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Notes by: Judith Ridge

The Fourteenth Summer of Angus Jack

by Jen Storer

and Lucinda Gifford

Book Summary:

Following the death of their mother, Angus Jack and his sister, Martha, have moved to Australia with their father to start a new life. They end up living in a bayside suburb, next door to a peculiar old lady called Reafen, who is a second-hand dealer.

To Angus and Martha, Reafen seems harmless enough. But who is she really and where did she get all the weird and creepy stuff in her shop? Reafen kicks off a chain of events that draws Angus into her world, into ancient feuds, wild magic and bitter rivalries, into the astonishing dramas of the Old Realm.

Funny, exhilarating and a little bit scary, THE FOURTEENTH SUMMER OF ANGUS JACK is a bewitching blend of Norse mythology and urban fantasy.

Curriculum Areas and Key Learning Outcomes:

Language, Literature, Literacy, Literature in context, Norse Mythology, Rites of Passage, Memory, Grief and Loyalty

Appropriate Ages: 8-11yrs

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jen Storer grew up in a small wheatbelt town in Australia. She left school in a hurry and fiddled about in a variety of jobs from selling shoes to nursing, all the while taking night classes in English, drama and history. In the 1990s, Jen returned to formal study and completed a Bachelor of Arts at Monash University, Clayton, where she majored in both Literature and Cinema Studies. She graduated with First Class Honours in Literature.

After graduating, Jen worked as a children's book editor. This renewed her love of children's literature and sent her imagination soaring. Jen lives in Melbourne. jenstorer.com

Also by Jen Storer

Tensy Farlow and the Home for Mislaid Children

The Accidental Princess

Truly Tan

Truly Tan: Jinxed!

Truly Tan: Spooked!

Truly Tan: Freaked!

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The first inklings of *The Fourteenth Summer of Angus Jack* began with the idea of the goblin girls. But it would be several years before the full story was ready to be written. Not just because I was distracted with other work but because the details, images and ideas needed several years to settle into something cohesive that I could bring forth from my subconscious; something whole that I could dig up. And even when I began to work on it with intention, I was still unsure about it. I kept thinking it had to be set in Norway or at least somewhere in Scandinavia. I would go off, read some more Norse mythology, mentally stroll about in *Verdens Ende* and such places.

And yet every time I sat down to write, the story kept popping up in Australia. It took me ages to get used to that. It seemed so unorthodox; a story of Vikings and goblins, enchanted boats, shape-shifting witches and magical carnival tents, set in urban Australia. As far as I knew no one had tried to make these leaps or invent connections like this. It was hard to categorise a story like this. But to be true to the story, to see its face clearly, I had to tell it as I experienced it.

CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

These notes have been prepared with students from the early years of high school in mind, however, the book and these activities may be suitable for able students in upper primary. The national curriculum outcomes below are for English in Years 7 and 8

ACELA1529, ACELA1782, ACELA1536, ACELT1619, ACELT1620, ACELT1621, ACELY1720, ACELY1725, ACELY1729, ACELY1731, ACELY1732, ACELY1736, ACELA1540, ACELA1541, ACELA1547, ACELT1626, ACELT1807, ACELT1629

THEMES

Memory

'...for the loss of our narrares, the scattering of our narrares, is a terrible calamity. It means the loss of our stories. And without our stories, our legends, our memories, who are we?' p. 167

Together with *Imagination versus Logic*, memory is one of the unifying themes of *The Fourteenth Summer of Angus Jack*. The catalyst for the main action of the novel is the theft of a *narrare*, a magical snow dome that acts much like a crystal ball, revealing memories and stories. *Narrare* belong to the inhabitants of the Old Realm, an ancient world peopled by goblins and other creatures familiar from myth and fairy tale. Connected to our world—and to the novel's protagonists, Angus Jack and his sister Martha—by the Vikings, a *narrare* has been brought to 21st century Queensland from the Old Realm to protect it from a witch, Varla. Varla, once a side-show carnival performer from this world, has used 'wild magick' to transform herself into a 'tyrant... a cruel, self-seeking fiend', who deals in necromancy and wishes to use the *narrare* to take control of the Old Realm and its inhabitants:

The Donut Lady placed the *narrare* on the coffee table.

'It holds the memories of the goblins,' she said. 'Each tiny snowflake stores memories of their customs, their music, their stories, their comings and goings. Their knowledge of the earth — its mountains, its land, its subterranean treasures. To own the *narrare* is to own the power.' (p. 138)

Discussion point

You may like to begin your class study of *The Fourteenth Summer of Angus Jack* by discussing the epigraph at the beginning of the novel, and asking students if they agree or disagree with the idea that memories can keep a person, an object, an event or a place alive for us after they have become 'lost to us' in some way:

'Nothing is ever really lost to us as long as we remember it.' LM
Montgomery, *The Story Girl*

The concept and importance of memory is thus closely connected to many of the novel's other themes, as follows.

Family

'It's just that, well, he's never there, and even when he is there ... he's not there. And it makes me furious, Angus. Furious.'

Angus nodded. What could he say? There were no words for what they felt. No words to describe their loneliness, their anger, the way they felt ... betrayed. p. 130

It is evident from the beginning of the novel that Angus's family is in disrepair. Their mother dead, and their father barely coping with his grief, Angus and Martha have been dragged first of all, across the world from their home in England to Australia, and then across Australia, moving every six months or so. The novel opens with them living in a 'rotten house' whose only saving grace is its proximity to the beach and its lively carnival. From the beginning, the narrative, primarily focalised through Angus, describes the children's father in negative terms: *his stupid father's fault; Their father had no idea.*

Did he even care? Their father—who the children somewhat derisively call 'The Prof' or Maxwell, his first name— spends all his time at work, leaving the children feeling lonely and neglected. The Prof is so disconnected from his children's lives that at one point, ordering pizza for a rare dinner at home with his children, he asks Angus 'Is Martha still a vegetarian?' (p. 70)

The children's anger at their father peaks when he begins dating an archaeologist he met on the internet. The children's mother had a life-long fascination with Norse mythology and history, claiming she herself was descended from the Vikings, and the children view their father's interest in the archaeologist (an expert in Norse history) an utter betrayal of them and their mother. When ultimately their father is kidnapped into a world-between-worlds by the witch Varla, the children realise they do not, after all, hate their father, and the novel's climatic scenes are in part to do with his rescue. A key aspect

of the novel's resolution is the repairing of the relationship between the children and their father:

Angus looked back at the Prof. He and his father had spent many hours the previous night talking and laughing and, for the first time in their lives, reminiscing. (p. 252)

Grief

Grief is explored through the children's loss of their mother, and the subsequent damage done to their family by their father's inability to deal with his grief at the loss of his wife.

In Chapter 28, Martha reveals a memory of her mother that the *narrare*—the magic 'snow dome'—has shown her:

Sadness welled up inside Angus. That was just the kind of kooky thing his mother often used to say. She had always been full of nonsense, full of mischief. They had forgotten that side of her ... Why had they forgotten? Why had they let these details slide? (p.137)

Later, Angus tells Martha, in reference to their lost mother:

'Don't worry,' said Angus. 'I've been writing it down. All the memories. All the stories. What made her laugh. Her favourite films. How she dressed — remember those horrible green beads? Remember how she thought she could sing?'

Martha smiled shakily.

'The perfume she wore. How she was petrified of cockroaches and always said "whatchamacallit". I'll help you when you forget, Martha. I'll be your memory.' (p. 233)

Activity:

Have the students create a personal Memory Book. A blank artist's sketchbook is suitable for the purpose, allowing for the students to fill it with photo, drawings, magazine and newspaper clippings and their own written memories. Encourage them to write at least three entries drawing on favourite memories. They can write their memories in various modes: prose, poetry, lists, dialogue scripts, whatever suits the memory. Annotated maps and diagrams can also form part of their Memory Book. Remind them of the Goblin Girl Ava's words from Chapter 16:

'The truth is in the detail. The fascination is in the detail. The magic of the words, the magic of the stories, is all in the detail.' p. 88

They might like to take ideas from *The Fourteenth Summer of Angus Jack* and include memories of loved ones (including pets), listing favourite sayings of a grandparent or other close friend or relative, drawings or photos from magazines of objects they associate with that person, and personal photos. They could list their favourite things about the person, and create a list of their likes and dislikes. (Note that the person does not have had to have died for the purposes of this exercise!)

Other ideas for the Memory Book could be: my most important place, most valued possession (something from their younger childhood rather than a current/new possession), or any particular events they wish to remember (parties, family celebrations, something kind someone did for them, an achievement at school, a special moment with a friend).

Loyalty

'What would you expect from a fickle-hearted Insincere?' snapped Graini. *'She has no love for truth and loyalty and family ties. She will side with whoever suits her.'* (p. 86)

Closely related to the theme of family is that of loyalty. The theme is made explicit in the Goblin Girls' discussion about Reafen's betrayal in Chapter 16 'Tears and Lies', where Angus likens the argument over who is telling the truth about the *narrare* to a 'family feud' (p. 86). While the actual blood-relationship of the characters from the Old Realm is never specifically established, the language of the goblin girls reveals the primacy of family to them—*sister-sibling, father-relative*—and Angus is quite right in characterising their relationships as familial.

Debate topic:

Loyalty to family should always come first.

Imagination versus Logic

'You've got no imagination,' said Martha.

'Hello? What is science without imagination?' said Angus. *'Answer me that.'* p.6

The theme of imagination versus logic echoes throughout *The Fourteenth Summer of Angus Jack*. Martha and Angus embody the apparent polarity of the debate inspired by Albert Einstein's famous declaration that 'Imagination is more important than knowledge.'

When we first meet Angus he is reading *New Scientist* magazine, where he calls Martha a 'Cat-Whisperer', alluding to her more imaginative/spiritual approach to the world. Note the conversation the siblings have about the

abandoned fishing shack known as Berkeley's Shanty—it encapsulates the world view of each perfectly:

'I'm going there one day,' said Martha wistfully. 'You never know what you might find in a place like that. Old diaries, pirate loot, treasure chests ...'

'Pigeon poo and starving rats,' said Angus. 'A fun day out, Martha.' pp. 161-162

Angus is fond of 'logical explanations' (p. 60) likes to avoid 'nonsense' and asks Martha to 'stick to the facts' (p. 38). The novel consistently positions him on the side of science and logic, with Martha shown to be more open to the possibility of magic and the mysteries of the 'other'. Later, when Angus discovers there is more to the world than his science allows, he initially finds it difficult to deal with: *This was not his kind of logic.* (P.141) He starts to reconcile science and magic when Ava describes magic in terms that he describes as an 'offbeat physics lesson'. Ultimately, though, he has to accept that, as Einstein also said, knowledge is limited:

His life, all that he knew, all he believed, the facts and the science that he had diligently placed his trust in, had been turned on its head. Suddenly anything seemed possible, anything at all.(p. 190)

Activity:

'This is odd,' said the Donut Lady. 'You believe when you have not seen for yourself. You even write about these things you have not seen. And yet when the proof sits before you in a sun frock and workboots, you do not believe.' p. 107

Read as a class the discussion Angus has with the Donut Lady about belief and evidence in Chapter 20 'Theories and Proof'.

Lead a discussion: when has something you have been absolutely sure about proven to be wrong? Or when have you had to accept that something you did not believe was in fact true? What evidence do you personally require to believe someone or something? eg the reliability and trustworthiness of the source (a person, a book, a website), proof such as Angus cites; historical documents, archaeological and forensic evidence. What kind of evidence may be unreliable, eg manipulation of photographs (see links following for some useful images). When does evidence not matter, and faith or belief is the most important thing? (This may or may not include religious faith.)

<http://listverse.com/2007/10/19/top-15-manipulated-photographs/>

<http://i.imgur.com/abMQe.jpg>

Remind students of this discussion when they are researching for this and other units of work. Your teacher-librarian will have excellent guiding materials on assessing resources including websites for reliability and authenticity.

Writing task:

The Fourteenth Summer of Angus Jack proves Albert Einstein's observation that 'imagination is more important than knowledge'.

The full quote from Einstein is:

*'I am enough of the artist to draw freely upon my imagination. **Imagination is more important than knowledge.** Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world.'*

<http://quoteinvestigator.com/2013/01/01/einstein-imagination/>

Using this quote with students would provide an excellent opportunity to discuss the reliability of many 'famous' quotes found on internet memes, summed up by the witty meme attributed to Abraham Lincoln: don't believe everything you read on the internet

(<http://memegenerator.net/instance/34007033>)

The Quote Investigator site is excellent for checking the veracity of such quotes. Student would also do well to learn about sites such as Snopes, which investigates (and frequently debunks) a wide range of urban myths, conspiracy theories, rumours and misinformation.

<http://quoteinvestigator.com>

<http://m.snopes.com/>

BEFORE READING

In *A Literature Companion for Teachers*, Lorraine McDonald identifies 3 types of fantasy novel:

1. Fantasy set in the real, primary world into which magic intrudes.
2. Fantasy starts in the real world and moves to another.
3. Fantasy takes places entirely in an alternative or secondary world.

The Fourteenth Summer of Angus Jack is an example of the first kind of fantasy novel.

Discussion points

In context of these three types of fantasy, discuss what kind of fantasy fiction the students have read or seen in films and television, video games etc. Discuss their personal tastes and create a list of the conventions they might expect to be common to or typical of fantasy fiction. (Note that *A Literature Companion for Teacher* has an extensive list of these conventions.) You may like to create a chart for each type of fantasy to record their ideas. This can be added to during the course of the novel study or at any time during the year, depending on their wide reading and class study. Depending on the ability of your students, you may also like to consider clichés in fantasy fiction.

Repertoire

Consider the students' personal, social, cultural and literary repertoire, and conduct a discussion to determine what level of pre-knowledge students may have on the following:

Norse mythology

Vikings

Folk tale characters such as goblins

Experience of fantasy fiction

Experience of carnivals

Some preliminary work may be useful in preparing students for some of the many intertextual and cultural references in the novel.

LANGUAGE

'... You need to extend your vocabulary; otherwise people will never take you seriously.' (p. 51)

Some of the language of *The Fourteenth Summer of Angus Jack* may be unfamiliar to some students; it includes some archaic words, words from Norwegian, archaic language and others not commonly used by the implied readership. Have them keep a running record of unfamiliar words with their definitions on a page in their workbook. Make this the basis of a class activity where students share their favourite unknown words from the novel. Create a word bank on posters for your classroom as you read the book.

- **Character voices**

Many of the characters in the novel are marked by particular modes of speech/language. Examples include the Donut Lady's friend Barney, who uses old-fashioned slang ('Lord love a duck!') and the Donut Lady herself, whose speech is marked by a type of malapropism, where she frequently gets common expressions just slightly wrong, eg. 'Saints pickle us' (p. 36).

Activity

Using the chart in Appendix 1, have students list specific examples of the character's distinct language usage. An example is given to get them started. They should also try and describe that this reveals about the character, and where possible, identify the language feature or device used. Some may remind them of other characters, eg Yoda from Star Wars has syntax similar to that of the Goblin Girls.

The students should choose a minimum of 3 speech quotes for each character from different parts of the book in order to get as full a portrayal of them as possible.

Note Gary Disher's observation in his book *Writing Fiction: An Introduction to the Craft*.

In real life we discover or surmise things about people as we listen to them. We pay attention to not only who is speaking but also to what is said, the way it is said, and why, and come to conclusions about the speaker's background and personality. In the same way, readers learn something about fictional characters.

Alternatively, you may ask the students to focus in a single character rather than complete the chart for all the main characters.

IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

As referred to elsewhere, the speech of the Donut Lady is characterised by her use of slightly misheard common expressions. eg 'There are some who would go to twenty lengths to steal a narrare' (p. 140)

Discuss malapropisms, eggcorns and mondegreens with your students.

Malapropisms are named for Mrs Malaprop, a character in the Restoration Comedy *The Rivals*, by Richard Brinsley Sheridan. A malapropism is the use of an incorrect word that sounds similar to the correct word; often it has an unintentionally comic or ironic effect.

An eggcorn (for 'acorn') is a misheard word that often ends up being a better (wittier or surprisingly revealing) than the correct word. eg *Firstable* for 'first of all', When all is *set* and done, A *far-gone* conclusion. Eggcorns are more than simply errors; to qualify, they need to have a close relationship to the correct word that somehow seems to expand or even improve the original meaning.

Mondegreens are specific to misheard song lyrics. There are many famous examples, including 'Excuse me while I kiss this guy' for 'Excuse me while I kiss the sky' (Purple Haze by Jimi Hendrix).

Such misuses are, of course, common in students' own work, as every teacher will recognise. Some students may have been aware of their own misheard songs, prayers, expressions etc, particularly from their younger childhood years, and a very entertaining discussion may follow about their own discoveries in this regard. (A common example from the Christian tradition is children mishearing the words to the hymn Gladly the Cross I'd Bear as Gladly, the Cross-Eyed Bear.) There are many resources for these language features on the internet: a selection are included at the end of this section.

Activity

Give students a list of the Donut Lady's mistaken use of common idiomatic expressions (Appendix 2). See how many they can 'correct'. Discuss which they prefer—their own, or the Donut Lady's.

For your more able and creative students, create a list of common expressions and ask them to create a Donut Lady-style version, with one or two words replaced. Note that they replacement words need to make some kind of sense—the idea is not to create nonsense phrases, but phrases with a twist of meaning from the original.

Ask the students to keep their ears open for eggcorns, mondegreens and malapropisms, and keep a record of any they come across in their work books. Share these at appropriate times with the class.

NB: Note that the Donut Lady is from Russia and English is not her first language. It is very common for people to misunderstand and mishear words from a language that they are less familiar with, and sensitivity to ESL/EALD students is essential in conducting these discussion and activities. The activity on idiomatic expressions can, however, provide an excellent opportunity to talk about literal and non-literal language and discuss the challenges learners of a language have in understanding common idiomatic expressions.

Some useful resources:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malapropism>

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/sep/16/that-eggcorn-moment>

<http://time.com/3902230/what-is-an-eggcorn/>

<http://www.newyorker.com/science/maria-konnikova/science-misheard-lyrics-mondegreens>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mondegreen>

<http://www.smart-words.org/quotes-sayings/idioms-meaning.html>

DIALOGUE AND SPEECH TAGS

Students are often taught to be creative in their use of speech attributions or speech tags, yet most professional writers agree that minimum use of speech attributions (he said, she said) is desirable. Kate Grenville, in *The Writing Book: A Workbook for Fiction Writers* calls attributions 'a necessary evil'. 'Too many give a bit of dialogue a monotonous limping feeling. Too few and you lose track of who's saying what.' (p. 99)

Similarly, professional writers tend to agree that over-use of 'fancy' tags (*expostulated, shrieked, moaned, muttered, etc*) suggests a lack of confidence that the dialogue itself is doing the job in communication mood and tone. Too many such tag lines can produce an unintentionally comic effect and detract from what is being said—students should be encouraged to use such attributions sparingly, so their effect is not diluted. Often, the desired effect can be created not by describing the way the dialogue is spoken, but by giving the character an action to accompany the dialogue.

Another common weakness in writing dialogue is the use of inaccurate verbs; '*He's awful, Sally grimaced*' is incorrect, because grimacing is not an action of speech. The correct form here would be '*He's awful, Sally said, grimacing*'.

Activity

Read together **Chapter 25 Stealing from Friends**. If possible, photocopy the chapter and ask the students to colour code by highlighting different dialogue techniques as they read. They should identify:

Simple attribution (*he said, she said*)

Verb speech tags (*she squeaked*)

Adverbial speech tags (*Angus said quickly*)

Dialogue tagged with an action (*'Now,' said Graini, and she turned and disappeared into the darkness.*)

Calculate the rough percentage of each technique, and then discuss the effect the different ways of attributing speech can have on the reader. Note that at times some of the verb tags cluster, heightening the tension and suspense of the scene, while the use of action associated with speech gives the scene energy.

RUNES

'This writing ...' he muttered as he turned the velvety pages. 'This intricate, precise lettering ...'

'They are the letters of our people,' snapped Graini. 'What's wrong with them?'

'It looks like runes,' said Angus.

'That's right,' said Graini. 'You don't think we'd use your slippery, double-sided English, do you?'

'But this,' said Angus, smoothing the pages, 'this is the language of Vikings.'

'Ha,' scoffed Graini. 'It is the language of goblins.'(p. 85)

Research activity

Have your students research runes. This is an endlessly complex and fascinating topic, and students may be overwhelmed by the amount of information available to them, even from the Wikipedia entry on the topic. The questions on Appendix 3 will help guide and limit their research.

Ensure that the students follow your preferred form of referencing for all items included in their research throughout the unit.

Writing activity

Using the free downloadable charts at the link, have the students write a letter to a friend using Runes. They will also enjoy creating a nameplate for their bedroom door spelling their name out in Viking runes.

<http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/history/thevikingalphabet.htm>

Extension Activity

JRR Tolkien used Norse runes as the basis of the Elvish language in *The Lord of the Rings*. Anglo-Saxon runes appear also in *The Hobbit*. Some students may already be Tolkien fans or are ready have Tolkien recommended to them for extension reading. Such students may well enjoy researching and presenting on Tolkien's use of runes and Norse mythology in his fantasy fiction.

Fortune-telling

The woman swallowed hard as if steeling herself, then with an audacious rush cast the stones across the floor. She closed her eyes, made her wish — then promptly passed out. (p. 1)

NB Some students will be very uncomfortable with the topic of fortune-telling. While a strictly anthropological approach is recommended, be sensitive to the fact that some students may have religious or other objections to this topic of study.

Runes were not simply a language or method of communication; runes were imbued with symbolic and mystical significance and rune stones continue to be used to this day for fortune-telling and divination. Runes were also carved as magic charms or talismans on swords and other significant objects. As in other cultural traditions, such as the I Ching from China, the random nature of casting the stones and allowing fate to let them fall where they will is key to the process.

In *The Fourteenth Summer of Angus Jack*, the Wishing Stones are birth gifts given to every goblin baby, as gifts are often given at birth in fairy tales. The stones have healing powers, divination powers and are instrumental in awakening the power of the witch Varla.

Begin by asking students to share their knowledge about different kinds of fortune-telling. Most will know their star sign from Western Astrology—how many know their Chinese horoscope animal? Other forms of fortune-telling they may be familiar with include tarot cards and crystal balls, the latter echoed by the *narrare* in *The Fourteenth Summer of Angus Jack*. And nearly all of them will have made a paper fortune-teller at some point in their lives!

Activity

Have the students make a paper fortune-teller designed to provide a range of answers to a question they believe a character from the novel would want answered. For example, Martha might want to have an answer to the question 'Will our cat Jarly even come home?' or 'How can I remember my mother?' Angus might ask a question about his father, and so on. The student needs to decide on the question, and then come up with a range of answers that are possible. The 'bigger' the question, the more answers are possible.

A simpler exercise would be to ask the students to list 8 facts about a particular character under the 8 sections of the paper fortune-teller (4 if the sections are not cut, as in the second video instructions linked below). They then play the fortune-teller with another student, who has to guess which character it is from the different bits of information provided in the fortune-teller.

Encourage students to use runes instead of numbers or colours for the selection options on the fortune-teller.

How to make a paper fortune-teller

<http://www.kidspot.com.au/kids-activities-and-games/Party-games+7/Make-a-paper-fortune-teller+12855.htm>

<https://youtu.be/ccrwwGYlqyg>

Research activity

Research different types of fortune-telling across cultures. A comprehensive list can be found here:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fortune-telling>

Reports can be made back in any format suitable: multimedia, oral, posters etc.

Fortune telling—an Aboriginal perspective

Read and discuss the article 'Aboriginal weather knowledge gains recognition' at the following link as part of the overall discussion about various forms of fortune telling. You may also like to include water divination in the discussion:

<http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2007/s1910142.htm>

Useful resources

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Runes>

Rune and Viking style fonts are available for free download at these sites (and many others):

<http://www.fontspace.com/>

www.dafont.com

INTERTEXTUALITY AND OTHER CULTURAL REFERENCES

The Fourteenth Summer of Angus Jack is full of intertextual and cultural references, including the following:

- Sherlock Holmes p. 12
- Jungle Jim p. 30
- Gentle Ben (TV show) p.26
- Nancy Drew p.60
- Alice in Wonderland: 'As mad as a March hare.' p. 14
- Additionally, the novel draws on a wide range of cultural references. These include:
 - Snow domes and by inference, crystal balls (numerous mentions)
 - Theremin (musical instrument) p. 150
 - Vikings, including longboat/archaeological discoveries p. 24
 - Norse mythology
 - Verdens Ende 'World's End. Mum's favourite place on earth.' p. 28

Inklings (p. 25) Note that the book uses the word in the sense of 'ideas' but it may also be read as a reference to Tolkien, author of *Lord of the Rings*, which was heavily influenced by Norse mythology. Tolkien was a member of a group of writers and scholars known as the Inklings.

Birth gifts.

'Does every goblin have a set of special stones?' said Martha. 'Singing Stones. Water Stones. It seems like it.'

'We do,' said Ava. 'They are our Birth Gifts. We goblins are blessed to understand the earth's hidden treasures. We are honoured to guard these treasures with reverence and ... use them sparingly and with discretion.' (p. 166)

Birth gifts are common tropes in fairy tales (*The Sleeping Beauty*) and fantasy fiction such as *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* by J.K. Rowling, *Charmed Life* by Diana Wynne Jones, *Ella Enchanted* by Gail Carson Levine, *The Whisperer* by Fiona McIntosh, *Melisande* by E. Nesbit, *Savvy* by Ingrid Law

Magic mirrors appear in many fairy tales and fantasy stories. Consider the Queen's mirror in *Snow White*, Galadriel's mirror in *Lord of the Rings*, the mirror that Alice goes through in *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, the Mirror of Erised in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, Gwendolen's mirror in *Charmed Life*, Julia Donaldson's *Princess Mirror-belle* series (for younger children), Anthony Browne's *Through the Magic Mirror*. Liquid can also act as a mirror in many similar stories and if students find examples of these, they should be included.

Ravens (referred to numerous times throughout). Ravens are specifically relevant because of their association with the Norse god Odin, but they have significance across a wide range of cultures (eg the ravens in the Tower of London, mentioned on (p. 32), including Aboriginal culture (the Australian raven *Corvus coronoides* has both totemic significance to some Aboriginal people and appears in Dreamtime stories).

Goblins.

'You don't look like goblins,' he muttered.

Graini put her hands on her hips. 'And just how do you know that?' she said. 'What are goblins supposed to look like?'

'Well,' said Angus slowly, for he feared he might be backing himself into a corner, 'as I understand it, goblins are filthy, snivelling, wizened little creatures that live in dungeons and catacombs and haunted houses ...'

'And sewers and cesspools and rotting cellars,' added Martha quietly. p. 85

Activity

In pairs or small groups, have your students research and prepare a report on one of the above cultural references. More able student may take on more complex subjects, such as investigation of goblins in folk mythology, while less able students may do a more straightforward topic, such as the theremin or Verdens Ende. Where appropriate, they should consider what relevance the intertextual reference has to *The Fourteenth Summer of Angus Jack*.

Students may present their research report in a number of ways:

- Multimedia
- Oral report
- Poster
- Booklet/newsletter

Or any other format that suits your preferred outcomes.

rites of passage:

'It is called a Rite of Passage, Angus Jack,' said Ava. 'Do you know of these things?' (p. 167)

Read together with the class the discussion about 'rites of passage' held between Angus, Martha and the Goblin girls Ava and Graini (Chapter 34, (pp. 166-167). In literature, the 'rites of passage' or 'coming of age' story is known as the *Bildungsroman*. Some theorists argue that all young adult stories are forms of *Bildungsroman*, dealing as they do with the teen's transition from childhood to nascent adulthood, from dependence to independence and agency. However, a rite of passage may not necessarily be to do with the transition from childhood to adulthood. Other examples of Rites of Passage that may be pertinent to your students may include:

- Starting kindergarten
- Walking to school alone
- Being allowed to stay up to a certain time
- Going to the movies with friends and no parents
- Joining a new sports team
- Older sibling leaving home
- Remarriage of parents

Discussion points:

What examples of Rites of Passage ceremonies are the students familiar with? eg Bar/Bat Mitzvah, First Communion or Confirmation, Debutant Balls, Aboriginal Initiation ceremonies for boys and girls.

(<http://www.indigenoustralia.info/culture/initiation-ceremonies.html>)

What rites of passage have your students already experienced? Which ones are they looking forward to?

What 'rites of passage' events do Angus and Martha go through in the novel?

What other examples of 'rites of passage' in other stories do students know of? They might like to consider movies, TV shows, books, video games, fairy tales and myths and legends.

(NB: Some students may be familiar with the successful TV series Vikings—note that it is rated MA15+ in Australia. The first episode of the first series is called 'Rites of Passage'. The Wikipedia entry for Norse Rituals, however, notes that 'Unusually, no Scandinavian sources tell about rituals for the passage from child to adult.)

Activity

Interview a family member about a significant rite of passage in their life: starting university, marriage, becoming a parent, first job, loss of a loved one etc. Prepare a series of questions asking the family member about the significance of the rite of passage, was it a positive or negative experience, how did it change them, what would they do differently, etc. Audio interview to be presented on USB stick for assessment or to be used as the basis of a video or written presentation.

CREATIVE RESPONSES TO *The Fourteenth Summer of Angus Jack*

Carnival Legends

A significant part of the action and plot of *The Fourteenth Summer of Angus Jack* relies on the seaside carnival. Some of its attractions are listed on (p. 174): Congo the Killer Ape; Farid the Fire-Eater; Lionel the Lion-faced Boy; Mietta the Little Mermaid Girl

Students are to write a biography of each of these characters, including their childhood, where they came from, and how they ended up as carnival attractions. Then, they should create a list of their own carnival characters, inspired by the ones mentioned in the book and by research. Students may then choose one of their characters and write their biography. Students should be encouraged to create a performer who is there by choice; someone who has trained in particular magical tricks or feats of strength and endurance, for example, rather than those who are there simply by virtue of a disability beyond their control. eg The Seven Sutherland Sisters, who grew their hair to the ground (they were reported to have between them 37 feet of hair).

NB: It is important to contextualise this activity with a discussion of the ethical issues pertaining to what were once called 'Sideshow Freaks'. Many sideshow performers were people with intellectual disabilities or unusual physical appearances and impairments. Others were more akin to circus performers, performing great feats or having deliberately modified their bodies (for example with tattoos). Animals held in captivity for human entertainment is also a source of contention to this day, with an increasing number of local government areas banning circuses with live animals. Other famous sideshows were proven to have been fakes, eg 'pig-faced ladies' were simply pigs dressed in women's clothing.

Some useful resources (teachers should use their own judgement about sharing these with students):

<http://mentalfloss.com/article/50078/true-stories-behind-11-famous-sideshow-performers>

<http://www.thehumanmarvels.com/>

Mevras the Viking Magician

Mevras is the Viking magician that it emerges Angus and Martha are descended from. (Mevras is a fictional creation.) Using the research you may have done on Norse mythology and beliefs, write a story about Mevras.

Puppet Play

As a class, or, depending on your students' ability, in small groups or pairs, create a script for the puppet play described in Chapter 10 'Seeking Shelter', (pp. 44-45)

Crafty students can make the puppets and scenery while your more dramatic students can learn the script, creating suitable voices and sound effects for the performance. Perform the play for another class.

Cat Chat

Martha and Angus's cat Jarly goes missing early in the book. Write a short story telling the events of the novel and what happens to Jarly and the Donut Lady's cat Vladimir from Jarly's point of view.

Carnival Legends

Barney's tired eyes gaped with terror. He had heard of tents like these, rogue tents that seemed to sprout from the ground itself then disappear without a trace. All the old carnival folk feared them but few had ever seen one. (p. 181)

Have students write their own Carnival Legend. It might be worthwhile to study urban myths first, but be sure to encourage them to write an original story. Students who have not visited a carnival like the one described in *The Fourteenth Summer of Angus Jack* might like to create a Circus Legend, a Show Legend (such as a Rural Show or Easter Show), a Fun Park legend or similar.

DEBATE TOPICS

Create a class debate on topics drawing from quotes from the novel:

- Oh, the sugar, it is a great temptation to us, and it is also a great, all-consuming poison. (p. 148)
- Without our stories, our legends, our memories... we are no-one. (p. 167)
- There is a problem with humans and greed. (p. 168)
- We can never know what will happen as a result of our wishes. (p. 192)

- There are no ordinary lives. (p. 208)
- We are all little heroes. Each and every one of us (p. 208)

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Jones, Diana Wynne *The Eight Days of Luke* HarperCollins 2011 (originally published 1975)

Riggs, Ransom *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* Quirk Books 2011

Rossell, Judith *Withering-by-Sea: A Stella Montgomery Intrigue* ABC Children's Books 2014

Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings*

Vikings and Norse Mythology

Crossley-Holland, Kevin *The Norse Myths* Pantheon 1980

Deary, Terry *The Vicious Vikings* Horrible Histories Series. Scholastic 1998.

Stowell, Louie, et al *Illustrated Norse Myths* Usborne 2013

Useful websites:

Vikings: Beliefs and Stories

http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/vikings/beliefs_and_stories/

Norse Mythology for Smart People

<http://norse-mythology.org/>

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Judith Ridge is a children's and youth literature specialist from Sydney. Originally a secondary English and History teacher, Judith has worked as a children's book editor, critic, teacher of creative writing and children's literature at universities and private colleges. She spent a total of 8 years as an editor at the NSW School Magazine and for 7 years was program director for WestWords—the Western Sydney Young People's Literature Development Project. She has also worked on programs such as the Nestlé Write Around Australia children's creative writing program and has curated the School Days program for Sydney Writers' Festival. She teaches at the Australian Catholic University in Children's Literature, Early Childhood and Primary and Secondary Education subjects. Judith is a Churchill Fellow and an Honorary Associate of the School of Education and Social Science at the University of Sydney. Judith operates **Misrule** freelance editorial, writing and educational consultancy services and she has a Masters in Children's Literature from Macquarie University. Her website is misrule.com.au/wordpress

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Appendix 1. The Fourteenth Summer of Angus Jack
Character Voice

Character	Examples	Character Information	Language Feature
Angus Jack			
Martha Jack	'Angus Jack, you are such a jerk,' said Martha. 'It's not my fault we moved to this cruddy place. You can't take it out on me.'	Cranky, rude, defensive	Colloquial, very mild version of swearing
The Professor/ Maxwell Jack			
Reafen/the shop keeper	'They're here,' she whispered. 'They have found Reafen at last. They have ramshackled her emporium and ...' Reafen drew a long, soggy breath, 'they have broken Reafen's heart.'	Sad, slightly 'otherworldly' feel to her speaking of herself as a character	Speaks of herself in 3 rd person Makes a verb of an adjective (ramshackled)

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The Donut Lady			
Ava			
Graini			
Varla			
Barney			

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Lynch			
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The Fourteenth Summer of Angus Jack
Appendix 2. IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

The Donut Lady

DL: pulled some wool

Correct expression: _____

DL: saints pickle us

Correct expression: _____

DL: There are some who would go to twenty lengths to steal a *narrare*

Correct expression: _____

DL: Am I making myself transparent?

Correct expression: _____

DL: there is more to you than meets the eyeballs

Correct expression: _____

DL: Not by the longest shot

Correct expression: _____

Now create your own!

Paint the Town Red

Add insult to injury

A hot potato

The ball is in your court

Once in a blue moon

Take with a grain of salt

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Bursting at the seams

Straight from the horse's mouth

Wouldn't be caught dead

Let the cat out of the bag

Take with a grain of salt

Caught red-handed

Hit the sack

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Kill two birds with one stone

Let sleeping dogs lie

Don't put your eggs in one basket

Crying over spilt milk

Barking up the wrong tree

Cost an arm and a leg

RUNES

'But this,' said Angus, smoothing the pages, 'this is the language of Vikings.'

'Ha,' scoffed Graini. 'It is the language of goblins.'

Appendix 3 :- The fourteenth summer of Angus Jack by Jen Storer p. 85

What are runes?

When were they used?

How were they used?

Who used them, and for how long?

Why do we no longer use runes? What LANGUAGE REPLACED THEM?

To download a Rune font. <http://www.fontspace.com/joel-carrouche/norse>

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