph written?
 - Why do you think that the author chose this point to start telling the story?
 - Were you surprised to discover that the first paragraph was not actually written at the very end of the action of the novel? Why/why not?
 - What was the impact of this first passage not being the end, and how would it affect the narrative and impact the reader experience of the story if it were missing and the second chapter had been the beginning?
 - In small groups discuss these questions, before writing a new first passage that gives the ending of the novel away. Read these first passages to the rest of the class, then, as a class, discuss how you feel your reading experience would have differed if one of them had been the actual first passage.
- Write a poem about the Blue Mountains using descriptions from the novel for inspiration.
- In pairs or small groups, create a decision tree or flow chart that reflects the key points where one or more of the teenagers in the novel made a pivotal choice. Use your final version to help you write a choose-your-own-adventure story based on the plot of *Into the Wild*. Think carefully about how things might have turned out for the better, or for worse, depending on the different choices that the five characters all made.
- Locate the places mentioned on the map, and trace out the route of the hike that the five set out to complete.

AUTHOR OF NOTES
RAE CARLYLE