



Our Island

By the Children of Gununa
With Alison Lester and Elizabeth Honey

SYNOPSIS:

Our island lies beneath a big blue sky, surrounded by the turquoise sea. Turtles glide through the clear salt water, and dugongs graze on banks of seagrass. In this lyrical celebration of place, the children of Mornington Island explore their home in words and pictures. This is a collaboration with much-loved children's picture-book creators authors Alison Lester and Elizabeth Honey. All royalties from *Our Island* and one dollar from the sale of each copy will be donated to Mornington Island State School to fund art projects in the community.

WRITING STYLE:

This book will be a great educational resource, tying into the Indigenous part of the national curriculum and will be a great subject for classroom discussion and art projects. Includes information on how Alison and Liz made the book with the children of Mornington Island, general information on Mornington Island - where it is in Australia, its history; and includes some words in language (Lardil) and their meanings. All words are taken from the book.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

This lyrical picture book celebrating Mornington Island by Children's Laureate Alison Lester and Elizabeth Honey was created with the **Indigenous children of Mornington Island State School**

Australian Children's Laureate **Alison Lester** is one of Australia's most popular and bestselling creators of children's books. She has won many awards, including the 2005 Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Picture Book of the Year Award for *Are We There Yet?* and the 2012 CBCA Eve Pownall Book of the Year Award for *One Small Island*. Her most recent picture books include *Running With the Horses*, a story based on the evacuation of the world-famous Lipizzaner horses from the Spanish Riding School in Vienna during the second world war; *One Small Island*, about the life and times of a World Heritage Listed island; *Sophie Scott Goes South* about a little girl's voyage to Antarctica; and *Kissed by the Moon*, a lyrical lullaby for small babies celebrating a child's wonder at the natural world.

Alison lives on a farm in the Victorian countryside. She spends part of each year travelling to schools around Australia, helping students and teachers develop their own stories.

Elizabeth Honey is an award-winning author of poetry, picture books and novels. Her playful humour, originality and energy strike a chord with children everywhere. Elizabeth is also an artist and she illustrates her own books. Her picture books include *Ten Blue Wrens*, *Not a Nibble!*, *I'm Still Awake, Still!* and *That's not a Daffodil!* Elizabeth's books are published in many countries around the world.

A lyrical picture book celebrating Mornington Island by Children's Laureate Alison Lester and Elizabeth Honey, created with the Indigenous children of Mornington Island State School

EDITORIAL COMMENTS:

The poetic text of this picture book provides the perfect lyrical counterpart to the vivid, stunning artwork created by Liz and Alison with the children of Mornington Island. We really do see the children's home from their eyes, and a wonderful sense of place is evoked, and all of the distinctive elements of their home celebrated.

STUDY NOTES/ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHERS

PRE-READING DISCUSSION:

- Find out where the children of Gununa live,
- What is this part of the world like?
- What do you think life would be like there?
- What sort of things would the people do?
- What would be the most important things in their lives?

READING:

Page 1

- Describe the island in your own words.
- What can you see in this picture? What does that tell you about this place and the people who live there?
- How do you think the children feel about their island? What words or colours help you get this idea?
- What does the word turquoise mean? Why is this a better word than the words blue or green? (Are unusual words more attractive than common ones? Why?)

Page 2

- What mood is created on this page? How is this achieved?
- What can you tell about the water?

Page 3

- How is the mood on this page different?
- Consider the word patrol. What image does this word create?
- Why is it a better word than 'swim'?
- Why might the sharks and stingrays be patrolling the water?

Page 4

- What is meant by 'the morning glory'?
- How do you think it would affect the land?
- What do the animals seem to be doing?
- How would you feel during the morning glory?
- How does the morning glory make this part of the world special or unique?

Page 5

- Consider the language on this page. What mood does it create?

Page 6

- How does a line of shells get left along the beach?
- What do you think the children would do?

Page 7

- What animals can you see in this illustration?
- What would it be like there at midday?
- Why do the wallabies lie in the shade?
- How have wallabies adapted to their surroundings?
- Wallabies are nocturnal animals. What does this mean?

Page 8

- What is a brolga?
- What is meant by 'bow and sway'? What image does this create?
- What are the shimmering salt pans?
- Why is this a good description of them?

Page 9

- What are sea rats?
- What feeling do you get from the illustration on this page?

Page 10

- What are mudflats?
- What do mangroves look like?
- Why might they be described as marching on skinny legs?
- This poetic device is known as personification (giving a non-human object human behaviours). Can you describe another piece of nature using personification?

Page 11

- What is the island like when the sun drops behind the sea?
- What mood is created on this page?
- How do the colours and words help to create this mood?

Page 12

- This page has a very different feeling what is the mood on this page?
- How is it created?
- What can you see, hear, taste and smell as you look at this page?

Page 13

- What are ghost crabs?
- How did they get their name?
- What is another name for them?
- What does their pattern on the sand look like?

Page 14

- What happens when one dog howls?
- Why do dogs howl at the moon?
- What does this page sound like?

Page 15

- What are bloodwoods?
- Why do they 'whisper in the night breeze'?
- What mood is created on this page?
- How do the words and images help to create this mood?

WRITING STYLE:

Illustrations:

- How do the illustrations help to create mood in this book?
- What is the impact of the use of traditional colours?
- Do the child like drawings add to this story? How would it be different with more professional looking illustrations?

Poetic Language:

- The story is not written in poetry, but it is still very poetic. In what way is it poetic?
- How do these words help to create strong word pictures or mood?

FOR DISCUSSION / ACTIVITIES:

- Make a list of all the animals mentioned in the book and research them.

- What do you think life would be like for the people who live here? Think back to your original predictions and consider if you were accurate.
- What do you think would be important to them? What sort of things do you think they would do?
- Notice that there are no people mentioned in this book. What might that tell you about these people and their attitude to nature?
- If you were asked to describe your hometown would you mention people?
- How else might a book about your home be different from this one?
- Draw a venn diagram that compares the life of the children of Gununa with your own life.
- What aspects of their life do you find unusual?
- What aspects of your life do you think they would find unusual?
- Create a similar picture book describing your local area
 - What things would you include?
 - Why are these important things to help describe where you live?
 - Use poetic language to create some good descriptions that create a mood or atmosphere as well as word pictures.
 - Use your illustrations to help create contrasts between morning, midday and evening.

Marketing / Publicity / Online:

Penguin Children's Highlights, our direct to media e-newsletter sent to over 2,000 media contacts February 2014

2014 Penguin catalogue will include a double page spread feature

Will feature on puffin.com.au as well as the Puffin Facebook page which is aimed at parents.

Advertising in *Reading Time*, *Magpies* and *Off the Shelf* and a review in OZTL Net (a network of over 14,000 teacher librarians)