



The **GIANT**
AND THE SEA

TRENT JAMIESON
ROVINA CAI



TEACHERS RESOURCES

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Teachers Resources by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

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INTRODUCTION

*'The sea is rising,' the giant said.
'The sea is rising.'*

A giant stands on the shore, watching the sea.

She never moves, never speaks, until one day she shares an important message. But will the people listen?

This is a moving and powerful story about climate change by Aurealis award-winning author Trent Jamieson and CBCA award-winning illustrator Rovina Cai.

It is told as a fable in enticing and stately language which is perfectly illustrated in sepia-toned, atmospherically suggestive and filmic illustrations which will have enormous appeal to contemporary readers.

THEMES & CURRICULUM TOPICS

Several themes are covered in this book which might be related to the Australian Curriculum, including:

STUDY OF HISTORY, SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT

CLIMATE CHANGE

DISCUSSION POINT: What is climate change? How serious is the threat of rising sea levels, and global warming, and what have scientists discovered about the causes of such changes to the earth's environment?

ACTIVITY: Conduct a debate for and against the necessity to confront climate change.

ACTIVITY: Seventeen-year-old Greta Thunberg has become the face of young people protesting against global inaction in confronting climate change. In 2020 she spoke at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, as she had the year before, about such inaction. Research the 'Extinction Rebellion' movement and the student school strikes which have occurred all over the world. Do you believe that such actions by young people can make a difference?

ACTIVITY: Brainstorm with students what societies can do to alleviate global warming and climate change. [See Healey (2014) in the **Bibliography** for ideas regarding this activity.]

INDUSTRIALISM AND ALIENATION FROM NATURE

DISCUSSION POINT: Many human beings have gradually lost touch with natural processes as a result of industrialisation and automation. How important is it to maintain connection with nature and the landscape in which we live? Discuss and compare other picture books which deal with this theme. [See **Bibliography**.]

ACTIVITY: Conduct a field trip with students encouraging them to keep a diary of what they observe in nature during the outing. Make what they observe the subject of a further research topic for each student.

ACTIVISM AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH

DISCUSSION POINT: The giant and the girl try to warn the people of impending disaster. But the people don't like being told what to do by the giant, and they protest with hand-made signs:

'You cannot tell us to turn off the machine. The machine works.
We are prosperous. It is a wonderful machine.
You should come and admire it. It is as shiny as the sea.'

They eventually ban the giant from their area. Discuss how activism often leads to what we might call fascist or totalitarian responses such as this one. Freedom of speech is an issue which we all should all be aware of. Should anyone be banned for voicing an opinion?

DISCUSSION POINT: Conduct a debate about the individual's right to protest.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

The text of this book might be studied in relation to the following aspects:

ACTIVITY: This tale reads like a traditional fable. It also employs a circular structure so that the beginning becomes the end in a tantalisingly suggestive way. The female giant tells a young girl to spread the message that the sea is rising and that the machine must be turned off or else people will drown. Invite students to write a fable like this, based on the theme of the environment.

DISCUSSION POINT: What literary devices can you identify in this text?

ACTIVITY: Write a poem about climate change after reading other examples of such poetry. [See **Bibliography**.] [See also **Worksheet 2**.]

ACTIVITY: Test your students' comprehension by asking them questions about the written and visual text. [See also **Author's and Illustrator's Notes** below.]

VISUAL LITERACY

The visual text of a book combines with the written text to tell the story using the various parts of the book's design and illustrations, as explored below:

ACTIVITY: The cover of a book is an important part of its message. What does this cover suggest to your students?

ACTIVITY: The endpapers contain suggestive splotches as if ink has been spilled on the page. What do you think the artist was suggesting here?

ACTIVITY: The title page is without an image. Design a suitable image to appear below the title.

Discussion Point: How does the layout of the storyboard and the portrait format and design of the book influence your reading of it?

ACTIVITY: Study the medium employed which is drawing on iPad and computer. [See **Illustrator's Notes** below.]

DISCUSSION POINT: Many other aspects of artistry come into play in Rovina Cai's work:

'Line introduces a sense of movement into a piece. In my more rendered images, I use flowing ribbons and lines as a way to create narrative, to direct the viewer's attention. A teacher I had in grad school once mentioned something about finding the wind in an image – thinking about where the wind is coming from, and that's what I've been trying to do with line – to breathe a sense of life or spirit into my images. In my looser drawings, I'm interested in exploring mark-making.' (Lien quoting Rovina Cai 2014) What aspects of Rovina Cai's style did you particularly notice in this text?

DISCUSSION POINT: Point of view is another aspect which is obvious in these images. Examine the images to ascertain how the angle of the 'camera' or 'viewer' of the image changes in each frame.

DISCUSSION POINT: Some of the colours used in this book are sepia in tone. How does this colour palette influence your reading? [See **Illustrator's Notes** below.]

ACTIVITY: Prediction is an important part of picture book reading. The reader's perspective in observing strong left to right movement across a double page spread is also important in a picture book, encouraging the reader to follow the action sequentially in a filmic way. Analyse how this picture book employs these strategies.

ACTIVITY: Invite students to draw, paint, or collage another scene to accompany the story you wrote in the fable activity above. Create a classroom display using all the images. [See also **Worksheet 1** below.]

ACTIVITY: Create a cartoon which makes a comment on global warming.

ACTIVITY: Create a graphic novel/comic version of a scene in this book. [See **Bibliography.**] [See also **Worksheet 4.**]

CREATIVE ARTS

There are many creative activities suggested by this text:

1. **Celebrate days such as Earth Day or World Environment Day at your school by creating displays** of relevant books and some of the work students have been doing in researching this picture book.
2. **Create a mural** in your classroom responding to the issue of climate change. Map it out together and then invite each student to participate in creating a section of the mural.
3. **Create a diorama of the scene which opens this text.** Use a cardboard box as your frame.
4. **Create a slogan and poster** to protest against climate change inaction.
5. **Create a Book Trailer** to promote this book. [See **Bibliography.**]

LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

ACTIVITY: Research the topics above online.

ACTIVITY: Research the author and illustrator online. [See **Bibliography.**]

MATHEMATICS

ACTIVITY: Discuss the statistics associated with rising sea levels.

ACTIVITY: Invite students to keep a record of the hours they each spend travelling and the different modes of transport they use during a designated week. e.g. walking, bicycle, scooter, bus, train, private vehicle, aircraft. Create a simple graph of the hours spent in each mode of transport and discuss the energy usage implications.

FURTHER TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

- Research the work of Trent Jamieson.
- Research the work of Rovina Cai.
- Students might research this book in comparison to reading other picture books such as those listed in the **Bibliography.**
- Investigate any other topic not covered in these notes which you consider is suggested by this text.

CONCLUSION

This atmospheric tale is a moral fable and an instructional text about the precious world in which we live. It will encourage students to think about the impact that humans have on their environment and to 'tread lightly' on the earth that we should value much more than we do.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

'Stories are the best way I know of making sense of the world. They give me comfort when I am sad, and they offer wisdom when I need it (which is always). I've built my life on stories. It fills me with joy that I can start writing a story about a giant and it somehow becomes about something else altogether, while still being about a girl, a giant, and the sea. Stories bring truth to the reader, and readers bring truth to a story, and together they make something powerful, gentle and wonderful. That's the real magic of storytelling, the way the same words in the same combination can mean so many different things to different people. One story is many stories, and all of them are true.

Everywhere I have lived has been prone to flooding. I remember my hometown of Gunnedah being surrounded by a sea of brown water, trees poking forlornly out of the muck. The year I moved to Lismore in NSW it flooded several times – one time my Dad had to rescue me and my brother from school. Brisbane, where I've lived since the late 90s, experienced a horrible flood in 2011. There's something slow, and horrible, and terribly violent about big floods, and they have snuck into my stories many, many times – so have levies which have a tendency to offer a false sense of security. It's no wonder that my first picture book would feature rising waters. Floods are transformative (just like climate change), the familiar becomes unfamiliar, land gives way to water, and the world becomes something different. I believe anything we can do to reduce our impact on the world we should be doing.'

ILLUSTRATOR'S NOTES

'The illustrations in *The Giant and the Sea* were created using an iPad and computer. The drawings were done first on the iPad, in the same way that a graphite pencil drawing on paper would be. And then colour and textures were added in Photoshop on a computer. In each illustration, colour, line, shape, and texture were all used to help create narrative, and guide the reader's response to the written words.

The contrast of the natural vs the man-made was one of the main visual themes I focused on. The landscapes and other organic elements in the book were drawn with soft flowing lines and warm colours, while the machine was depicted using harsh flat shapes, with jagged edges and dark splotchy textures. The aim was for the machine to look jarring and out of place, much like in the real world, where factories, machines and other man-made structures can stand out and even damage a natural landscape.

Colour was used strategically throughout the book; in the first pages, the colours are more saturated and warm. As we progress, and the machine is introduced, they become cooler and less saturated; even the once lush landscapes are depicted as duller and emptier. Once the waves arrive, the art is almost entirely black and white. And only towards the end of the book does the warm colour begin to return. Colour is often used in art to suggest emotion. Warm colours create feelings of happiness, comfort, etc. While darker, cooler colours create feelings of foreboding and sadness. My use of colour in the book follows the emotional arc of the written story.

In terms of design, I wanted the giant to look like she was a part of the landscape; made up of rocks and branches. So when the giant warns the girl and others that the sea is rising, it is as if nature itself is giving the warning. The way I've drawn the rocks on the giant and in some of the landscapes was inspired by natural rock formations known as basalt columns, found in Iceland, Ireland, and other places. In many of these places, there are local legends related to giants – either that giants were turned into these rocks, built the rocks, or that the rocks themselves are giants. I thought including the rock formations in the book was a fitting tribute to these legends, and also taps into the way that nature is often personified in myths.

It is my hope that the art provides a secondary layer of reading to the book and helps to set the tone and atmosphere of the story.'

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Trent Jamieson is an editor, bookseller and award-winning writer of science fiction and fantasy, including the Death Works series and Roil duology. His 2015 novel, *Day Boy*, won the Aurealis Award for Best Fantasy Novel 2015, Aurealis Award for Best Horror Novel 2015, was shortlisted for the Ditmar Award for Best Novel 2016 and Courier-Mail's People's Choice Queensland Book of the Year 2016, and longlisted for the International DUBLIN Literary Award 2017. He has published over 70 short stories, two of which have won prestigious Aurealis Awards. For further information visit his website: www.trentjamieson.com.au

See also the following:

Lindgren, Carl 'Trent Jamieson, Novelist, Brisbane Writers Festival' *The Weekend Edition* 27 August 2015 <<https://theweekendedition.com.au/the-locals/trent-jamieson/>>

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Rovina Cai is an illustrator from Melbourne, Australia. Her illustrations evoke a sense of intrigue; images that make you linger, hungry to know the story behind them. She has a degree in Communication Design from RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia, and an MFA in Illustration as Visual Essay at the School of Visual Arts in New York City. *Tinnabula*, her first picture book, with acclaimed author Margo Lanagan, was published in 2017 and won the CBCA Crichton Award for New Illustrators. For further information visit her website: rovinacai.com

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WORKSHEETS

WORKSHEET 1. COLLAGE THIS IMAGE

This is a famous image by Japanese artist and printmaker Hokusai (1760–1849) entitled The Great Wave off Kanagawa 1823. Enlarge the image on a photocopier and invite students to create a collage of this image.



WORKSHEET 2. ENVIRONMENTAL POETRY

A. ACROSTIC POEM

O	
C	
E	
A	
N	

B. CALLIGRAM OR SHAPE POEM

Write a poem in the shape of a wave:

C. HAIKU POEM

5 syllables:	
7 syllables:	
5 syllables:	

See: '7 Poetry Forms Every Teacher Should Be Teaching and Why' Literacy Ideas for teachers and Students

<<https://www.literacyideas.com/latest/2018/3/1/7-poetry-forms-every-teacher-should-be-teaching-and-why-they-should-be-teaching-them>>

WORKSHEET 3. WORD GAMES

A. Complete this Wordfind.

E	N	E	R	G	Y		P		C
X	W	A	V	E	S	M	O	G	O
T	O	X	I	C			L		A
I	Z	G	R	E	E	N	L		L
N	O		B	I	O	F	U	E	L
C	N	W	A	S	T	E	T		S
T	E	S	O	L	A	R	I		O
B	U	G	C	A	R	B	O	N	I
E	M	I	S	S	I	O	N	S	L
B	E	E	C	L	I	M	A	T	E

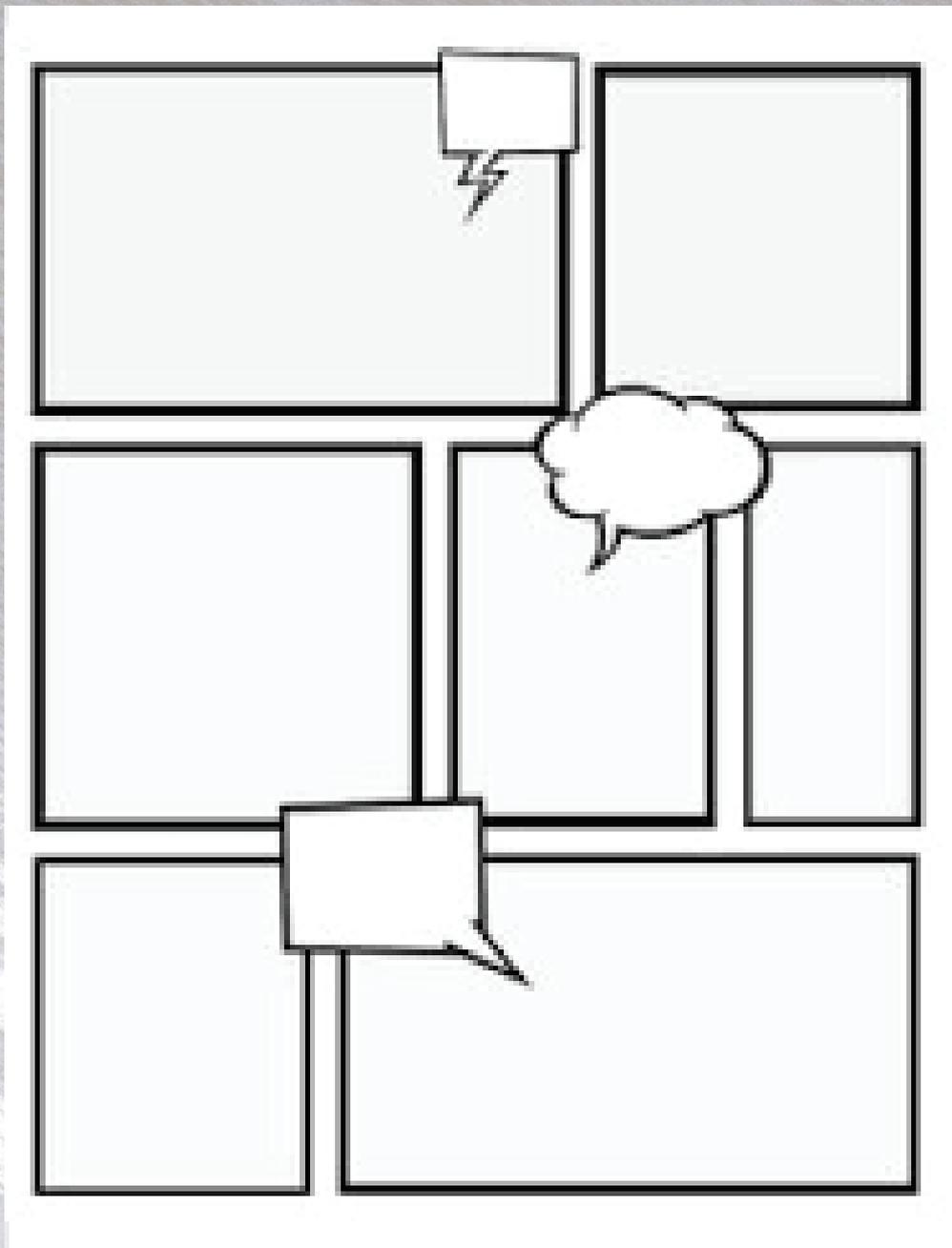
WORDS: ENERGY, POLLUTION, TOXIC, EXTINCT, BIOFUEL, OZONE, EMISSIONS, CARBON, SMOG, CLIMATE, GREEN, COAL, SOLAR, WASTE, WAVE, SOIL, BEE, BUG

B. Write a list of all the words you can make from the letters in ENVIRONMENT. See if you can find 20!

Possible Answers: Even, Event, Invent, Iron, Men, Mentor, Neon, Nor, Omen, One, Ore, Rent, Rote, Teem, Ten, Tern, Ton, Tore, Vein, Vent.

WORKSHEET 4. GRAPHIC STORYTELLING

Create a graphic novel/comic interpretation of one of the scenes in this book. Use the layout below as the storyboard for your comic. Enlarge on a photocopier to give you more space.



Comic Book Template viewed at: <http://www.pinterest.com/pin/365706432212821426/>

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WEBSITES AND NON-FICTION TEACHING RESOURCES ON CLIMATE CHANGE

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright operates justified text writing and publishing consultancy services, and is widely published on children's literature, publishing history and Australian fiction. In 2011 she was the recipient of the CBCA (Qld Branch) Dame Annabelle Rankin Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Queensland, in 2012 the CBCA Nan Chauncy Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Australia, and in 2014, the QWC's Johnno Award.





