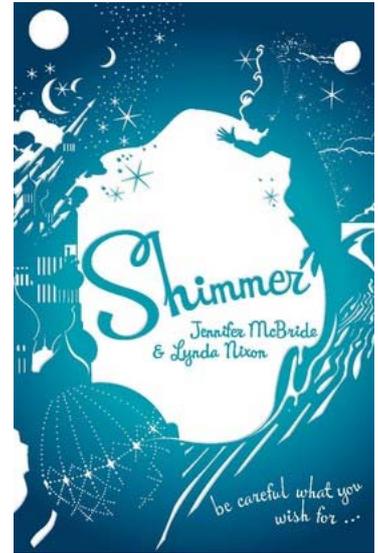


SHIMMER

Jennifer McBride and Lynda Nixon
Publication date: October 2013
ISBN (PB): 9781922089434 • RRP: \$14.99
ISBN (ebook): 9781922089397 • RRP: \$7.99
Themes: War, Fantasy, Friendship, Relationships, Culture
Year level: Y4 to Y8



ABOUT THE BOOK

At thirteen, Empress Kora Archein is banished from her homeland of Genesisia against her will. Kora is the most powerful genie her homeland has seen in generations and she has been sent to Earth for her own protection. Her only contact with Genesisia is through Amurru, her father's trusted armourowl.

Meanwhile on Earth, everything is going wrong in David Wolfe's life. He's failing at school, his mum has grounded him, and her new boyfriend Rodney makes them eat the worst food. And David just can't forget about his real father, who has been missing in action in Afghanistan for five years, presumed dead.

When David accidentally summons Kora from her globe, he thinks her magic powers might just be the answer to his problems. But commanding a genie is notoriously tricky – especially when she's also an angry teenage girl.

Unable to move more than 100 metres apart, and with their loved ones under the threat of Venum – a half-human half-genie bent on world domination – Kora and David discover that they each have more to gain by helping the other.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jennifer McBride was born and raised in Western Australia, where she lives with her husband and two daughters. She enjoys reading, writing and watching movies, with a particular love of fantasy and science fiction. After many hectic years balancing secretarial work and parenting, she has finally found time to co-author her first children's novel, *Shimmer*. When she is not writing, Jennifer loves travelling, watching the Fremantle Dockers and spending time with her family.

Lynda Nixon lives in the Perth hills in Western Australia. She first fell in love with books after reading *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and by the time she was a teenager knew that she wanted to be a writer. After many years of office work she finally decided it was time to chase her dream and has co-authored her first children's book, *Shimmer*. When she isn't writing she loves to be at home spending time with her family.

STUDY NOTES

A. Language

Language for interaction

1. Find examples of the differing speech styles of David and Kora. What differences are there in the way that the two characters talk to each other and to others? What does this tell the reader about their backgrounds and upbringing?

Text structure and organisation

2. What is the purpose of the chapter titles in this novel? Why do you think the authors have used titles rather than numbers to mark the sections? Choose one chapter and think of a new name for it. What influenced your decision? How does the title relate to the events of that chapter?

Expressing and developing ideas

3. Find out the meaning of the following words, first by reading them in context and then by using a dictionary. As you continue reading, add any words you come across that you had not seen before.

	I think this word means	Dictionary definition	I was correct (✓) close (~) incorrect (x)
imperial (p. 6)			
glamorous (p. 8)			
condone (p. 8)			
musing (p. 11)			
persistent (p. 12)			
wretched (p. 15)			
snigger (p. 21)			
contemplation (p. 24)			
condescending (p. 25)			

B. Literature

Literature in context

4. List all the stories, films and television shows you can think of that involve genies.
What do the stories have in common? What aspects of the genies and their masters are common to all the tales? What are your expectations of this novel based on your previous understandings of these stories?
5. Use your school library or the internet to research the mythology of genies or other wish-granting supernatural beings. Present your findings in visual form, for example a PowerPoint presentation, a short film or a poster display in the classroom.

Responding to literature

6. How did you feel about David's mother cutting off his hair while he slept? As a class, discuss Marcia's actions. Why do you think David then cut off the rest of his hair? David said to Kora, '*It's just hair, Kora. No big deal.*' (p. 167) Do you think he really meant this? What clues are there that he does not believe his own words?
7. Write a review of this story for use in your school library or on a website or blog. In it, include a summary of the plot, the recommended audience, and your opinion of the text. Try to be innovative and attractive in your presentation of the review – for example, could you film a scene from the book with the help of your peers, create illustrations of the main characters, or create an infographic.
8. Make a list of at least 10 statements that are related to the actions of the characters and how readers might feel about them. For example: 'It was wrong for David to not unharness Kora so that she could search for her father' and 'Kora's parents were right to send her away to Earth'. Divide the classroom or an open space in half with a line – one side for Agree and the other for Disagree. Read out the

statements and have the students choose a side. The two groups should then confer to come up with reasons for their choice and then debate the issue. Students can then be given the opportunity to change their sides if they wish to do so. This activity is designed to encourage students to develop their reasoning skills, as well as to think about making moral decisions. After the activity, have students write reflectively about the choices they made.

Examining literature

9. Read Pages 5–19. Construct a character profile for Kora, David and Amurru that give information about their appearance, personality, motivations and feelings.

Thinking about the four aspects of characterisation when creating this profile may help: the characters' (1) actions (2) descriptions (3) speech (4) others' reactions to them.

Draw a picture or make a sculpture from papier-mache or clay that illustrates what you imagine each of them looks like. Add to your character profile as you continue reading the novel.

10. '*... just as evil thoughts lead to evil deeds, noble thoughts lead to noble deeds.*' (p. 157)

What do you think the authors were trying to tell readers about decision-making?

Creating literature

11. Imagine what happens after the last page of the novel and write the next chapter. You might like to focus on the growing friendship between David and Kora, what happens once David returns home, or the Genesian High Council deciding whether or not Kora will have to stay on Earth. Be creative, and illustrate your chapter if time allows.
12. What strong emotions do the characters of this story experience? Using ideas from the novel, or your own thoughts and history, write a poem that conveys one or more of these emotions. Try to include metaphors and similes, personification, and other poetic devices in order to create vivid imagery for your reader. Collect everyone's poems and organise them into an anthology.

C. Literacy

Interacting with others

13. As a class, participate in a 'Hot Seat' activity. A student is picked to be in the 'hot seat' where they take on the character of Kora, David, Vennum or Amurru. The rest of the class takes turns to ask the character questions about their motivations, ideas, actions and emotions. The person playing the character role should answer based on their understandings gained through reading the novel. Confident students might even use drama to act out the character's voice and behaviour. Have as many students as possible participate in the activity by taking turns in the 'hot seat' or working in small groups.
14. Write a letter from the perspective of David or Kora to a teen magazine, asking for advice about a situation they face. Swap with a partner and write them a reply. In your letter, make sure you outline the situation and describe the problem it is causing you. In your reply you should suggest one or more solutions to the problem and give reasons why you think it would work.

Interpreting, analysing, evaluating

15. If you could wish for anything at all, what would it be? Why? What might be the consequences of making this wish? Would it only have positive outcomes? Do even the most selfless decisions sometimes have unintended negative consequences?
16. In what ways are David and Kora alike? Use evidence from the text to support your ideas.
17. What events led to Kora and David developing a greater understanding of each other? Which do you think was the most significant? Give reasons for your answer.

18. The antagonist of this story is the evil half-human, half-genie Vennum. Sometimes in stories, characters are metaphors for ideas or issues. What parts of human nature does Vennum embody? What is the significance of Vennum's harnessing of so many genies? Are David and Vennum alike in any ways? In what ways are they different? Reread 'Memories' (pp. 148–157). What events led to Vennum becoming evil? What does this chapter tell us about human nature?
19. Both Kora and David had to put aside their personal feelings of hurt and anger in order to achieve their goals of saving Genesia and finding their fathers. Describe a time when you have had to be selfless in order to accomplish something for the greater good. (It need not be as grand as saving a city!)
20. What does David's broken watch symbolise? Why does he not accept Kora's offer to repair it for him? What does Kora have that symbolises her links to her family and life at home?
21. Using a map of Western Australia, decide where you think Panda Rock is. Use clues in the text such as the weather, references to Perth, and so on to help you make this decision. Did everyone come up with the same place? What might account for the differences?

Creating texts

22. In a small group, come up with a way to represent the meaning contained within the story without using words. You might compose some music together, construct a collage, perform a mime or paint a picture. Once you have completed your project, present it to the class and explain how you have represented the story's themes and ideas in your chosen medium.
23. Using a shoebox or other appropriate container, construct a diorama which shows the inside of Kora's globe. Use the information given in the novel as well as your imagination when furnishing it.