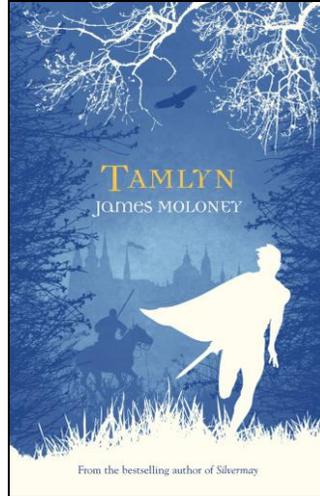


Tamlyn

Teachers' Notes



Author: James Moloney

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INTRODUCTION

'It was this power, which would grow a thousandfold as Lucien became older, that he planned to set loose on the kingdom until every man bowed down before him.' (p 7)

In *Tamlyn*, the sequel to *Silvermay*, Tamlyn Strongbow and Silvermay Hawker have made their way to the north of the island kingdom of Athlane, where they are desperately searching for the baby, Lucien. Silvermay is convinced of her love for Tamlyn despite the fact that he is Wyrdborn, as is Lucien. Their mission is to take Lucien to the land of Erebis Felan in order to lift the curse foretold in the mosaics excavated by Arnou Dessau which predicted that Lucien would become a monster. Silvermay had vowed to Nerigold, Lucien's mother, on her deathbed, that she would protect him, and instead of ridding the world of his powers, as she and Tamlyn had once tried to do by killing him, decides to take him to a place which might cure him of his violent tendencies. They come full circle, though, when Coyle Strongbow, Tamlyn and Lucien's father, steals the baby away. They then realise that Ryall is so badly injured that they have to journey home by sea to the village of Haywode in order for Birdie, Silvermay's mother, to heal him. There, Tamlyn is enraged when he hears that Coyle has killed Ezeldi, Tamlyn's mother. They then return to the capital, Vonne, where both King Chatiny and his nobleman, Coyle, reside. There they begin to watch Coyle's stronghold for signs of Lucien, and meet a magician named Geran, and later Miston Dessau, relative of Arnou, who eventually helps them when they confront Coyle in the ghastly underground City of Lost Souls where he's been hiding Lucien. Despite her love for him, Silvermay is still unsure that Tamlyn will be able to support her quest to rescue Lucien when all he really wants is revenge.

This is a novel about the warring sides of these two Wyrdborn's natures, and the power of love to heal and even rescue them from themselves. It may also be, though, about the dangerous blindness of love when those who love, seek to protect those who are dangerous to themselves and to others.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James Moloney was born in Sydney, Australia in 1954. When he was seven years old, his family moved to Brisbane and apart from the odd year or two, he has lived in Brisbane ever since. After studying at university he became a teacher and then a teacher-librarian; he worked at several schools and in 1977-8 found himself in outback Cunnamulla, which were important years for his writing. In 1983 he began work at Marist College Ashgrove, where he worked for fifteen years. During this time, he became interested in writing for young people, and used ideas and experiences gained from his time in Cunnamulla, and overseas. His first novel, *Crossfire*, was published in 1992. In 1997, his fifth novel for

young adults, *A Bridge to Wiseman's Cove* won the CBCA Children's Book of the Year (Older Readers) Award. At the end of that year, he left teaching to become a full-time writer. His other books include *Silvermay* (the prequel to *Tamlyn*), and the fantasy trilogy *The Book of Lies*. He has written nearly forty books for young people and in September 2012 will publish his first novel for adults *The Tower Mill* with UQP. He lives with his wife Kate and his three children. James says that:

'Now that I have turned my hobby into my job, I have had to develop some other interests. For exercise, I go cycling along the bike paths around Brisbane and in recent years we have done a little riding in France, Vietnam and the USA. I'm also into great books, great food, movies and travelling, especially in France, which Kate and I enjoy more than any other country.'

See his website: www.jamesmoloney.com.au/

AUTHOR INSPIRATION

James says:

'Fantasy has a great tradition of exploring the struggle between good and evil. This usually takes the form of the story's heroes, 'good' people by nature, taking up the fight against an external enemy whose actions are clearly evil eg. Frodo versus Sauron in *The Lord of the Rings*

In the *Silvermay* series I wanted to explore this struggle within the one person and in the second book, *Tamlyn*, this was certainly my inspiration. Tamlyn is Wyrdborn, a special breed who feel no compassion for others and only ever act in their own interests. Needless to say, without any kind of moral guide they are utterly ruthless and their actions invariably result in evil consequences. But what if the seed of love has survived within one of these beings, I thought, and what if he encounters a person, in *Silvermay*, who is prepared to show him how to act as a human being through her own love? This is what happens in the first story, but in this second book, Tamlyn's Wyrdborn nature is drawn to the fore again when his mother is murdered. The need to bring the culprit to justice would be strong in any being, but in the soul of a Wyrdborn which is ruled by raw emotions such as revenge, self-interest and the desire to dominate there is the potential for the 'good' *Silvermay* has nurtured in him to be snuffed out.'

STUDY NOTES

a) THEMES

- **Love Versus Cruelty / Nature or Nurture**

One of the central themes in this series is the importance of love and caring for others, in order to be fully 'human'. Tamlyn constantly resists his nature as a Wyrdborn to protect both *Silvermay* and Lucien,

feelings which make his brutal father Coyle scorn him. 'There was love in what you did, Tamlyn. I am more grateful for that than for my own life. It was a human choice you made, not a heartless one.' (pp 26-7) Silvermay also resists the temptation to believe that Tamlyn has succumbed to his real nature and stays on the wharf instead of joining Coyle and Lucien on the boat: 'My head believed you had betrayed me, but not my heart. I stayed because ... because I would rather die than discover that you had been loyal to me all along and I hadn't done the same.' (p 34) Captain Jerbarle is like many, initially sceptical of Tamlyn but learns to trust him as a friend. 'I saw only wonder in their faces. Like Captain Jerbarle, they simply couldn't believe that a Wyrdborn would help another human being and so they didn't guess that Tamlyn was one of that hated breed.' (p 58) Tamlyn also dreams for the first time as he develops his love for Silvermay, which seems to make him more human (p 46). Tamlyn's mother Ezeldi also acted against her instincts: 'She gave you those puppies so you would feel their love for you,' I said.' (p 63) Ezeldi recalls a parable (p 66) of stealing a doll as a child, and then realising that it wasn't a happy experience. She has gifted to her son a healthy doubt about his capacity for evil. 'But he hasn't succeeded, Silvermay. Whenever I look at you and feel joy in my heart, I know my mother has won out over my father.' (p 68) Both Ezeldi and Tamlyn have learned the value of hope: 'Tomorrow, Silvermay. That was how I dealt with the nights seeing my dogs suffer: I turned my eyes towards tomorrow.' (p 88) The Wyrdborn can be brutal, as a young man named Deiton discovers: 'Mercy is only for those who serve our purpose.' (p 187) But Tamlyn learns to be merciful as the series progresses.

Discussion Point: Discuss the role of love in the thematic development of this novel. When Tamlyn learns of his mother's murder, his nature reverts to anger and violence (p 121), but this is in itself an expression of his love.

Discussion Point: 'Love is a strange creature. It lives inside us and we feel it radiating out towards those that mean most to us, but its joy only warms us right through when someone we love shows how much they need us in return.' (p 322) Love often leads to ugly emotions as well as happy ones, for example, revenge or jealousy. Discuss with students how one balances love with unhealthy emotions occasioned by lack of love.

- **Maturity**

Silvermay's journey makes her stronger and more mature. 'On the day I waved farewell to my parents, I was just a girl, but I have come back a woman. What makes such a change? Love, perhaps? It has played its part, but the wide world seems all too eager to crush such feelings in commonfolk like me. Harsh decisions have to be made and out of them can come cold-blooded acts. On my journey, I killed two men.' (p 2) Tamlyn, too, grows as a person, due to the influence of the love he finds in Silvermay and Lucien, and the companionship with Ryall.

Discussion Point: Discuss maturation as a theme in this novel and in other works of young adult fiction. Discuss the idea of 'a rite of passage' and how important it is for each of us to be tested in order to develop skills for life.

- **Identity**

Each of the characters in this novel are struggling to discover and assert their true identities. Silvermay was not content with her lot as a farmer's daughter destined to be married off to someone local and then to be a subservient wife. Her love for Tamlyn opens up new possibilities and adventures to her. Tamlyn struggles with his nature, since he is born to be both a cruel landlord and a Wyrdborn. Ryall can't imagine not being a trapper.

Discussion Point: How much are our identities determined by our circumstances? Invite students to consider this question in relation to this novel, and also in relation to their own lives.

- **Friendship and Teamwork**

Silvermay helps Ryall by inventing a metal arm, but when it finally works it's because they've tackled the invention together (p 174).

Discussion Point: How important to success is working with other people?

b) Curriculum areas and key learning outcomes

SOSE

- **Medieval Feudal System**

The religo come regularly to extract the food harvested by the poor farmers and villagers. 'It's a disgrace,' I muttered. 'It's not supposed to be this way. No one minds paying tribute to their religos in return for the roads they build and their protection from brigands, but they've become greedy. They take whatever they want because no one can stand up to the Wyrdborn.' (p 62)

Discussion Point: Discuss with students the medieval system whereby poorer people were tied to wealthy estates and forced to give up their produce, or instead risk either punishment or death.

- **Medieval Society**

Although this is set in an imagined world, it also contains details of medieval life, culture, customs, warfare, architecture and beliefs.

Activity: Research any of these topics as a background to reading this novel.

- **Outsiders and Community**

The Wyrdeborn are virtually shunned, or at least feared by others in this society.

Discussion Point: Tamlyn, Ezeldi and Lucien show that not all Wyrdborn are completely bad, and that he can control his violent tendencies. Relate this to how we isolate those who are of different cultures or

who behave differently to the 'norm'. How do we treat those who are different in our contemporary society?

Key learning outcomes:

- Understanding of how a feudal society works.
- Insight into Medieval culture.
- Appreciation of community responses to outsiders.

Literacy and Language

- **This series belongs to the high fantasy genre which shares common tropes** with similar texts. It employs for example,
 - a) an **imaginary or secondary world** with its own geography and society
 - b) is **peopled with unearthly creatures** with strange powers (Wydeborn)
 - c) is about the **battle between good and evil**
 - d) which is fought by **heroes** (Silvermay and Tamlyn) against **villains** (Coyle)
 - e) who go on a **journey or quest**
 - f) are joined by various companions (such as Ryall and Geran)
 - g) the series also includes a **magical place** (Erebis Felan)
 - h) and it contains **various forms of magic** (eg a secret talisman or tattoo; Tamlyn and Ezeldi communicate with birds and use them as messengers; his father Coyle transforms Tamlyn's own hounds into monsters; and Birdie, Silvermay's mother, can heal those who come to her for assistance. When Ryall is brutally injured, Silvermay says of her, 'but I would match her against the best healers in the land.' (p 39)

Discussion Point: What other forms of magic did the novel include?

Discussion Point: What other fantasy tropes are evident in this series?

Activity: Have fun with students creating an imaginary world and a plot summary for a fantasy series. Consult serious guides to writing fantasies such as:

Richard Harland's 'A free 145 Page Guide to Writing Fantasy SF, Horror and Popular Genre Fiction'

www.writingtips.com.au/

'The Fantasy Guide'

http://fantasyguide.stormthecastle.com/fantasy_for_writers.htm

‘Writing Science Fiction and Fantasy’

www.writesf.com/

and; some not so serious guides such as:

‘How to write a best selling fantasy novel’

<http://members.ozemail.com.au/~imcfadyen/fantasy.html>

- It also has elements of the **folktale or fairy tale** on which all fantasies are based. ‘If this were a fairytale, then it would have been Tamlyn who saved me, scooping me up in his arms and carrying me off to the happiness of ever after. The truth is less romantic, I’m afraid.’ (p 2)
Discussion Point: Discuss this comment in relation to the conventions of fairy tales.
- **It might also be described as a mystery series, which shares common tropes** with other similar texts. It employs for example,
a) people with false identities such as Coyle posing as Miston Dessau, leading to further plot turns, whereafter the real Miston Dessau turns up (p 115-6); b) and secret missions.
Discussion Point: What other mystery elements did you notice in this book or series?
- The trope of a **journey** is a major one in many works of literature. This is a ‘Pilgrim’s Progress’ of hurdles to overcome. For example, when Silvermay realises that she will have to carry the stretcher bearing Ryall, she has no idea of the challenge. ‘Ryall was a lanky young man but I was quickly learning that slim didn’t mean light as a feather.’ (p 55) The City of Lost Souls underground is a ghastly place which they are also forced to traverse (pp 239-40).
Discussion Point: What other hurdles do they overcome on this journey?
- **Characters lie at the heart of any narrative, are the catalysts for action, and the central core around which all other narrative aspects such as theme must revolve and work.** In this novel there are several major characters and a cast of minor ones.
Discussion Point: Apart from Silvermay and Tamlyn, which character did you consider to be central to the novel’s plot and themes, and why? Was there any minor character who might have played a larger part? Why would you have liked to have seen more of this character?
Character Arcs are the curve on which key events show how a character grows or develops in response to events and to interactions with other characters in the novel.
Activity: Choose a character and trace an arc on which key events indicate some aspect of their personality or change in their behaviour.

- **Names and Naming** are discussed when Silvermay explains the origins of her Christian name, and in fact, most names were originally derived from nature or incident. For example, Coyle and Tamlyn's surname is Strongbow; Silvermay's surname is Hawker.
Discussion Point: What would your name be if it was related to your nature or particular skills?
- **Moloney uses the technique of animating description; of creating metaphorical links between landscape and human action.** For example, in this description: 'Beneath the billowing fog, the water of Greystone Harbour was a sheet of darkened glass, somewhere green, in other places black as pitch. Even where the oily colours touched the stone of the jetty and kissed the hull of the rowing boat at the base of the stairs, there were no waves, no gentle lapping, to challenge the hungry silence.' (p 5)
Discussion Point: Choose a passage which descriptively gives you an insight into character or thematic development.
- **Chapter titles** are important in structuring some narratives.
Discussion Point: Choose a chapter title and discuss how it relates to the contents of that chapter.
- **The narrative voice alternates between Silvermay in first person and other stories (eg of Coyle and Ezeldi) in third.**
Discussion Point: What effect does this alternating voice have on the narrative?
- **The persuasive powers of language** are demonstrated in Silvermay's speech defending Tamlyn to Geran and Miston Dessau (pp 339-41).
- *Discussion Point:* Discuss the strategies she uses in this speech to convince them.

Key learning outcomes:

- Understanding of the conventions of the genres of fantasy, fairy tale and mystery.
- Appreciation of the narrative strategies employed by writers of fiction.
- Investigation of the use of alternative narrative voices.
- Analysis of character and motivation.

Visual Literacy

- Study the **covers** of the books in this series. How might you re-design these covers? *Activity:* Create a display of the covers which students create.
- Read the novel carefully in order to visualise the geography of their imaginary country. *Activity:* Create a **map** of the kingdom of Athlane as you see it.
- This novel contains some very **dramatic scenes and conflicts**, which are similar to the scenes described in the mosaics at Nan Tocha. *Activity:* Create a classroom mosaic mural depicting

some of the key scenes in this novel. Invite students to work in small groups and to sketch a scene. Then use cut up chart paper in primary colours to create the effect of mosaics in this mural.

Key learning outcomes:

- Understanding of the relationship between design and narrative content.
- Visualisation of the secondary world created by the author.
- Visual appreciation of the key dramatic conflicts within the narrative.

QUESTIONS FOR READING AND DISCUSSION

1. What chance do you think Silvermay has of protecting Lucien from his own nature? Relate your answer to the age-old question of 'nature or nurture'. Can environment change a person's nature? Conduct a debate on this question using contemporary or historical examples.
2. Invite students to name their favourite character, and why? Who is their least favourite character and why?
3. Debate the pros and cons of the feudal system in which farmers have to give much of the produce they grow or breed to the wealthy landowner?
4. When Ryall loses his arm he is depressed and initially hopeless about his future. When Silvermay invents a mechanical arm for him it gives him new hope. But what else helps him to recover?
5. Lady Ezeldi is known to be capable of cruelty and yet she's depicted as something of a heroine in this novel, and Tamlyn certainly loves her. Discuss the human capacity to be both flawed and yet honourable as well.
6. Geran and Lathen are members of the Felan. Describe what you know about the Felan from having read this novel. For example, why are they able to defeat the Wyrdborn?
7. Imagine what it was like for prisoners in medieval times held captive in dungeons and caverns such as the City of Lost Souls. Is the scenario depicted in this novel fanciful, or is it close to the truth? Research this topic further.
8. Dark magic and witchcraft are mentioned often in this novel. However, there was often a fine line in earlier medieval cultures between magic and the understanding of natural remedies and the healing properties possessed by people such as Birdie. Research and discuss this topic further.
9. Paint a portrait of Tamlyn and imagine a costume for him, based on what is described in this novel. Create a companion portrait of Silvermay in her yellow dress.
10. What might happen in Book Three? Discuss possible plot complications and developments.

WORKSHEET 1 COMPREHENSION QUIZ

Questions:

1. What did Silvermay do to help Ryall?
2. Who is Silvermay's best friend?
3. Who is Kemper Boreman in this novel?
4. What object does Ezeldi send to Tamlyn?
5. Where were the mosaics excavated?
6. What did they feel under their feet when they were walking through the City of Lost Souls?
7. Who was Aben Cornwall in this novel?
8. What might have happened to him, if Lucien had stayed with Coyle?
9. How does Deiton die in the underground cavern?
10. What secret does Geran hide until later in the novel?

Answers:

1. She invented a metal arm to replace his lost one. 2. Hespera. 3. Kemper Boreman was a rival to Coyle and another servant to King Chatiny. 4. A silver ring to melt down and make into a blade tip capable of killing a Wyrdborn. 5. Na Tocha. 6. Cockroaches. 7. Chamberlain to Lord Coyle Strongbow. 8. He might have become a monster. 9. The huge hounds kill him. 10. That he is a woman.



WORKSHEET 2 WORDS AND CONCEPTS

Choose words in this list to form groups of three words with some relationship to each other. Put the matching two words in the columns below: gloomy/ vow/ spy/ sword/ captive/ power/ tattoo/ watch/ grief-stricken/ thief/ fortress/ symbol/ stronghold/ mystic/ promise/ prisoner/ crossbow/ control/ seer/ fugitive

hostage		
pledge		
turret		
vigil		
vagabond		
weapon		
prophecy		
desolate		
dominance		
talisman		

Answers:

hostage	prisoner	captive
pledge	promise	vow
turret	stronghold	fortress
vigil	spy	watch
vagabond	thief	fugitive
weapon	sword	crossbow
prophecy	mystic	seer
desolate	gloomy	grief-stricken
dominance	power	control
talisman	tattoo	symbol

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

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