

# Kalik

Jack Lasenby

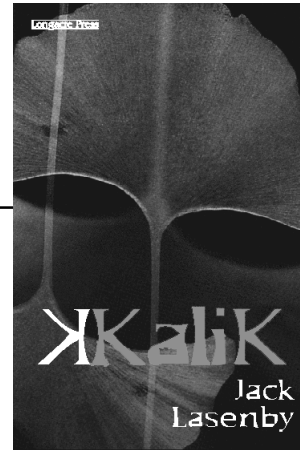
By the river, our people lie  
By the river rushing by...

Ish is introduced to Lutha's Headland; a cruel and primitive society driven by fear and superstition. He quickly distrusts a quality in Lutha and her beautiful, elegant friend and lieutenant Kalik.

Ish wishes to escape but realises he cannot go alone – as this would mean leaving behind a group of terrorised children.

In this novel Jack Lasenby weaves in threads of ancient myths, religions and folk tales from cultures as diverse as Ancient Persia and old Russia. His inventiveness reminds us how vital the power of story-telling is, and how it creates a sense of history, community and identity for all.

A magnificent and powerful novel written by one of our finest writers.



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jack Lasenby was born in Waharoa, New Zealand in 1931. During the 1950s he was a deer-culler and possum trapper in the Urewera Country. He is a former school teacher, lecturer in English at the Wellington Teachers' College, and editor of New Zealand's School Journal.

Jack Lasenby held the Sargeson Fellowship in 1991, the Writer's Fellowship at the Victoria University of Wellington in 1993, and was the Writer in Residence at the Dunedin College of Education in 1995. He is the author of many novels for children and young adults, and has been the recipient of New Zealand's most prestigious children's fiction awards.

*Kalik* is the fourth and final title in the 'Travellers Quartet'. The first, *Because We Were the Travellers*, received an Honour Award in the 1998 NZ Post Children's Book Awards. *Taur*, the second, won the senior fiction category of the same awards in 1999, and *The Shaman and the Droll*, the third title, was a finalist for the awards in 2000.

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## RESOURCE KIT

FOR USE IN SCHOOLS

Contains:

- comprehension questions
- character study
- discussion points
- debate topics
- creative exercises
- visual responses
- performance exercises
- extension exercises

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## Comprehension Questions

### BOOK ONE LAKE KA

#### Chapter One

1. What ceremony does the novel begin with?
2. Why does Lutha give Ish the pendant?

#### Chapter Two

1. How did Lutha's father die?
2. What does Ish hide from Lutha and her people?
3. What does Ish notice that nobody else seems to, and what does this say about Lutha's tribe?

#### Chapter Three

1. Why do the storehouses have spikes?
2. What does Lutha have that Ish would like?
3. What does Ish think the shrieks he hears are from?
4. What talent does Kalik show already?
5. What memory helps to make Ish remain cautious about what he says to Kalik?

#### Chapter Four

1. What power does Ish think Kalik has?
2. How have Lutha and Kalik's people prepared for both survival and potential attack from the tribe of Salt Men?
3. page 27: Here Ish thinks he's noticed a major difference between himself and Kalik and Lutha. What is this difference?
4. What aspects of Kalik's character show at the end of this chapter?

#### Chapter Five

1. How do Lutha and Kalik's people trick the Salt Men?
2. How do the victors in the battle of the Salt Men respond to their win?
3. How has Raka's behaviour towards Ish changed?
4. What most shocks Ish in this chapter?

#### Chapter Six

1. What is Hekkat the goddess of, and who is her chief priestess?
2. How had Ish misinterpreted the display of the newborn baby, and what was the real intention behind the display?
3. How does Lutha's society guarantee its population keeps growing?

4. page 37: Why might this particular Salt Woman not have made it to the canoes?
5. What does Ish think the relationship between leadership and personality is?
6. pp 38–39: What valuable knowledge does Ish try to share with Kalik and his warriors?

#### Chapter Seven

1. What do Lutha's people believe about infection and death?
2. What lies does Ish tell about his storybook?

#### Chapter Eight

1. Why does a child die at the beginning of this chapter?
2. What measures does Ish take to improve the living conditions for the Salt Children?
3. What concerns does Ish have for the two children Puli and Tama?

#### Chapter Nine

1. Ish starts to tell a fable to the Salt Children – what do all the animals in this fable have in common? What elements in their plight might particularly appeal to the Salt Children? Do Puli and Tama respond?

#### Chapter Ten

1. What secret is Ish afraid Kalik will discover? Why might Kalik find it threatening?
2. What does Ish believe helps to give the Children strength?
3. How are tasks divided between the Children?
4. What seems to have reduced the planet to a few struggling, primitive tribes?
5. How does the donkey change perspective in Ish's fable?
6. How might Ish's fable be preparing the Salt Children for things to come?

#### Chapter Eleven

1. How does Ish's story come back to haunt (and perhaps instruct) him in this chapter?

#### Chapter Twelve

1. page 71: What does "plenty of sign" mean in this context?
2. page 72: What does Nip help Ish discover?

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3. page 72: Why does Ish make himself visualise a rabbit warren?

### Chapter Thirteen

1. Why does the Queen in Kalik's tale bury her sons?
2. What is the prediction the goddess Hekkat gives, and how does Kalik relate it to Ish?
3. **Research:** What other world myths about the origins of fire can you track down?

### Chapter Fourteen

1. Why does Ish think Kalik told him the legends of Kalik's elders?
2. When had Kalik and Ish nearly met before?
3. Why are all the Salt Men slaves lame?
4. Where does Kalik's tribe get their metal tools?
5. Can you think of any answers to Ish's rhetorical question in the penultimate paragraph on page 88?
6. Why and how did Raka die, according to Kalik?

### Chapter Fifteen

1. What is Ish searching for the whole time he is with Kalik on their travels?
2. Why doesn't Ish join in Kalik's laughter?
3. What shocks Ish about Kalik's ideas for how to travel over the extensive mountain range?
4. What have the Children learned while Ish has been gone?
5. What is the 'obvious thing' that Ish has stumbled on, which helps Tama and Puli?
6. What happens to one of the Salt Children when Kalik gets back from the timber haul?

### Chapter Sixteen

1. page 100: Why does Ish wonder if it might be better for the Children to live as slaves?
2. page 101: What does Ish feel about the Salt Children?
3. pp 101–102: What does Kalik warn Ish about?
4. page 107: Why should Ish avoid food prepared by other people until after the full moon?
5. What seems to be the purpose of the scapegoat killings in this society?

### Chapter Seventeen

1. page 106: What are Lutha's concerns about Kalik?

2. page 107: Why does Lutha want to keep her people united with Kalik's?
3. What is Lutha's version of how Raka died?
4. What does Lutha give Ish, and how does he interpret her gesture?
5. What is the great 'tote' log begin turned into?
6. Why are the guards on the stockades asleep?
7. What does Ish use for his escape with the Children?

## BOOK TWO LAKE TIP

### Chapter Eighteen

1. What do Ish and the Children do right at the start of this chapter to delay any pursuers?
2. Why does Ish knock out Tama? Why does he force the roof of the tunnel to collapse?
3. What might the tunnel have once been used for?

### Chapter Nineteen

1. What surprises Ish about Maka at the end of this chapter?

### Chapter Twenty

1. What are the attributes Ish remembers from his three teachers?
2. pp 129–130: Why does Ish drop a log? What expectations does this give you of how the story might develop around Maka and Ish?
3. From the folktale Ish tells, what do you think he might feel about authority?

### Chapter Twenty One

1. Why isn't Maka happy staying where they had the feast?
2. What theory has Ish heard about the connection between machines and happiness?
3. What talents are Tama and Tepulka developing?
4. What new skills are the Children learning on this part of their travels?
5. What is Ish's strategy for ensuring Kalik doesn't find out that they are trading with the Iron people?

### Chapter Twenty Two

1. Why is Ish looking for Kalik's old tracks?
2. What slows Ish down on his return to the Children?
3. What new talent does Puli show?

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4. Why does Ish decide not to camp at the spot they've already found?

### **Chapter Twenty Three**

1. How successful is the trading experience between Ish and Henga of the Iron People?
2. Why does woven wool seem to particularly appeal to the Iron People?

### **Chapter Twenty Four**

1. Why does Tepulka's voice 'crack' at the start of this chapter?
2. Why is Henga willing to trade the tribe's donkey?
3. page 163: Ish says "It's good trading to finish with a gift". Where, and in what form, in our own society, does this belief sometimes apply?
4. Why don't Ish and Tepulka head back to the Children straight away?
5. Why does the camp fall so quiet at the end of this chapter?

### **Chapter Twenty Five**

1. page 169: How does the author build up suspense in the river crossing scene?
2. page 170: Why does Maka blame herself for what happened during the river crossing?
3. How does Paku show his leadership potential in this chapter?

### **Chapter Twenty Six**

1. How do Puli and Tama differ despite their similarities at the start of the novel?
2. What does the Children's story about Chak develop into?

### **Chapter Twenty Seven**

1. Why does Paku start to sleep uneasily?
2. Why is Ish discussing Paku's state with Tepulka?
3. How do maggots become a positive thing in this chapter?

### **Chapter Twenty Eight**

1. page 193: What does Ish link depression to here?

### **Chapter Twenty Nine**

1. Compare the births of Perrah and Arak.
2. What does Ish seem to regret about Sheenah?

### **Chapter Thirty**

1. Why does Tama's manner seem to change?
2. How does Puli make the folktale Ish read to the Children both more frightening and more hopeful?

### **Chapter Thirty One**

1. page 209: How does it become clear that Henga knows Ish hasn't told the truth about where they come from?
2. Why does Ish go east first when he leaves Henga?
3. How does Tupu's accident bring good luck for Ish's tribe?
4. What do Ish and the Children do to make the most of their journeying time?

### **Chapter Thirty Two**

1. What shock do the Travellers get at the start of this chapter?
2. Why is Ish keen to prepare paper and ink?
3. How do the Salt Children design a defence for themselves in the gorge they find?

### **Chapter Thirty Three**

1. What tactic does Kalik start to use when his warriors can't survive trying to get through the mouth of the gorge?
2. What mistake does the bereaved man make in Ish's fable about patience?

### **Chapter Thirty Four**

1. What new attacks does Kalik try in this chapter?
2. Why does Maka disappear from the gully?
3. How and why does Kalik's shadow dance begin to change?
4. What does Ish check Maka for upon her return and what does he discover?
5. pages 232-233: Who is the child Tepulka retrieves from the bluff?

## **Character Study**

Write a monologue describing Ish from the point of view of one of the other major characters in the novel – e.g. Kalik, Lutha, Maka, or one of the other Salt Children.

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## Discussion Points

- What would a society without literature and literacy be like? What, apart from creative writing, would we lose from our own society?
- Can you think of instances in our own social history where leaders have used the techniques of fear Kalik uses in Chapter Thirty Three?
- Is Jack Lasenby's novel optimistic about the future for Ish and general humanity?
- Is Kalik evil, or merely trying to survive in a harsh environment?

## Debate

Either as a class or in standard debating teams, argue affirmative or positive on the following issues:

1. We are all savage animals underneath our modern ways.
2. Machines and technology have brought us far more unhappiness than happiness.
3. Humanity is its own worse enemy.
4. There are no evil people, only immoral deeds.

## Creative Exercise

- Imagine you are an archaeologist from a future society well in advance of Jack Lasenby's fictional tribal world. Write a report about your discovery of remains from Ish's tribe, and what conclusions you draw about what type of people they were.
- Write the words to a song that one of the tribes from the novel might sing to accompany their labour or religious rituals.
- Ish's folk tale about the man called Nostril uses very vivid descriptions of food. Write a descriptive piece in which you are – for some reason – unable to find food, and in which you start to fantasise about your favourite meal.
- Invent an 'origin' myth for a tribe that might live in Jack Lasenby's fictional world – i.e. a story that either explains the origins of fire, earth and sky, water, man and woman, or animals, etc.

- Imagine you are one of the Salt Children in old age, retelling the tales of his or her time with Ish. Write this memoir using the kind of language that would suit his or her character.
- Invent a game that the Salt Children might have played when having to stay close to their camp – bearing in mind the types of materials that would have been available for toys or equipment (e.g. pebbles, bones, sticks, feathers, bits of coal, yarn, etc.)
- Imagine you are a Salt Child who has time-travelled to the present day. Describe how you would see this world, with its machines, electricity, plumbing, etc.
- Ish and the Salt Children just want 'a place of their own'. 1. What would your ideal place be, in the present day? Write a descriptive piece telling us about it. 2. Describe – and if you wish, draw a map of – the place where you imagine Ish and his new 'family' (or tribe) would finally settle.

## Visual Responses

- Design your own book cover for a new edition of *Kalik*.
- Design costumes for the TV serial version of the novel.
- Design a diorama depicting one of the campsites or village scenes from the novel.
- Design artefacts discovered in an archaeological dig which give evidence of Ish's people.
- Design a 'Triple-Hekkat' statue.
- On a map of New Zealand, mark the major place names in Jack Lasenby's version of the future.
- Recreate, in some form (pastel or pencil drawing, painting, even weaving itself!) the type of weaving Puli does on page 202.

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### Performance Exercise:

In small groups, choreograph and compose a dance or religious ritual that one of the tribes in the novel might follow for a particular feast or ceremony. Perform this for the whole class.

### Extension Exercises:

1. If you have read any of the other books in the Travellers quartet, ***EITHER***
    - a. Write a piece describing how Ish seems to have developed over the series
- OR**
- b. Write a piece comparing the novels you have read: i.e. which novel did you find most convincing, moving, intriguing, thought-provoking, etc?
2. Ish has learnt the basics of hygiene and infection from the Shaman. Choose an important medical discovery – recent or historical – and write a short research item on its background.

## ‘ TRAVELLERS QUARTET ’

by Jack Lasenby

***Kalik*** is the fourth and final volume in Jack Lasenby's award winning ‘Travellers Quartet’.

The other titles are:

**Volume 1 – *Because We Were the Travellers***

**Volume 2 – *Taur***

**Volume 3 – *The Shaman and the Droll***

‘...one of the most substantial structures in our children's literature in the past decade.’

‘...plot-powered, following the journeys of Ish across a maimed emblematic and futuristic land.’

‘Blurbs often describe Jack Lasenby as “our master storyteller”. I hate it when blurbs are right.’

David Hill, *New Zealand Books*