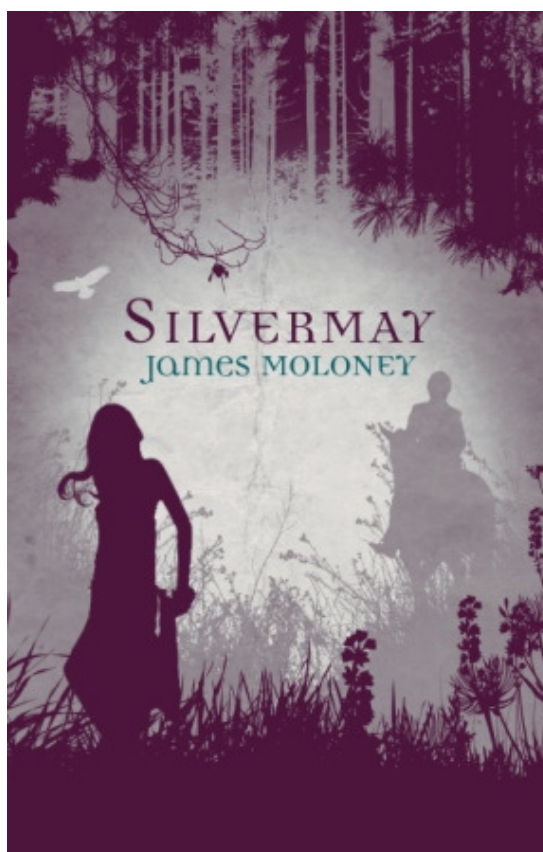


SILVERMAY

By James Moloney

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Teacher's Guide

Notes by Cathy Hainstock

Includes Summary, Australian Nat'l Curriculum: English curriculum connections, discussion questions and Classroom/ICT Activities

About the Book

Sixteen-year-old Silvermay can't help falling for the dark, handsome youth who shows up in the village. But he is a man she has no right to love; he is with Nerigold and baby Lucien. The trio are fugitives on the run from Coyle, a corrupt and cruel Wyrdborn. As they make ready to flee once more, Silvermay is swept up in their adventure. She finds herself losing her heart to all three as they travel through the forest to the heart of the mountains and beyond. She also discovers that the evil they are running from will test not only her love, courage, and trust, but will test the very essence of her humanity.

About the Author

James Moloney was born in Sydney and has lived most of his life in Brisbane. As a school-boy, he was typically more interested in sports than reading, but in his senior years the texts he studied sparked his interest in stories and writing.

James became a teacher and took up writing in earnest while working as a teacher librarian in an all-boys school. He saw a need for more stories that would suit young male readers. The time he spent teaching in Outback Queensland, provided life experiences he used to write his first novels. *Crossfire* was published in 1992 and by 1997 James had published five novels and won numerous literary awards including two Children's Book Council awards. He is now the author of more than thirty novels.

Recently James has broadened his writing to include fantasy as well as realistic fiction. His popular *Book of Lies* trilogy was published between 2004 and 2009. *Silvermay* is the first book in his latest fantasy series.

Australian Curriculum: English descriptions addressed

Year 7

Language	Literature	Literacy
Understand how accents, styles of speech and idioms express and create personal and social identities (ACELA1529)	Reflect on ideas and opinions about characters, settings and events in literary texts, indentifying areas of agreement and difference with others and justifying a point of view (ACELT1620)	Analyse and explain the ways text structures and language features shape meaning and vary according to audience and purpose (ACELY1721)
Understand how language is used to evaluate texts and how evaluations about a text can be substantiated by reference to the text and other sources (ACELA1782)	Compare the ways that language and images are used to create character, and to influence emotions and opinions in different types of texts (ACELT1621)	Use prior knowledge and text processing strategies to interpret a range of types of texts (ACELY1722)
Understand how modality is achieved through discriminating choices in modal verbs, adverbs, adjectives	Discuss aspects of texts, for example their aesthetic and social value, using relevant and appropriate metalanguage	Use comprehension strategies to interpret, analyse and synthesise ideas and information, critiquing ideas and issues

and nouns (ACELA1536)	(ACELT1803)	from a variety of textual sources (ACELY1723)
	Recognise and analyse the ways that characterisation, events and settings are combined in narratives, and discuss the purposes and appeal of different approaches (ACELT1622)	Use a range of software, including word processing programs, to confidently create, edit and publish written and multimodal texts (ACELY1728)

Year 8

Language	Literature	Literacy
Understand how rhetorical devices are used to persuade and how different layers of meaning are developed through the use of metaphor, irony and parody (ACELA1542)	Share, reflect on, clarify and evaluate opinions and arguments about aspects of literary texts (ACELT1627)	Use comprehension strategies to interpret and evaluate texts by reflecting on the validity of content and the credibility of sources, including finding evidence in the text for the author's point of view (ACELY1734)
	Recognise and explain differing viewpoints about the world, cultures, individual people and concerns represented in texts (ACELT1807)	Experiment with text structures and language features to refine and clarify ideas to improve the effectiveness of students' own texts (ACELY1810)
	Create literary texts that draw upon text structures and language features of other texts for particular purposes and effects (ACELT1632)	

Year 9

Language	Literature	Literacy
Investigate how evaluation can be expressed directly	Present an argument about a literary text based	Interpret, analyse and evaluate how different

and indirectly using devices, for example allusion, evocative vocabulary and metaphor(ACELA1552)	on initial impressions and subsequent analysis of the whole text (ACELT1771)	perspectives of issue, event, situation, individuals or groups are constructed to serve specific purposes in texts (ACELY1742)
Understand that authors innovate with text structures and language for specific purposes and effects (ACELA1553)	Explore and reflect on personal understanding of the world and significant human experience gained from interpreting various representations of life matters in texts (ACELT1635)	
Identify how vocabulary choices contribute to specificity, abstraction and stylistic effectiveness(ACELA1561)	Analyse texts from familiar and unfamiliar contexts, and discuss and evaluate their content and the appeal of an individual author's literary style(ACELT1636)	

ACARA Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. (2011). *The Australian Curriculum v1.2: English Foundation to Year 10 curriculum*. Retrieved June, 2011, from <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/English/Curriculum/F-10>

Before Reading

In small groups or as a class, examine the book's cover. Discuss initial impressions and any predictions about the plot. Help students to focus on what influenced their impressions.

Next, read the description from the book or from the teaching notes and make further observations and predictions. You may wish to have students save these for comparison at a later stage.

Genre

Discuss the book's genre. How can knowing a book's genre help to understand the story better? Briefly discuss elements of the genre based on students' prior knowledge.

You may want to introduce the **Hero's Journey** activity at this stage.

First Impressions – The Prologue

Discussion or journal questions:

1. What is a prologue? What do you think is the purpose of this prologue? Is this an effective prologue, why or why not?
2. Who might the author be targeting as an audience? How do you know?
3. Now that you have read the prologue, have your impressions about the story changed? How? Why?
4. What kind of person is Silvermay? Write an initial character sketch. Save it for later discussion

While Reading

Generating questions

You may want to have students record in a journal or blog any questions that occur to them as they read and then record the answers (including in which chapter) as they are revealed. At the end of the story, have students review their questions to see if there were any that were not answered. If there were, have students suggest possible reasons for why they were not answered.

Discussing the story:

Chapters 1 - 4

1. In chapter 1, readers are introduced to the Wyrdborn. Describe the Wyrdborn based on information in this chapter. (You may want students to continue adding to this description as they read further along in the text).
2. In chapter 2, readers meet Silvermay at the beginning of her story. Describe her life and home environment. What she is like? What does she think about? Who and what is important to her? Compare her life to yours; list any similarities and differences. (You may want the students to use a graphic organiser to do this such as a Venn diagram).
3. On page 34 Silvermay keeps Piet's secret (his true identity). What is her motive for doing so?
4. Silvermay admits to spying on Nerigold and Tamlyn when they are together (p. 37). What does she discover? How does this affect Silvermay? How does this affect you, the reader?

5. By the end of chapter 3, the characters' relationships have been established. Have students create a chart showing what kinds of connections the major and minor characters have to each other. You may wish the students to use a mind-mapping tool such as www.bubbl.us to do this.
6. In chapter 4, Silvermay is coaxed into climbing on to a rooftop with Tamlyn (pp.46 – 48). How is the climb a significant event for Silvermay? What might it signify? Find quotes in the chapter to support your answer

Chapters 5 - 8

7. In chapter 5, more is revealed about the Wyrdborn. What powers, strengths and weaknesses do they possess? (You may want the students to review and update their initial description of the Wyrdborn).
8. Wyrdborn live amongst the humans in this story but are feared and despised. Whom do they serve? What is their function?
9. How do you think Tamlyn stopped the Wyrdborn from taking Hespera away from the village?
10. Silvermay ends up going with Tamlyn, Nerigold and the baby. What pros and cons are considered in the decision-making process? Do you think she makes the right choice? Explain why or why not.
11. At the end of Chapter 7, Tamlyn and Silvermay have a moment of possible affection. Flirting often involves non verbal messages that are difficult to interpret. Does Tamlyn really mean it or is it just Silvermay's wishful thinking? Discuss.
12. Tamlyn's character is gradually being revealed. On page 96, Silvermay calls him 'a strange man' but then admits that she loves him even more. In what ways is he strange and confusing? Why do you think this is so?

Chapters 9 - 15

13. Chapter 10 is entitled *The Secrets of Dead Men*. Who are the 'dead men' and what secrets are revealed?
14. Tamlyn describes his escape from death (p. 136) but his story turns out to be a lie. How does the author use language to create doubt in the mind of the reader before the lie is exposed? How does Tamlyn really survive?
15. Did you suspect before this point that Tamlyn was Wyrdborn? If so when did you begin to suspect? What made you suspicious? There is a saying, "Love is blind". What does this saying mean? Do you think this applies to Silvermay? Explain why or why not. Could there be any other reason/s why she has not suspected until now?
16. Tamlyn's mother teaches him "Birth is not destiny" (p. 156). How did Tamlyn's mother try to change his destiny?

17. Tamlyn calls Lucien 'an instrument of evil'. What does he mean by this?

Chapters 16 – 23

18. Dessar reads the story of Haylan Redwing to Silvermay and Tamlyn. Should they trust the story? Is there any reason to believe the tale is a more reliable source of information than the mosaics?

19. If fear is the currency of the Wyrdborn (p. 261), what is Silvermay's currency in dealing with Hallig? How does she 'buy what's most precious' to her?

20. The opening sentence of Chapter 21 says, "Lucien saved us." How is this ironic?

21. What is the talisman? Why does Theron lie about it? Why does Silvermay trust (or half-trust) him?

22. What skills and knowledge do Silvermay and Ryall draw on to make their escape from Theron and recover the talisman?

Chapters 24 – 27

23. The words on the mosaic have been deciphered and hold vital information. What do they say and how is the information important?

24. Ryall asks who the man (Miston Dessar) is when he first appears and Silvermay replies, "What did names matter?" How is this ironic? What difference do names make in this chapter?

25. Silvermay unwittingly seals Ryall's fate in Chapter 25. How does she do this?

26. Based on the details provided, envisage and design what you think the talisman looks like.

27. What motivates Miston to give Lucien the tattoo?

28. How is Silvermay saved in the end?

Literary Elements

Literary elements make stories rich; they help to better express human thoughts and emotions. Literary elements are also the tools writers use to position a reader, make them a participant or assist them to a particular view on a subject.

Point of View

The author has chosen to use two different points of view in this novel. Chapters

focussing on Silvermay are told in the first person, storyline about Coyle Strongbow is told in the third person. What is the author hoping to achieve by doing this? Is it effective? Why or why not? How would the story have been different if both parts had been told from the same point of view?

Figurative language

The author wisely does not reach far for his figurative language. The similes and metaphors in the book are drawn from the characters' immediate surroundings and lives. E.g. *The Wyrdborn snorted harshly through his nostrils, like a bad-tempered horse*. Have students find other examples of similes, metaphors and figurative language within the text. Using the examples they have collected, encourage them to experiment with constructing similar sentences using figurative language based on their own surroundings or life.

Imagery

Imagery evokes the senses and can be used to create personal/social identity.

E.g. *The first [Tamlyn] I loved; the other I hated so intensely it's a wonder my hair didn't catch fire.* (p. 384)

There were no teeth in her mouth but her eyes were sharp enough to bite. (p. 325)

Have students find other examples in the story and explain how they enrich the story and the characters.

Foreshadowing

Foreshadowing is how authors leave hints throughout the story on events to come. While foreshadowing is intended to influence the reader, it is not always obvious on the first reading. Have students scan back over the chapters for instances of foreshadowing.

Irony

Lucien twice saves Silvermay (pp. 306, 432). Why does the author choose for this irony of situation to occur? What is he trying to do? Is it effective? Why or why not?

Motifs and Symbolism

Hawks are featured throughout the book and are symbols that are significant for both Silvermay (and her family) and for the Wyrdborn. How is the bird significant to each? Why do you think the author has used the same bird as significant for both?

Mist/Fog appears at significant times in the book (Chapters 22 and 27). Both times the word 'shroud' is mentioned. What purpose does the mist/fog serve? What does it symbolize? Mist is mentioned in two other instances. Encourage students to find them (on the cover and in Miston Dessar's name). Is its purpose similar or different for these two instances?

Questioning

Silvermay admits to being a curious person early on and in each chapter she has many internal as well as external questions. Questions can serve many purposes. What are the functions of these questions? Have students collect and categorize some; help them pay close attention to how the author uses questions to affect the reader. Is this an effective technique? Would the book have been as gripping without them? Have students rewrite the prologue replacing the questions with statements that give the same information. Have them evaluate the results.

What's in a Name

Authors such as Dickens and Chekov sometimes gave their characters names that indicated something about the type of person they were. When speaking of Quesal, a messenger thought – "It was handy when a name matched its bearer so well ..." (p. 14). Silvermay also explains the reason for her mother's name, Birdie. Examine the names of other characters in this story. Do you think there is any significance to their names? Example: Gabbet, Coyle Strongbow, Silvermay, Wyrdborn, Nerigold, Miston Dessar. Discuss some possibilities.

Names also become powerful tools in this story. Discuss and give examples.

Hero's Journey

In chapter 9, Silvermay says –

Heroes are men who win battles with nothing more than courage and the swords in their hands. That's what I remember from childhood stories. Now and then, a woman, or even a girl, is the brave one who fights off enemies or leads her people to safety in the face of heart-stopping danger. A heroine whose spirit and deeds make her stand out like a proud flame for all the rest to admire. (p. 98)

The Hero's Journey is a story pattern with a long history and is still a popular framework used in books and film. In the above quote, Silvermay is talking about Nerigold, but could Silvermay be classed as a hero?

Starting with the character sketch of Silvermay students drew earlier, and using the interactive tool at ReadWriteThink (link is provided below) or providing your own Hero's Journey story circle, have students compare Silvermay's story with the elements of the Hero's Journey. Decide whether she could be classed as a hero or not.

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/student-interactives/hero-journey-30069.html>

Themes/Moral Dilemma

Fate, Destiny and Predictions

More than eight of the mosaic scenes are described in Chapter 14. Have students choose one of the descriptions and draw their interpretation of it.

Predictions are statements about what will happen in the future and are often based on experience or knowledge of a specific topic or field. Prophecies are messages that are communicated from divine sources to a special person. These too are often about future events.

In the diggings at Nan Tocha, Arnou Dessar states –

There is magic here ... but the carvings and these pictures are mystical more than magical. (p. 184)

Have students determine what the difference is between mystical and magical. Why does Dessar make this distinction? Help students decide whether the mosaics are predictions or prophesy or something else.

Have students discuss or write about –

1. Would you want to know your destiny? Draw up a list of positive and negative reasons then discuss.

Horoscopes are used to predict and guide a person's future based on their Zodiac or star sign. Each star sign has personality traits assigned to it, both positive and negative.

2. Using one of the websites below or a book on Signs of the Zodiac read about your star sign. Discuss how accurately you feel the description of your sign matches your personality.

<http://www.astrology.com.au/astrology/12-signs-of-the-zodiac/>
http://www.psychicguild.com/horoscopes_explained.php

3. Have you or would you ever use your horoscope to guide your decisions? Why or why not? If you have, describe your actions and their outcomes.

Have students relate their experiences with star signs and horoscopes to the mosaics and the decisions and choices of the characters in the text. Is Lucien a victim of fate?

Nature vs. Nurture debate

Have students define personality, and drawing on their own experiences and prior knowledge, answer the following questions to connect with this theme.

1. Do you have any similar personality traits to your parents, siblings or other family members? If so, you may want to make note of them now to refer to later.
2. Are your thoughts, emotions or behaviours influenced by friends, the media or other things in your life? Make detailed notes of these too.

Have students watch this short video (or one of the teacher's choosing) that explains the nature/nurture debate –

<http://www.5min.com/Video/The-Nature-vs-Nurture-Argument-175265999>

Have students do some further research on nature vs. nurture. Based on what they have learned, discuss the following –

Which do you think has the greatest influence on a person's personality, nature or nurture? Is it possible to change one's personality? Why or why not? If so, how?

Prophecy is a sinister thing no matter what magic it springs from. Scholars like me have debated for years whether it is truly a vision of an unchangeable future or simply the spur that prompts men to make it happen so. (p. 231)

What do you think the author believes about the nature/nurture question?

Us and Them

Silvermay pities the Wyrdborn because of their cold, cruel nature.

A picture of what They (the Wyrdborn) are like is built up through the book. Scan back over the chapters to gather this evidence.

1. Visualize a typical Wyrdborn; draw a cartoon or character. Surround your portrait of a Wyrdborn with the traits gathered from the book.
2. Now do the same for humans. What are we like? Try using a Venn diagram to chart traits shared or different.

Trust

Have students discuss or reflect on the following –

1. Did you share Silvermay's doubts about Tamlyn's love and motives? At what points? What made you doubt? Identify things within the text that made you doubt and discuss techniques the author uses to instil doubt.

Some Wyrdborn like to play games with the commonfolk, to pretend they care in order to deceive, but I've never been one for lies. They're for the weak who can't get what they want by force.

2. Theron tells this to Silvermay and Ryall. In hindsight, this is important information – how so? Why has the author given this information to the reader?

The actions and motives of two characters are shown in two very different lights in Chapters 24 and 27. Up until Chapter 24, Silvermay sees Tamlyn in one way then his actions are interpreted by Miston.

3. Create a chart recording Tamlyn's actions and the two possible interpretations of them. Do the same for the actions and possible motives for Miston Dessar as seen by Silvermay and Tamlyn in Chapter 27.
4. Review chapter 24 closely, what inconsistencies or flaws appear in Miston's persuasive argument against Tamlyn?
5. Have you ever been in a position where you have been unsure whether to trust someone or not. How do you decide? If you have not been in this position, think up a scenario, how would you go about deciding? Poll five friends to see how they would decide.

Reason vs. instinct – Should you listen to your heart?

Silvermay speaks of her heart on several occasions as if it has a will of its own. Have students find and share examples from the text (Chapters 24 and 27) Discuss reasons why the author has Silvermay react this way.

1. When have you used reason to make decisions? Have you ever based decisions on feelings or instincts? Why? What were the outcomes?
2. Which should one trust more – feelings or instincts? When? What do you think the author believes?

Good and Evil

Tamlyn tells Silvermay, "No one is allowed to defy my father, yet he's never happier than when someone tries." (p. 147)

1. What does he mean by this?

Coyle Strongbow is the main villain or *antagonist* in this story. What makes a good antagonist or villain? Have students recall antagonists in novels or movies such as Voldemort, The White Queen (Narnia), The Joker (Batman) or others relevant to your students' reading experiences.

2. Create a list of characteristics and elements necessary for an effective villain and prioritise them from most important to least.

Moral Dilemma

Silvermay states several times that she does not believe in fate and yet she decides to smother Lucien.

1. Reread that part of the story again in Chapter 15. What are the truths surrounding this dilemma? What are the fallacies? What are the uncertainties?

The chapter is entitled *Take One Life to Save a Thousand*. Although Silvermay was written before such events occurred, this was the reasoning behind the USA's actions towards Osama bin Laden.

2. As a class discuss or debate this dilemma. Are there any circumstances that justify murder?
3. Does the fact that Lucien is a baby make this dilemma any different? Why? Why not?

Other Themes

Power

Is power the same thing as influence?

What kinds of power are there in this novel?

Who is the most powerful person in this novel? List their powers. Write a persuasive piece defending your choice.

The below link is a graphic organizer to assist you in constructing a persuasive argument if you have not written one before.

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/student-interactives/persuasion-30034.html>

There is a well-known saying – “Power corrupts”. Do you think all power is destined to become evil? Discuss.

Family /relationships

Most of Silvermay’s adventure takes place far from her home, yet family figures strongly in this story.

Define or discuss with a partner, “What is a family”.

Compare the different sorts of families that exist in this story to your definition of family. Can your definition be broadened? How does Silvermay’s family help her?

Final Thoughts

James Moloney says on his website –

[Writing] gives me an avenue to say what I think about human beings and the world.

Yet, his main characters like Lucien, Tamlyn and the Wyrdborn are not human. What do you think the author is trying to say about human beings and the world in this story? Why do you think he would choose the fantasy genre to explore this? Do you think it was a good choice?

Just about every title on a book lover's reference shelves, for instance, falls into this category. No one reads the American Heritage Dictionary or Roget's Thesaurus from cover to cover. One of my favorite books is John Sutherland's "The Stanford Companion to Victorian Fiction." It's a fascinating, witty and very opinionated survey of Victorian England's