

THE SECRET OF THE STONE

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Year level: Y5–7

ABOUT THE BOOK

The Secret of the Stone is an adventure story following three students who discover a stone that can give them superpowers.

When Olive and her friends find a mysterious stone and discover it grants wishes, they think their lives are made. Sure, they're going to save the world and all that stuff, but there are a few fun things they want to do first.

Secrets are kept, loyalties are questioned and promises are broken as the group realises that other people are looking for the stone – people who will stop at nothing to get it. As the stakes become more dangerous, the friends begin to realise the importance of friendships and family, whatever their makeup may be.

How much are Olive and her friends willing to risk to make all their dreams come true?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kathryn has story in her blood. Her great-great-great-uncle was Jane Austen's inspiration for one of literature's most well-loved figures, Mr Darcy. She writes fiction novels and screenplays, and non-fiction content for some of the world's top brands.

Kathryn has a first-class honours degree in Art History from the University of Melbourne, a PhD in Marketing from Monash University, and is a graduate of UCLA's Professional Screenwriting Program.

THEMES

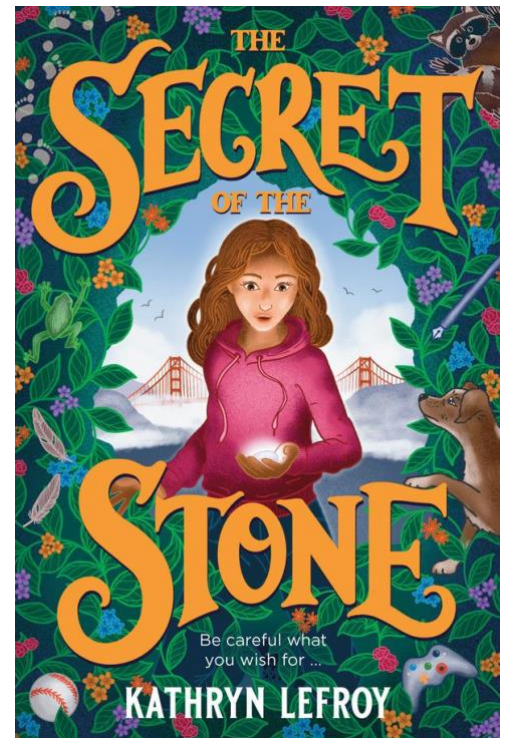
- Friendship
- Family relationships
- Trust
- Coming to terms with the loss of a loved one
- Learning to deal with change

AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

- Y5–7 English

USEFUL WEBSITES

- Author's website: kathrynlestroy.com
- Convention on the Rights of the Child: unicef.org/media/56661/file



CLASSROOM IDEAS

Vocabulary

- Find the definition of the following words and then use them in a sentence of your own.
 - Exasperated: '**... Lola said, exasperated**' (p. 48).
 - Ruffle: '**Not even Jake Webster could ruffle him**' (p. 73).
 - Obliterate: '**You'll obliterate the opposition every time**' (p. 91).
 - Insightful: '**This is extremely insightful**' (p. 113).
 - Deliberation: '**... I'm very pleased with your deliberation and tenacity**' (p. 113).
 - Tenacity: '**... I'm very pleased with your deliberation and tenacity**' (p. 113).
 - Incredulous: '**"So, that was it?" Theo asked, incredulous**' (p. 138).
 - Contradicted: '**... when no one contradicted his suggestion**' (p. 138).
 - Interjected: '**Olive interjected. "Lola!"**' (p. 158).
 - Implausibility: '**... Olive tried not to let the complete implausibility of that statement show on her face**' (p. 194).
- Take the base word 'sight' and see how many words you can make adding prefixes and suffixes. What is the longest word you can make? Use this word in a sentence of your own.

Discussion Questions

- What superpower would you ask for and why?
- Why was Olive not able to go to the same high school as Lola and Theo?
- Why do you think Olive does not share the news about GK being ill with Lola and Theo?
- Discuss where you think a bully's anger might come from and why. Some suggestions might include from a place of insecurity or fear.
- GK does not have a superpower, but she does say she has a secret weapon. What is it and how does it eventually come in useful for Olive?

Creative Writing

- In the chapter 'Blind Baseball', GK gives instructions to Olive on how to hit a baseball. Choose a skill that you enjoy and write out instructions for someone who has never tried that skill before. Share the instructions with your partner and ask for their feedback.
- Find 5 different ways the author describes the feeling someone gets in the story when the stone is being used. For example: '**For a fraction of a second her insides fizzed and popped ...**' (p. 6). Which description do you think works best and why? Can you think of any other descriptive words or phrases that would also work?
- Write a descriptive sentence to describe a feeling or sensation you have experienced in each of the following situations when something makes you:
 - happy
 - sad
 - frightened
 - bored
 - excited
- On page 60, the friends make a list of rules to follow when using the stone.
 - Discuss this list in a group and consider if you agree with all the rules and if you think anything is missing.
 - For each rule, write a short paragraph about what could happen if that rule is broken.
 - Brainstorm two extra rules that you might add to this list.
- On page 230, Jake Webster says '**Just because you have a magic solution, doesn't mean you should use it**'. Brainstorm this statement as a class and write on the board the arguments for and against. Explore it from an ethical perspective. Then, students can write a persuasive piece agreeing, or disagreeing, with this statement. The answer should have an introduction, 3 body paragraphs where each one discusses a different reason why you agree or disagree with the statement, and a conclusion to summarise what has been said.

Health, Social and Emotional

1. Friendship is one of the main themes running through the book. When Olive decides to use the stone without her friends' knowledge, they end up feeling hurt and angry when they eventually find out. She has lost their trust and is made to consider it from their perspective when Lola says, **'Do you know how crappy that makes me feel?'** (p. 217).
 - a. What qualities do you think are important in a friendship? Write a paragraph outlining the top three qualities you look for in a friend and explain why they are important to you.
 - b. What would you do if you had to make the same decision as Olive?

Protective Behaviours

1. Olive, Theo and Lola do not feel they can tell anyone that Ms Ogier is bullying/threatening Olive. They think adults will **'believe her (Ms Ogier) because she's a teacher and we're just kids'** (p. 188). All children must know they have the right to feel safe, be heard and be treated fairly (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2012).
 - a. Discuss who you would feel safe talking to if you had a problem you could not solve or found yourself in a tricky situation. Students can draw around their hand or do a tree with branches to write the names of the people they feel safe talking to.
 - b. Discuss Rights versus Responsibilities – such as, you have the right to be heard, but it is your responsibility to tell the truth, etc.