



TEACHERS' RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Secondary students
(ages 14+; years 8+)

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KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English, Health and Physical Education
- **General capabilities:** Literacy, Creative and Critical Thinking, Personal and Social Capability, Ethical Understanding

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- Learning about inspirational people
- Discussing body image, confidence and self-esteem, goal-setting and mindset
- Exploring the importance of family and friends

THEMES

- Fire
- Family
- Friends
- Love
- The ripple effect
- Public life
- Anger
- Fate
- Body image and confidence
- Dexterity
- Self esteem
- Goals
- Inspirational people
- Mindset
- Legacy

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Unmasked Young Adult Edition Turia Pitt and Bryce Corbett

PLOT SUMMARY

A young adult edition of Turia Pitt's bestselling book *Unmasked* that is unflinchingly honest and completely inspirational.

Telling the story of Turia's life before and after the fire, this young readers' edition unmasked the real Turia: funny, fierce, intelligent, flawed. With a new foreword from Turia, additional content and a new Q&A section, this edition covers topics such as confidence, goal-setting, family and friends and happiness that will resonate strongly with tweens and teens.

Unmasked reveals the woman behind the headlines, and in so doing, uncovers the grace, humour and inner-steel that gets Turia Pitt through every day – and which leaves the rest of us watching on in amazement.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Turia Pitt has a double degree in Mining Engineering and Science. She worked as a model before landing her dream job with Rio Tinto at their prestigious Argyle Diamond Mine and moving to Kununurra with her partner, Michael. Their lives were turned upside-down when she was trapped by a grassfire in a 100 kilometre ultra-marathon in September 2011, and suffered burns to 65 per cent of her body.

Turia lives in her hometown of Ulladulla. She is studying for her Masters and travels the world giving inspirational speeches. She is a well-recognised humanitarian, dedicating her time to causes she is passionate about. Interplast is one such cause – a charity that provides free reconstructive surgery to people in developing countries. Turia was named the NSW Premier’s Woman of the Year and was a finalist for Young Australian of the Year. She also graced the cover of the *Australian Women’s Weekly* and is a judge for the Australian Woman of the Future Fund.

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. When we first read the foreword what sort of person does Turia Pitt appear to be?
2. What words or phrases made you decide this?
3. ‘My advice would be to live life on your terms. Do what you want. Chase the dreams that matter to YOU. Life’s too short to try and please everybody and to worry about what people think’ (x). Do you agree with this statement?
4. What are the challenges of living your own life?
5. What obstacles might we face?
6. What can we do to overcome these obstacles?
7. What personal qualities might we require in order to live our own life?
8. Turia writes a list of advice to her younger self. Do any of these points resonate with you?

Activity

- Ask an adult (parent / relative / friend) to write their 5 pieces of advice they would give to their younger self. Collate these pieces of advice from class members. What recurring issues can you identify? What does that suggest about the challenges we face as adolescents?

THEMES

Fire

‘In the back of my mind, I knew the facts: fire moved faster uphill and trying to outrun a fire was pointless.

But when faced with the choice of standing still and being engulfed by flames or running for your life, there’s little time for reason’ (p6).

Discussion Questions

1. What should Turia and the others have done to avoid the fire?
2. What would have done in this situation?
3. Why was it so devastating for the two girls while the others escaped almost unharmed?
4. Research what physical implications burns to 65% of your body would have?
5. Why did Michael Hull not get as badly burned as Turia and Kate? (p171)

Family

Discussion Questions

1. Turia’s family is clearly very important to her and has had an enormous impact on her life both before and after the fire.
2. What qualities does Turia learn from each of her parents?
3. How did her mother’s love help Turia survive the fire?
4. Turia says her father practiced tough love and he says he was determined to make his children resilient. What is resilience?
5. How can tough love be a better parenting style than protective nurturing love?
6. What happens to us if our parents do too much for us or protect us too much?
7. Many people argue that today’s children lack resilience. What factors in our lives make us less able to cope with problems?

Friends

Discussion Questions

1. Why is it important for Turia to have friends who knew her before the fire? (p143)
2. In what ways are we different with our friends than we are with other people?
3. During the fire and again in the Iron Man races, Turia is helped out by people who at the time are complete strangers to her. How do their friendships at these times help her?
4. Why has Turia become such good friends with Kate Sanderson, Michael Hull, Hal Benson and Martin and Shaun Van de Merwe?



5. How does their shared experience help them cope with their new lives?
6. What would they understand that no-one else would?
7. Why did many of her friends avoid Turia after the fire?
8. Consider Turia's advice: 'You just need to show up. Just show up. Even if you stand there and say, "I don't know what to say, but I wanted you to know I am thinking about you." That's all it takes' (p40). Why did she need people to behave in this way?
9. When Turia is in France she says that one of the things she had to learn again was how to be a friend. What does she mean by this? What does it reveal about her character that this was important for her?

Writing style

1. What is the impact of having family members and friends tell their own stories throughout the book?
2. How does this reflect Turia's attitude towards both her own story and to others?

Love

Discussion Questions

1. Turia says that hers is fundamentally a love story. How has her relationship with Michael helped Turia during her ordeal?
2. In what ways are Michael and Turia similar and different?
3. What qualities does he have that have made him her ideal partner?
4. What qualities does Michael have that helped him cope with their situation?
5. Why did Michael not immediately visit Turia in hospital?
6. Why does he not look at old photographs?
7. Michael says, 'The fire wasn't something that had happened just to Turia, it had happened to the both of us. It was a problem for us both to solve together' (p66). What does this reveal about him?
8. How would this attitude have helped Turia through her ordeal?
9. Why did Turia often try to push Michael away after the accident?
10. Given that they had not been together for very long before the fire, do you find it surprising that Michael stayed with Turia?

The ripple effect

Discussion Questions

1. Turia talks about the ripple effect of the fire – the impact that it had not just on her but on those around her.
2. Who else was affected by the fire?
3. What does this suggest about people in times of crisis?
4. What characteristics did they all need in order to survive?
5. In what ways can the fire be seen to have been just as devastating for them as for Turia?
6. Turia's scars are obvious after the fire. What 'scars' might her friends and family now carry that are less obvious?
7. What is meant by 'survivor guilt'? Why might Michael Hull, Hal Benson and the Van de Merwes feel this?
8. How would you have felt if you had survived the fire almost unscathed when others were so badly hurt?
9. If you or a good friend had been through a devastating event such as this, how might it change your outlook on life (e.g. don't put things off etc)?

Public life

Discussion Questions

1. Turia had to make a decision as to whether to make her recovery journey private or public. Why did she decide to make it public?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this decision?
3. In contrast, Kate Sanderson, who was also badly burned in the fire, has stayed away from the media. 'It's funny, because people have sometimes asked whether I mind that she gets all the attention and I am relatively unknown. After all, we both went through the same ordeal; she sustained burns to 65 per cent of her body, I sustained burns to 60 per cent of mine. But I couldn't be happier for her – not least because I absolutely hate the limelight. In that regard, we are polar opposites. I would rather be strapped in a chair and made to watch infomercials all day long than have to stand in front of a room full of people and make a speech' (p166). What elements of Turia's personality would have made it easier for her to be a public person? Do you think she would have felt a sense of duty to do so?



- Given Turia's life before the fire, do you agree with Kate that 'Turia was probably always destined to be famous. I just don't suppose she expected it to be for all the reasons that she is' (p166).
- Many people in the modern world court fame, especially through social media. In what ways is Turia's desire for a high profile different from theirs?
- Turia talks about meeting the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. How have they used their profile to help others? What other celebrities can you think of who have used their profiles to make a difference?

Anger

Discussion Questions

- The Turia who existed before the fire seemed to be determined, but in a calm manner. After the fire, Turia often deals with her situation in anger. Why would she feel angry?
- Why did Turia get angry or frustrated when people seemed to be patronizing her and celebrating the tiniest of successes?
- Why would this anger have been directed towards Michael?
- In what ways can Turia's anger be seen as a positive emotion for her? What other emotions might she have experienced that would have hindered rather than assisted her recovery?
- What does Turia's anger or determination enable her to achieve?

Fate

Discussion Questions

- What does Turia mean when she describes the fire as a 'sliding doors moment'?
- How can a split-second decision change your life forever?
- Can you think of any sliding doors moments in your life or that of someone you know? E.g. missing a bus that is later in an accident.
- Does Turia seem to resent her sliding doors moment?
- How did it change her life?

Activity

- Write a short story that involves a sliding doors moment.

Body image and confidence

Discussion Questions

- How would it feel to be stared at every time you leave the house?
- How would you react to this situation?
- What aspects of your body do you prefer to keep covered up?
- How would you feel if there was no way you could hide them?
- How does our society define beauty?
- Collect examples of pictures of women who would be regarded as being 'beautiful'.
- How does the media help to reinforce this concept of beauty?
- How does Turia feel about the physical damage to her body?
- Given how attractive Turia was before the fire, do you find this surprising?
- Have you, like Turia, ever come away from looking at social media feeling *a little bit flat*? (p76)
- Are you kind to yourself, do you look after yourself, do you take pride in your appearance and pride in your abilities?* (p80). What does it mean to take pride in yourself? How does your level of pride in yourself affect your confidence and how others see you?
- What are Turia's three options for herself on the days she feels self-conscious? Have you ever used any of these tactics?

Dexterity

One of Turia's biggest challenges was the loss of her fingers. Consider what it would be like to lose this level of dexterity

Discussion Questions

- How would this affect her level of independence?
- How would this have affected her self-esteem?
- How did it affect her relationship with other people?

Activities

- Spend a day with your hands bandaged or in mittens. At the end of the day, complete a journal entry or blog that discusses the difficulties you faced during the day, how they made you feel and how you overcame the challenges.
- What changes could you make to your environment to help you manage with fewer fingers?



Self esteem

Discussion questions

1. Why do teenagers often have self-esteem issues?
2. Turia talks about a 'self esteem bank'. What fills your bank (increases your self-esteem)? What makes withdrawals from it (challenges or reduces your self-esteem)?
3. What are the benefits of having a healthy self-esteem?
4. What are the problems of having a negative self-esteem?
5. How can your self-esteem affect other elements of your life: success, achievements, friendships, motivation etc
4. Why do people often treat sick or disabled people as if they have acquired a brain injury?
5. Why did Turia set herself goals during her recovery?
6. Why do you think she chose such challenging goals that would be out of reach for most people?
7. How do her chosen goals reflect her personality?
8. The Pygmalion theory says that 'people will rise to the level of expectations.' What does this mean?
9. How can it be seen to be applicable to Turia's story?
10. 'Everything in this world is in our heads. And when we get our mindset right, when we get our mindset working for us and not against us, it's amazing what we can achieve. It's almost magic' (255). How can our mindset help to determine what we can and can't achieve?

Activities

- Keep a diary over the course of the week of any deposits or withdrawals in your self-esteem bank. Which is greater? Is there anything you can do next week to increase the deposits and reduce the withdrawals?
- Monitor your 'bank account' for 4 weeks and make a conscious effort to make more deposits than withdrawals.
- At the end of this time reflect on your mood and your self-perception. Has it made any difference?

Goals

Discussion Questions

1. Why did Turia find it hard to accept people's low expectations of her following the accident? 'To this day, that remains one of the harder things for me to cope with: the complete plummet in people's expectations of what I am capable of doing' (p21).
2. 'Progress, I was starting to understand, was measured in millimetres when you are recovering from burns such as mine – not leaps and bounds' (p23). Given all that she had achieved before the fire, how would this have made Turia feel?
3. Turia's mother understood this: 'She will be bored out of her brain hearing the same things over and over and over, no matter how well-meaning they might be. So I instructed everyone to read to her. Michael was told to read her poetry; her father was told to read from newspapers or scientific magazines, which I knew would pique our girl's interest; and I pulled together a collection of her favourite novels and spent my days slowly reading them out loud' (p96). Why would Turia have needed this stimulation?

Activities

'If it doesn't stretch you, if it doesn't intimidate you, if it doesn't scare you a little . . . Is it really a goal?' (257).

- Set yourself long term goal that will really challenge you and take you out of your comfort zone.
- Why is this an important goal for you? Consider what the completion of that goal will mean for you.

Inspirational people

Discussion Questions

1. What people in society inspire you?
2. What qualities do they have that you find inspirational?
3. How did reading Katie Piper's story help to encourage Turia?
4. What mental challenges would Katie have had to overcome that Turia would not?
5. In what ways were Jeff and Johnny Agar inspirational? *These two were, after all, the living embodiment of the Ironman spirit. Their story was, in some ways, my story. Triumph over adversity. It gets you every time* (p126).
6. Why do we need inspirational people in our lives?
7. In what ways is Turia Pitt inspirational?



Mindset

One of the constant messages throughout this book is that people's success is largely determined by their mindset.

Discussion Questions

- How does a positive and determined attitude help Turia?
- What would a negative attitude have done?
- How does the habit of 'normalising' situations help Turia (p53)?
- In what ways would it be easy for her to be too independent and stubborn as a result of the fire?
- 'I realised that the fire is part of me – and always will be. I am never going to get to a point when I am over the fire – when I have left it behind – because it is part of who I am. And I am okay with that' (p235). How does this mindset help Turia?
- What do psychologists mean by the 'set point for happiness' (p126)? Why do you think we have this baseline level? Why do you think we will always return to it?
- What can you do to help yourself develop a positive mindset?
- She says that one of their goals is to do themselves out of a job. How does this also reflect Turia's attitude?
- What other aspects of this organization reflect Turia's attitudes?
- What has Turia personally gained from working with Interplast?
- 'It's amazing how infrequently we ask questions and really, properly listen to the answers. But everyone has a story to tell' (p141). Do you listen to other people's stories? How might this one habit make a change in people's lives?
- 'Sometimes I think it's weird – the fact I am well known because of a random accident. A few seconds of my life that have changed everything. But then I don't think I am famous because I was burned but rather because of what I have done since. I am famous because of my resilience, my optimism and my attitude' (p207). What legacy has Turia Pitt's story left with you?
- What would you like your legacy to be? (What impact would you like to have in your world)?

Legacy

Turia doesn't want to be known as the girl who survived the fire. 'You're the chick that got burned in the fire' – I hate that. 'You're the chick from the TV' – that's not so good either. But when people come up and tell me I've inspired them to actually do something – whether it be to run a marathon, quit smoking or leave an abusive partner – I'm really proud and pleased I can have that influence' (p205).

- Why does Turia have concerns about the impact of the charity work she undertook earlier in life?
- What does it reveal about her character that she has a need to give back to society?
- Why is she grateful for living in Australia?
- 'I suppose it was the first time I started to understand that by virtue of what I had been through, I had become a lightning rod for people determined to change their lives' (p138). How does Turia's story help her inspire others?
- How would it feel to have this level of responsibility at the same time that you were trying to repair your own life?
- What impact would Turia like to have on others?
- What is the goal of Interplast, the charity Turia supports?

TEXT ANALYSIS

Word choices

Words have connotations (embedded meanings) in them that can be positive or negative.

Activities

- Consider for example the words bachelor and spinster. What do they mean?
 - Bachelor: good looking; attainable; freedom; fun; cool house; stylish dresser
 - Spinster: old; boring; eccentric; cat lady; glasses, bun and cardigan

Yet they should have the same connotation as they simply mean unmarried male and unmarried female.

- What are the connotations of the following words:

WORD	CONNOTATION
slender	
skinny	
disfigured	
normal	
different	



- What does this suggest about the power of words?
- Why do we need to choose our words carefully?
- These word choices affect those around us, but they can also affect our self-talk and self-perception. Make a list of adjectives you would use to describe yourself. Do any of them have a negative connotation that could be turned positive?

SYMBOLS

Fire

Fire is often used symbolically in literature as a turning point; a catharsis that changes things; a new start.

- What are the negative elements of fire? What are the positive elements?
- In Turia's world, what negative and positive elements came from the fire?

Cocoon

- Turia's father describes her as a butterfly emerging from her cocoon. 'It's almost as if she went into those bandages and came out a butterfly – completely transformed and ready to fly. She is like one of those Marvel superheroes. They are near death then dropped into some radioactive vat, only to emerge with superpowers. Would this enormous strength of character ever have been realised if this hadn't happened to her? If she had never been caught in that fire' (p112)?
- Given the bandages she wore, do you think this is an appropriate image?
- What happened when a caterpillar emerges from a cocoon?
- Was Turia Pitt ever really a caterpillar or was she too strong for that metaphor to apply?
- Turia could have chosen to cocoon herself very differently. What might she have done in order to protect herself?
- What happens to children when we 'cocoon' them from the world?
- In what ways did Ulladulla help to cocoon Turia?
- What other cocoons helped her recovery?
- 'As I paddled, I realised I felt light: as if an enormous weight had been lifted. It was over. The Ironman challenge I had set myself in that hospital bed all those years ago had been met. Now I could get on with the rest of my life. And I had a kind of epiphany. It felt like an end point: as if I had finally closed a massively formative chapter of my life. And the biggest revelation? When I stopped and

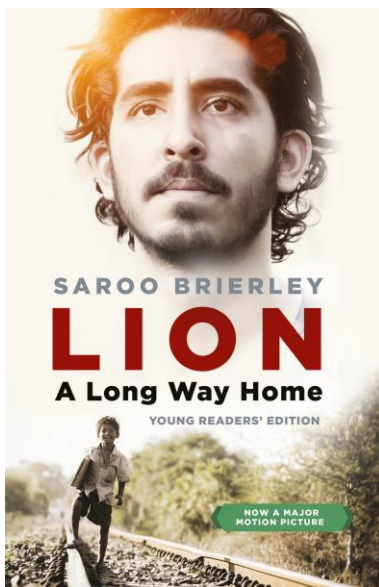
thought about it, that chapter of my life had actually been closed for a long while. The chapter was still in the book, and always would be. But I had long since finished writing it' (p 234). In what ways was the Iron Man championship a type of cocoon for Turia?

Masks

- In what ways do we all wear masks?
- Why did Turia struggle to remove her compression mask in public?
- How did she feel when she first removed it in France?
- What qualities does it take to remove our masks and face the world?
- Why did her friends choose to host a masquerade ball as a fund raiser for Turia?
- The book is called 'Unmasked'. Do you think this is an appropriate title? Why?
- How might this reflect the very public way in which Turia has shared her journey?



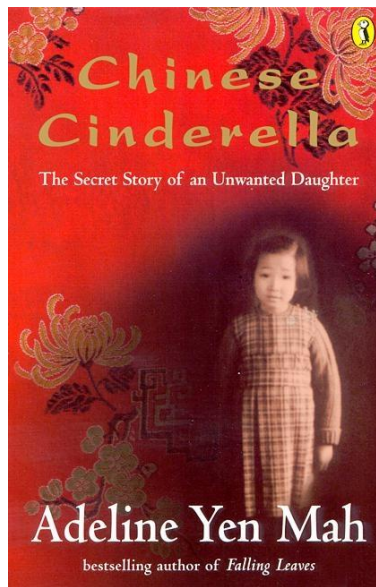
FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA



Lion: A Long Way Home
Young Readers' Edition
by Saroo Brierley

Why this story? Read it as another example of a journey of self-discovery and of overcoming seemingly insurmountable odds.

A moving and inspirational true story of survival and triumph against incredible odds. It celebrates the importance of never letting go of what drives the human spirit – hope.

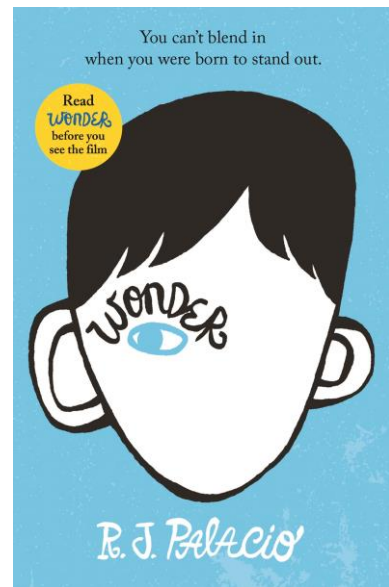


Chinese Cinderella
by Adeline Yen Mah

Why this story? Read it as another example of a story of survival and hope.

Jung-ling's family considers her bad luck because her mother died giving birth to her. They discriminate against her and make her feel unwanted yet she yearns and continuously strives for her parents' love. Her stepmother is vindictive and cruel and her father dismissive. Jung-ling grows up to be an academic child, with a natural ability for writing. Only her aunt and grandfather offer her any love and kindness. The story is of survival in the light of the mental and physical cruelty of her stepmother and the disloyalty of her siblings.

Teachers' resources available.



Wonder
by R.J. Palacio

Why this story? Read it as another example of accepting difference.

Auggie wants to be an ordinary ten-year-old. He does ordinary things - eating ice cream, playing on his Xbox. He feels ordinary - inside. But ordinary kids don't make other ordinary kids run away screaming in playgrounds. Ordinary kids aren't stared at wherever they go.

Born with a terrible facial abnormality, Auggie has been home-schooled by his parents his whole life. Now, for the first time, he's being sent to a real school - and he's dreading it. All he wants is to be accepted - but can he convince his new classmates that he's just like them, underneath it all?

Teachers' resources available.

ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
Unmasked Young Readers' Edition	Turia Pitt and Bryce Corbett	9780143790396	8+	17.99		
Lion: A Long Way Home Young Readers' Edition	Saroo Brierley	9780143784760	7+	16.99		
Chinese Cinderella	Adeline Yen Mah	9780141304878	7+	19.99		
Wonder	R.J. Palacio	9780552565974	4+	19.99		
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