

TEACHERS RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED FOR ages 8 to 14; years 3 to 8

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

Learning Areas: English, Arts, History, Computers/Technology, Music

General Capabilities: Literacy, Creative and critical thinking, Intercultural understanding, Problem solving, Ethical Understanding

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- Provide a discussion point for issues around friendship, family and moral dilemmas
- Examine speculative fiction writing.
- Encourage imaginative writing and world building.
- Examples of creative thinking and problem solving.
- Analyse language use and how it can create different moods and tension.

THEMES

- Family and friendship
- Moral Dilemmas
- Conflict Resolution
- Problem solving
- Learning about differences in culture and tradition
- Survival skills
- Safe use of technology
- Environment and sustainability

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BOOK INFORMATION

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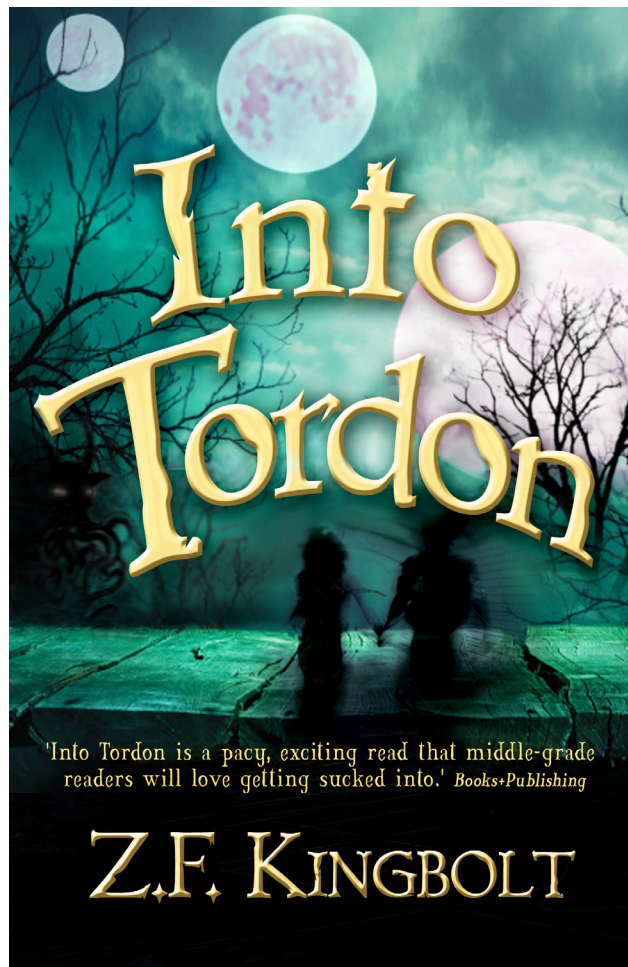
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Into Tordon

Z.F. Kingbolt

Into Tordon is a gripping look at a not too distant future where the line between games and life begins to blur. The characters are honest and real while the pacy plot carries the reader along on a fun, challenging and sometimes frightening journey where discovering the truth becomes the only hope for freedom. Through an exploration of tolerance, trust and friendship, the characters are challenged to face truths about themselves and others that can be confronting but rewarding. Moral dilemmas also provide the setting for discussion about serious subjects such as physical conflict, trust, intercultural understanding and cyber safety.

“An impressive debut! The narrative doesn’t falter, and middle-grade readers will delight at how quickly they are thrown into the action of the story. Into Tordon is a pacy, exciting read that middle-grade readers will love getting sucked into.”

– Bec Kavanagh, Books+Publishing

Into Tordon

Z.F. KINGBOLT

SYNOPSIS

What if the game were real?

Thirteen-year-old Beth has been waiting for weeks to play in the anniversary championship of her favourite online game, Tordon. Now tribes of beast-men roar through her speakers, mutts bark and her avatar materialises onscreen.

Game on!

After Beth tries the riskiest move in Tordon's history, the game sends her a mysterious message: Only champions dare to enter. Enter what? To find out, she meets her gaming nemesis Zane outside the house of Tordon's famous designer.

Unexpectedly, they're sucked into a strange world where they must push their skills to the limit to survive.

With riddles, a multitude of dangerous creatures, exotic cultures and scientific impossibilities, the two of them must face challenge after challenge if they're ever to return home.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ZF Kingbolt has had a varied career including lawyer, scientist, engineer, journalist, biologist, aid worker and teacher, so it took a while to discover that writing books was the best thing ever. A slitherphobe, Kingbolt hates snakes and burnt toast, but loves gaming, technology, geology and skateboarding.

ABOUT THE REAL AUTHORS

Into Tordon and author ZF Kingbolt are the creations of nine writers who decided to join forces and create stories that will engage and entertain young minds. The authors met through Sydney's Northern Beaches Writers' Group. All successful writers, but with a diverse range of other jobs and interests, collaboration was always going to be a challenge. Instead of hindering the creative process, this breadth of experience instead allowed the many worlds within Tordon to be born.

The authors are Leah Boonthanom, Tracey Jackson, Tony McFadden, Mijmark, Kristin Prescott, Zoya Nojin, Zena Shapter and Kirsten Taylor.

The authors are all available for school visits. For more information go to www.zfkingbolt.com

KEY THEMES & STUDY TOPICS

CREATIVE THINKING

Curriculum Areas: English, Art, History

World Building

Discuss the various worlds of *Into Tordon*. Ask them: Which is your favourite world?

Which world would you like to go to and why?

Choose one world/chapter. What do you like most about the setting?

How is it different from where you live?

What do you like/dislike about it?

Questions and activities

- Ask students to draw one of the worlds from *Into Tordon*.
- Why not ask them to draw a fantasy world of their own creation.
- Students could write about their world. Ask them to imagine they are looking around. What do they see? What colour is the sky? What is the temperature? How does the ground feel? What time is it? What type of people live there?
- Discuss the various characters/monsters of *Into Tordon* with students.
- Have students design and make masks of their favourite 'monster'.
- Have students create a character they would like to see appear in *Into Tordon*.

Then and Now

Read Chapter 14. In this chapter Bethlyn and Zane are exploring a playground. In their own world, playgrounds have fallen into disrepair because of the popularity of online games and the increase in skin damage by the sun.

Questions and activities

- Discuss what playgrounds looked like 20 years ago and 50 years ago compared to now.
- Look at pictures and talk to parents or grandparents about what they liked doing as a child.
- Have students design/draw their idea of what a playground might be in 20 years from now. How could technology impact how we use outdoor spaces.

Riddles & Brain Teasers

Throughout *Into Tordon*, Bethlyn and Zane must solve riddles or brain teasers to survive.

For Example:

'What can you have anytime, but never hold?'
(Chapter 14)

'From the start of evolution,
To the end of time and space,
The start of earthly equinox,
Points to the end of base.'
(Chapter 20)

Questions and activities

Have students read the riddles above. Ask them:

- What is a riddle or brain teaser?
- How would you go about solving these riddles?
- Have students make up their own riddle. It could be about something in the classroom or playground. Then swap with other students and see if they can solve them.

Tips for Writing Riddles

1. **Choose an answer. It needs to be general and clear in your mind!**
2. **Brainstorm your answer. Write down words and phrases you associate with the answer to your riddle.**
3. **Think like the object. Try describing the world from your answer's point of view.**
4. **Use figurative language. For example use 'like' or 'as'.**

Eg: "I reflect like a mirror" (answer: water)

Source: <http://www.readwritethink.org/>



RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Curriculum Areas: English, Drama

Friendship

Learning about friendship is an important part of Bethlyn and Zane's journey. As they discover, it certainly isn't easy, especially when you simply don't get along.

Questions and activities

Read through EXTRACT 1 with the students.

Ask them:

- Is Beth and Zane's behaviour acceptable?
- How could Beth and Zane have handled the situation differently?
- What would you do if someone confronted you in that way?

Have students role play this scene or an interaction like this. Discuss:

- How does it make you feel?
- How would you have behaved differently?
- What would you do next? Would you take the dare?

Read through EXTRACT 2 with the students.

Ask them:

- How has the relationship between Beth and Zane changed?
- Why do you think they are treating each other differently now?

Friendship Activities

Discuss students' past experiences with friends. Ask them:

- Have you ever had trouble with a friend? How did you resolve it?
- Ask students to write a story or poem about their experience.
- Ask students to draw a picture of what they most enjoy doing with their best friend.
- Have students write a letter to a friend, telling them about an experience they remember or enjoyed with that person and why.

EXTRACT 1 (Chapter 3)

'He means,' said Zane, grabbing 6thDan's sword, 'that no true champion would jump off a cliff to win. Dying in the heat of battle is fine. But to win like you did is cowardly.'

The blood rushed to Beth's face. 'But that's not what you said in the chatroom.'

Zane rolled his eyes. 'Only idiots say what they really think online.' He swished the sword around his body.

'Okay, give it back now,' said 6thDan, trying to snatch the sword.

'Go 007!' said VlahPaul with a laugh. Beth stepped forward, sick of them all. There were no friends to be made here. 'Give it back, Zane.'

'Why, you gonna win it back by throwing yourself off a cliff?'

'You know,' said Beth, clenching her fists, 'it's called strategy. Sometimes you have to make sacrifices to win. The championship might be configured that way for all we know.'

Zane pointed the sword at the house opposite them. 'Go on then.'

'Go on what?'

'Go ask.'

EXTRACT 2 (Chapter 13)

Zane glanced sideways at her. 'Well...' He looked away again. 'Nah. You won't like it.'

'What? Why?'

'Because you're gonna have to trust me and I know you won't do that.'

'Just tell me.'

'Okay. So I tie these roots around you, hook them over that one running across this ledge and lower you down. You grab the glowing egg thing, I haul you up, then we're out of here.'

'That's the worst idea I've ever heard. A root will never take my weight. And you don't have the strength to lift me.'

'You got another idea?'

She searched the cavern, then glanced back at Zane who flexed his arm muscles. 'Come on, I've been to survival camp. I can hold you. Trust me!'

She paused, but there really was no other way. 'Okay, I'll do it.'

MORAL DILEMMAS

Curriculum Areas: English

INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

Curriculum Areas: English, History, Art, Music

Conflict Resolution

Students are being increasingly exposed to physical and emotional conflict on television, in games and through books.

Throughout *Into Tordon*, Bethlyn faces instances of physical contact, which culminate in her confrontation with the Chameleon.

Questions and activities

Read the following extract from Chapter 23

The Chameleon smirked. 'You have to kill me to defeat me.'

'What? You don't have a sword. I've won. Now let Zane down and show us the gateway.'

She waved her sword at him, hoping to drive him back.

He simply stood his ground. 'Do it,' he hissed, his hands by his side.

'Do you want to die,' she tapped her head, 'in here?'

'You want to go home, don't you? I'm only trying to help. This is the way.'

Beth bit her lip, then stared at the Chameleon and let the tip of her sword drop to the ground.

'No, killing you is not the answer.'

'Yes, it is!' His eyes flared with anger.

'All I want is my friend back and to go home.' She stepped around him, closer to the tree. 'I don't want to kill you. I'm not going to kill you.'

'You have to!' Flecks of spit shot from his mouth and stuck to his moustache. 'That's what winners do, they kill their enemies!'

Beth nodded at the bushes where his sword had disappeared. 'Then make me!'

Discuss the extract. Ask them:

- How does it make you feel?
- Do you agree with how Beth handled the situation? Why?
- Is violence ever the answer, even if you are trying to help someone else?
- What should you do if someone threatens you?
- What do you know about self-defence?
- Have students work in small groups to come up with ways to solve a moral dilemma, without violence, then present them to the class.

Cultures

The woman in the black headdress watched them, then leant back and raised the flap of her tent. With a wink, she gestured them inside.

Beth hesitated. Dried blood was smeared down the fabric of the tent. She wrinkled her nose and Zane shook his head.

The woman's eyes danced with laughter. 'Do not worry, no one has been harmed here. This,' she gestured at the blood, 'is the mark of a good host. If a guest is grateful for shelter and food, they wipe their hands from the lamb stew here.' She stood and waved them inside, pointing to five fat cushions strewn on a colourful carpet. 'Sit and rest. They will not find you here.' (Chapter 8)

Bethlyn and Zane come into contact with a number of different cultures as they journey through the worlds of *Into Tordon*. In many instances, they must form an understanding and respect for the people and places they encounter, if they're to make it home.

Questions and activities

- Ask students to read Chapter 8 and write down the differences between their way of life and the way of life portrayed in that chapter. Consider language, setting, housing, food, games, etc.
- Ask if anyone in the class speaks a different language?
- Who has a different cultural background?
- Ask them which family traditions they enjoy.
- Have any students travelled to countries with different languages or cultures? Were there any funny moments?
- Discuss holidays celebrated by different cultures.

What is Harmony Day? (www.harmony.gov.au)

- How can your school mark Harmony Day?
- Have students plan their own cultural day at school. They could make flags, bring in food and dress in different national costumes.

Australian Aboriginal Folklore

Legend of the Suns (Chapter 16)

‘Haven’t the suns always been there?’ asked Zane, gazing at the dancing shadows.

Kira shook her head. ‘We used to have a single sun for every day of the week. Then the suns started squabbling over who was the most important. Sunday’s sun said she made people the happiest, by shining on them during their day of rest. Monday’s sun said people wouldn’t wake for work without her. Tuesday’s sun said it helped dry out the harvest. And so on. One day, they all came out at once, and now they refuse to return to their old ways. They’re too proud to back down. They must be defeated or else we will perish.’

Traditional stories often provide a fascinating insight into different cultures. In many cases these are passed down from generation to generation, in other instances they take the form of legend, myth (a story based on tradition or legend), or folktales.

Australian folklore, its traditions, customs and beliefs are based on both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people’s knowledge and experience of history in Australia.

The Indigenous Australians’ knowledge goes back tens of thousands of years. This knowledge has its roots in the ‘Dream times’ or ‘Dreamtime’ stories. (source www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/).

Questions and activities

Explore and analyse traditional Aboriginal Dreamtime Stories.

- What is an Aboriginal Dreamtime story?
- Have students discuss any Dreamtime stories they are familiar with. Eg. “How the Birds got their Colours”, “The Rainbow Serpent” or “How the Kangaroo got its pouch”.
- What lessons can Dreamtime stories teach us?

Read an Aboriginal Dreamtime story.

- What is the meaning of that story?
- Have students do their own Aboriginal-style artwork to illustrate the story.

Have students write and illustrate their own legend inspired by a world in *Into Tordon*.

Australian Bush Poems

The written history of a country can take the form of stories, poetry or ballads. Some of the best known early Australian storytellers include Banjo Patterson, Henry Lawson and Dorothea Mackellar.

Questions and activities

- Explore a selection of Australian poems. Eg “My Country” or “The Man From Snowy River”.
- Discuss the language. What words make these stories identifiably Australian?
- Have students write a short story or poem about the Australia they live in now. Ask the: what do you love most about Australia?

Australian Folk Music

Traditional stories are also often told through music. Folk music is music handed down within communities, but which is now shared more extensively. It often tells stories of the past and is identifiably geographic.

Questions and activities

- What is Australian folk music?
- From where did much of Australia’s non-indigenous folk music originate?

Play students some traditional Australian songs.

Eg. “The Wild Colonial Boy” or “Waltzing Matilda”.

- What makes these songs identifiably Australian?
- Look at the lyrics of the song. How does the language differ from the way we speak today?
- What does the song tell you about the past?
- What instruments would you normally see in a traditional bush band?

Why not make a time capsule?

1. What is a time capsule?
2. When should future students open it?
3. What do you think will best represent life today?
4. Each student chooses one item for the capsule. It can be an object, letter or poem.
5. Decide where to store the time capsule (above ground may give it a longer life and consider air/water tight containers).

