

# LONGACRE PRESS TEACHERS' RESOURCE KIT

## Hideout a novel

Lorraine Orman

*'We might be runaways, but we were also explorers, Dawn and me... We were travelling into a new world. ... Maybe this stupid, crazy idea was going to work.'*

Things at home have spun out of control. Fifteen-year-old Roz knows she has to take charge.

She packs up her younger sister and the two of them flee, finding refuge at a friend's beach house.

But are the girls really out of harm's way here on this wild and windy coast? Has Roz taken on more than she can handle?

Troubling events from the past, and mysterious, ancestral voices from Kapiti Island, seem to haunt Roz. Who should she be listening to? And when disaster strikes, who can she turn to for help?

A compelling, nail-biting drama.

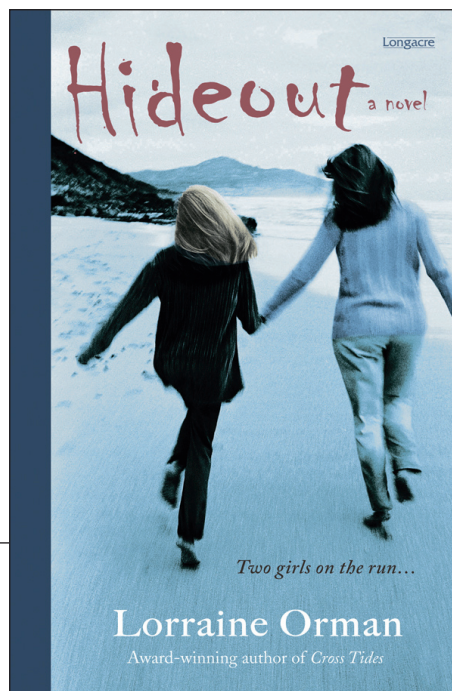
### POINTS OF INTEREST:

- dramatic, well told, suspenseful story
- author excellent interviewee
- includes Maori mysticism/legends
- good educational tool

### RESOURCE KIT CONTAINS:

- author statement
- questions for discussion/essay topics
- research questions

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## AUTHOR'S COMMENT



When talking to school students I often discuss how books begin. Everyone agrees that a book begins with one idea. But then I try to convey the importance of the other ideas that have to attach themselves to that first crucial thought. I often use the analogy of putting a jigsaw puzzle together – but having to actually shape the pieces as you fit them in.

My stories always start from one initial idea or concept – which can be a character, a theme, a memory, a dream, a setting. In the case of *Hideout*, I started with the setting. The house at Pukerua Bay is based on a real bach belonging to friends. When my family lived in Wellington, we often used to stay at the bach for holidays. I still have very strong memories of Pukerua Bay – and the extraordinary experience of living right on a beach.

I drew on those memories to write the book, but I also interviewed various members of the family who own the bach in order to capture their special childhood memories of the bay. I have never experienced a bad storm at Pukerua Bay but the owners have, and I used their descriptions.

Once I decided that I wanted to set a story there, I had to think of everything else – characters, plot, themes. Pukerua Bay seemed like a good place to run away to, so I latched on to that idea. The next idea that arrived was the decision to have two sisters as the main characters. I am an only child, and I often wonder what it's like to have a sibling. So I decided to explore the idea of two half-sisters. In the end, for the sake of an exciting plot, their relationship turned out to be a difficult one.

Anyone who runs away from home must have a strong reason to do so. I couldn't think of a more compelling reason than sexual abuse. By this time, Roz's family and all their associated long-term problems were starting to take definite shape in my mind. Because this is a story about secrets, I decided that Roz also needed her own (hidden) reasons to run away – but at the beginning she convinces herself she's doing it all for Dawn.

Pukerua Bay is almost like a character in the novel, in that it acts as a catalyst for things to happen. Roz doesn't know what to do, she's stuck in a bog of indecision. But what happens at the bay forces her to face up to her own problems – and to act to save both herself and her sister.

I always intended the bay to be a healing place for the two sisters. In the first versions of the story, Kapiti Island didn't play a very big part. But as I worked to put all the pieces of the puzzle together, Kapiti started haunting me. I read Alistair Campbell's poetry, researched the history of the island, and recognised that Kapiti is a very important place to a lot of people, both Maori and Pakeha. So I started weaving its influence into Roz's story – and in the end it also grew to become a virtual character.

I was happy with the resulting idea of three people, initially strangers to each other, being drawn into the spell of the island and eventually coming together to create something unique to help Kapiti remain a national treasure. Was there magic involved, or was it just coincidence? I leave it to readers to make up their own minds.

By the way, I desperately wanted to travel to Kapiti

as part of my research for this story. I got my DOC permit, booked my boat trip, flew from Auckland to Wellington, hired a car, stayed in a motel at Paraparaumu – only to find the wind blowing so strongly the next morning that all trips were cancelled. I deliberately used some of that personal frustration when I wrote about Roz’s love-hate relationship with the island.

I used real locations and real points of interest in the story. Initially I had changed the name of the bay to something fictional, but in the end I thought, “Why not use its real name? I’m not saying anything nasty about the bay – quite the opposite.” There *is* a timber lookout on the cliff top with an information board containing Alistair Campbell’s poem. There *is* a zigzag path down to the beach, and there is a Ngati Toa cemetery on the hill with a blue-painted headstone in it. When I last visited there was even a magnificent secondhand bookshop in Pukerua Bay – but it does have a different name to the one I used. And the last time I walked along the shoreline, the shingle was strewn with massive driftwood logs, their branches reaching to the sea and the sky ... I have photos to prove it.

Which leads me on to how I write. I took a lot of photos of Pukerua Bay and pinned them up on the wall over my desk. I also found photos of people in magazines whom I thought looked like Roz, Dawn, and Vic. When I got stuck I’d stare at these photos, waiting for inspiration.

I do many drafts of my novels. The final version of *Hideout* is very, very different to the first draft. I even had my manuscript assessed by professional assessors, and ended up totally re-writing the story on their advice. It was well worth the money because the original plot was too bulky and delved too much into the past.

I decided to (mostly) limit the “history” of Roz and her family to Roz’s one-page monologues aimed at her social worker, which sit at the beginning of each chapter. This is the kind of writing technique used by John Marsden, so I decided to give it a go. It taught me to be very selective about the background details I included, both retrospective and current.

This is a story about Roz finding herself, about Roz giving herself permission to follow her own path in life.

*Lorraine Orman*



# COMPREHENSION

## Chapter one:

- What do we find out about Roz's family in the prologue to Chapter One?
- Why don't most travellers notice Pukerua Bay, according to Roz?
- Why does Roz normally have to ring in sick for her mother?
- How old was Sylvia when she had Roz?
- What does Roz think people will notice as suspicious about her?
- Why doesn't Roz think it'd be a good idea to go to Auckland?

## Chapter two:

- Why is Pukerua Bay a special place for Roz?
- Why does Roz love Kapiti Island?
- What habit has Roz kept from almost everyone?
- How does Roz comfort Dawn?

## Chapter three:

- Why do Roz and Louise originally agree that they're not interested in boys?
- What does Roz think is different about Don Nepia?
- What does Roz hate about shoplifting?

## Chapter four:

- What are Roz's tactics for shoplifting?
- How are Roz and Louise fringe dwellers?
- Why is Louise's family so appealing to Roz?
- Why does Roz know they can't go home?

## Chapter five:

- Why does Roz know something bad happened to Dawn?
- Why will Sylvia not go back to Granity?
- How does Roz convince Gloria to tell her the truth?
- How does Sylvia's story echo the story of her daughters?
- What does Roz feel is missing from herself?

## Chapter six:

- Why does the guy in the bookstore first appeal to Roz?

## Chapter seven:

- What does Roz think was a warning sign about Stan?

## Chapter eight:

- How does Dawn's near-drowning and rescue parallel or contrast to her abuse by Stan?
- What image makes Roz doubt what they are doing?
- What does Roz think is the reason/s for Dawn's silence to her?
- How does Dawn show her anger?

## Chapter nine:

- What does Roz think the mistakes she made that night with Stan were?
- What does Dawn believe the voices in her dream were? How does she account for this?
- Why does Don say he doesn't need a permit to land on Kapiti?
- How do they bury their chiefs on Kapiti? Why?
- What does Don say happened to Te Rauparaha when he was taken from Kapiti?

## Chapter ten:

- How does Roz think her mother feels about her?
- What does Roz see when her 'future flash[es] past [her] eyes'?
- What is significant about Don's waiata?

## Chapter eleven:

- How does Sylvia's reaction to the crisis differ to what Roz expects? Why does Roz expect this?
- How do things relating to Roz, Vic, Don and Kapiti seem to be coming together?

## Chapter twelve:

- How did Louise react to Roz on her return?
- How does Roz think she can get Dawn to finally talk?
- How did Stan convince Dawn to keep quiet?
- What is the significance of the sculpture, and both Don and Roz's names for it? What does it symbolise?

**Chapter thirteen:**

- Why does Don talk about himself in the third person? How does he mean he has “two lives”? Which two lives is he talking about?
- How does Don come to the conclusion Roz has Maori blood? (What are the factors?)
- What does Roz feel she has given up for Kapiti?

**Chapter fourteen:**

- Why didn't Dawn tell Roz about the letter?
- How have Roz's actions in trying to help Dawn backfired?

**Chapter fifteen:**

- What does the dangerous log on the walkway symbolise in relation to Roz?
- How did Daisy help Don carry Dawn through the waves? What is the parallel with the dog in Don's reincarnation story?

**Chapter sixteen:**

- How has Sylvia changed?
- Why does Sylvia agree to Rick taking Dawn?
- Why does Roz suddenly change her mind about living with Rick?
- Why does the detail about Roz's father fit with what has happened to her so far?
- What makes Roz think it'd be best for her and Dawn to live apart?

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Research Kapiti Island – look at the history of the island and its present state as a nature reserve. You could create a timeline chart from its geological formation to the present.
- Research the historical figure of Te Rauparaha. Find and quote from different accounts (first hand if possible) to build a character sketch of him. What did he mean to different people in the time in which he lived? How is he viewed now?
- See what retellings you can find of Kahe Te Rau-o-te-rangi's story. Do they differ in any way? How does Kahe's story relate to the girls' story in the book (if at all)? Do you think the author has intentionally drawn a parallel?
- Look into the notion of kaitiaki. Is the idea of ancestors as guardians present in any other cultural traditions? Find out about one and present your findings to the class.
- Read Alistair Campbell's poems about Kapiti, and give a close reading of one or two of them. Does his treatment of Kapiti in the poems change? Are there themes that run throughout the poems? You could write a poem about a place that has significance to you, perhaps use a storm or 'big weather' imagery as a starting point.
- What support groups or agencies exist, in New Zealand, to help people suffering from abuse? Are there procedures in place to help people like Dawn and Roz? In a real life situation, what would be a better alternative to Roz's solution?

# DISCUSSION/ESSAY TOPICS

- Stan manipulates the girls and makes them feel guilt over what has happened, to keep them quiet – why do these tactics work?
- Roz takes on a mother role when she runs away with Dawn – though she has been playing this role for quite some time. Was she qualified to make these decisions? Did she have no choice or were there other, safer avenues she could have taken? Her own mother ran away from home – how were their situations different?
- Sylvia’s way of coping with her life is to drink heavily. Roz, although she claims to steal only from necessity, admits she gets a rush from it. Are these similar ways of coping, or are these entirely different cases?
- Don Nepia’s story involves the idea of reincarnation. Do you feel this is a literal reincarnation, or rather a way of carrying other histories with you? Which cultures or religions believe in reincarnation? How do you feel about the idea?
- Kapiti Island is seen as a spiritual place by many of the characters in *Hideout*. How do you feel about this? Is it a cultural thing, or does land have a spiritual quality in itself? Have you had any experiences of a particular place having a spiritual quality?
- There are two time-frames at work in the narration of this novel, with Roz looking back over the events in a prologue at the beginning of every chapter. Why does the author use this technique? How does it work on the reader? Do you feel it is successful?
- Given the circumstances do you think Roz did the right thing running away with her sister?
- Most of the female characters have an issue with body weight and body image. What are Roz’s attitudes to her own body image? What are her attitudes to the other characters’ body shapes?
- Roz claims she only ever stole food, so she and Dawn could eat. Is this justified? When she stole the book, something changed – why do you feel she (perhaps subconsciously) did this?
- When talking about their website, Roz gives a Janis Joplin quote that particularly struck her:  
‘I wanted those motherf\*\*\*ers to see what a fine feathered bird I turned into.’  
She sympathises with this, but says she won’t kill herself with drink and drugs like poor old Janis did. Why do you think Roz sympathises with Janis, yet is angry at her mother’s behaviour?
- In *Hideout*, Roz tells her sister stories as a way of comforting her. Often these stories involve themselves as characters. Don, however, speaks of himself in the third person, as a character in a story, in order to reveal something he finds difficult to say outright. How do we use stories to comfort ourselves, or confront things in our lives – can you think of any examples? In what other ways are narratives important to us? What use do they have apart from simply entertaining us?