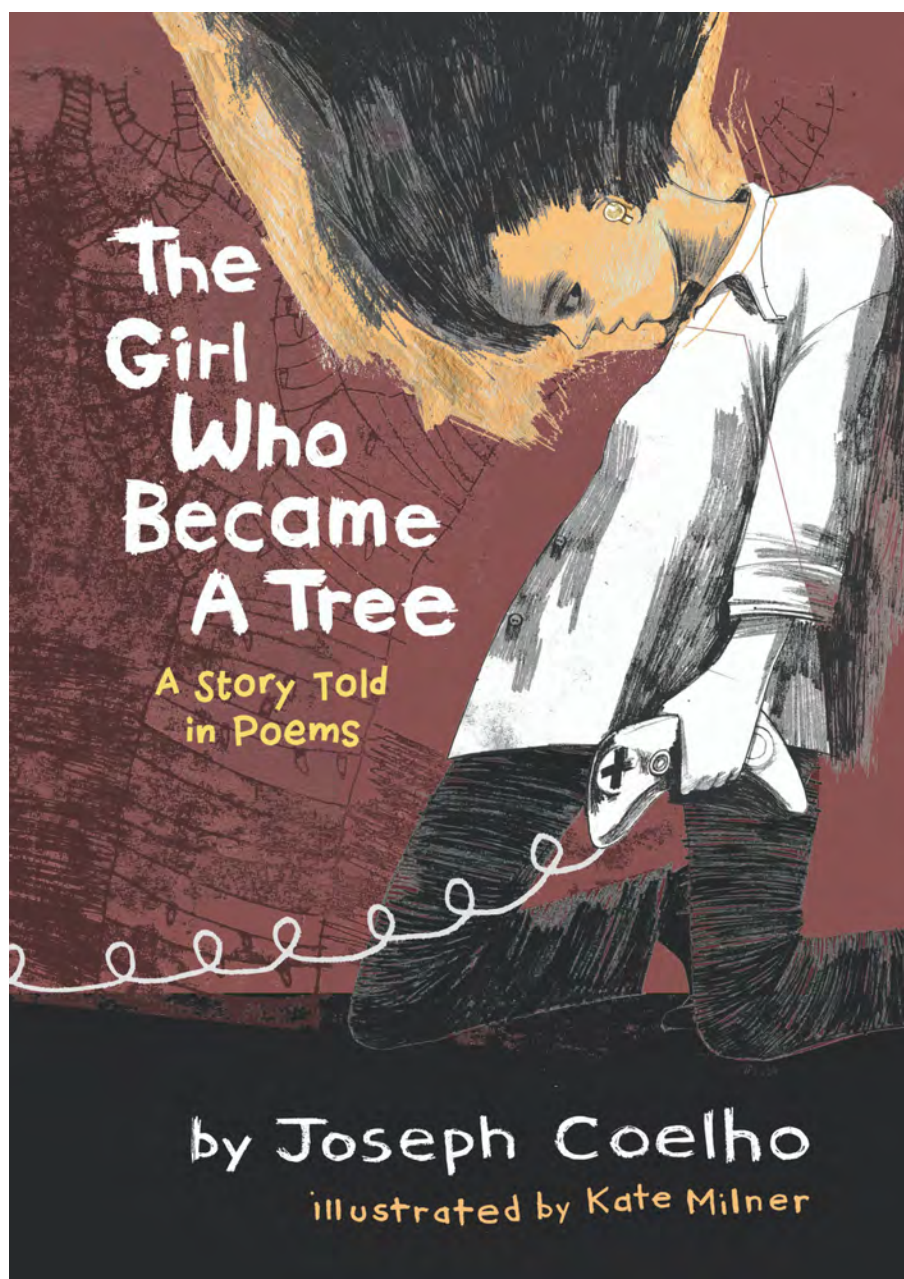


CILIP Carnegie Shortlist 2021

Shadowing Resources



The CILIP Carnegie
& Kate Greenaway
Children's Book
Awards



The Girl Who Became a Tree **by Joseph Coelho**

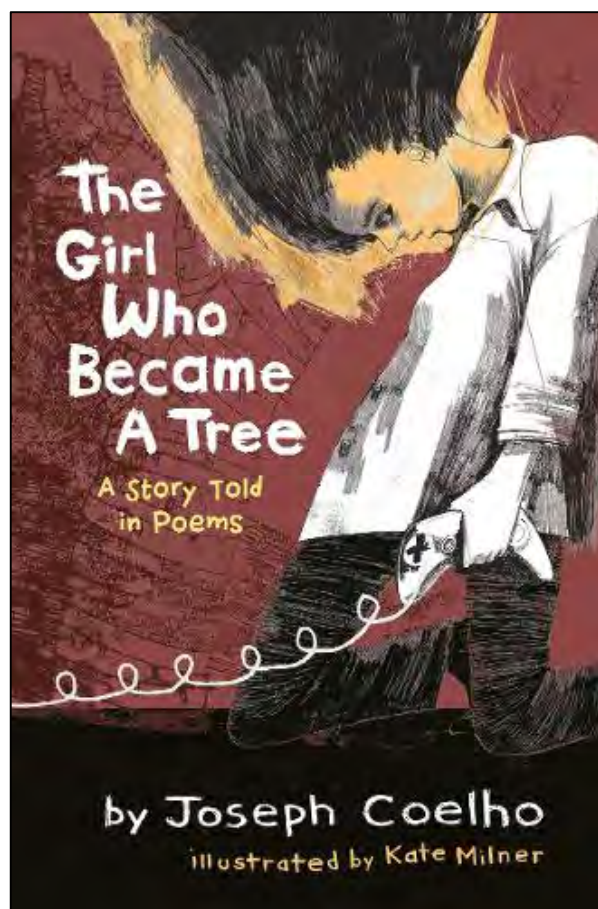
Before Reading

Making predictions

- Working on your own, in a pair, or in a small group, complete the three prediction tasks, below.
- If possible, discuss your ideas with other readers.
- Keep a note of your ideas so that you can refer back to them as you read.

The front cover

- Examine the book's front cover.
 - What do you think the book will be about?
 - What is the likely audience for the book?
 - Does it remind you of any other books? Does it make you want to pick the book up and start to read?



Looking inside the book

- Working on your own, in a pair, or in a small group, flick through the pages of the book.
- What are your thoughts about how it is set out as poetry? Have you read any other 'verse novels'? If so, which were they and what did you think of them? If not, what are your thoughts about trying one?
- What are your thoughts about the images in the book? What do they suggest about the tone of the book (how it feels)? What do they suggest might happen in the book?

A taster

- Read the extracts from the novel, below.
- Add to your ideas, questions and predictions about the novel, including what genre of story you might expect.

Extract 1

I never **really** chat to him.
I never really chat to anyone any more.
Teacher says, "You **need** to speak up,"
says, "If you need to talk to **someone**, I'm here."
But I don't need **to** do anything,
I don't want to **talk to** anyone.
The librarian always tries to talk.

Extract 2

A path wound through this towering forest,
A well-trod, well-dragged path.
A path where the grass daren't reach,
A path littered in mounds of stuff.
The columns of computer consoles,
spires of marbles, jelly-sweet monoliths,
wrapped chocolate bars forming steeples.
A temple of the outstretched arms of dolls.

Extract 3

In the corner
between fantasy and fact,
skirting myth and magic.

There's a table,
different and distinct.
An old desk for writing and reading.

During Reading

We recommend working through the novel without pausing too often, then doing some more substantial work afterwards. The novel does offer lots of opportunities to pause for reflection, particularly about the different relationships described and the issues raised.

- Keep a journal while reading, pausing to write down your reflections at various points. Where possible, have a discussion with other readers before putting your thoughts down on paper.
- You might like to pause when:
 - A new character is introduced
 - The book moves to a different setting
 - There is a twist in the plot
 - Something unexpected happens
 - You have questions about what is going on.

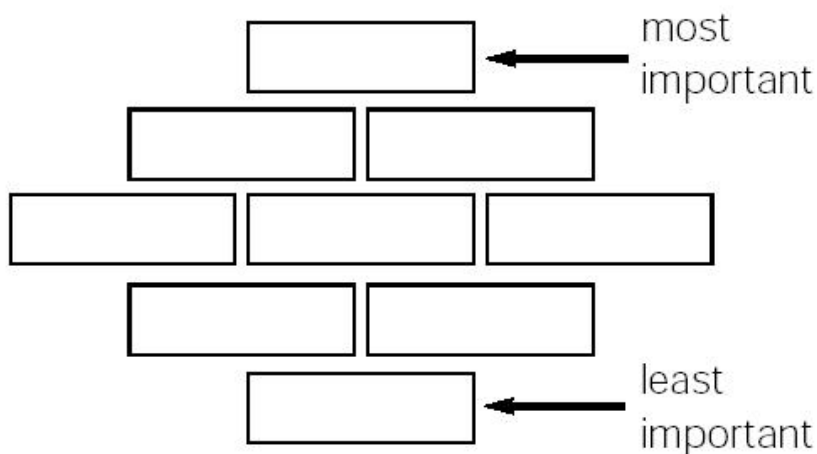
After Reading

What is the novel about?

- Below are nine suggestions for what *The Girl Who Became a Tree* is about.
- Working on your own, in a pair, or in a small group, rearrange them into a 'Diamond 9' formation, as shown below.
- If possible, compare your ideas with other readers and discuss any differences.

<i>The Girl Who Became a Tree</i> is about ...		
a girl coping with grief	how real life can be like a fantastical story	a girl growing up
the dark places that your mind can take you to	the consequences of falling out with someone	a girl's love for her father
how emotions are rooted in nature, even when our lives are full of technology	living with regret	how fathers and daughters have a very special bond

Diamond 9 pattern



A novel in verse

Do you like verse novels? Have you read lots before? Or was this the first one? The following activities will help you think about *The Girl Who Became a Tree* as a verse novel.

Is it poetry?

You will have read poems before. But are the separate sections of this book poems, or something else?

- Write down your thoughts and, if possible, share them with someone else.

Favourite 'poem'

Did any poems leap out at you as you were reading?

- Flick through the pages and find a poem that you particularly like. Write down your reasons for liking it and, if possible, share these with someone else.

Different poetic forms

Joseph Coelho draws on lots of different poetic forms to write his book. In other words, he writes different kinds of poems. This might be to do with their shape, their length, the use of verses, the relationship of different lines, the use of font and capitalisation and so on.

- Flick through the book and find as many different poetic forms as you can. See if you can find at least five.
- If possible, discuss your findings with someone else. Do you have a name for any of the poetic forms? If not, do you think Coelho is using forms familiar to other poets, or inventing forms for himself?

Writing a poem

- Have a go at writing a poem in the style of one of the examples in the book. You can try to write something that links to Daphne's story, or make up a poem entirely from your own ideas.
- How easy or difficult was this to do? What does it make you think about how Joseph Coelho's must have done to write a whole verse novel?

Borrowing from the past

The Girl Who Became a Tree references some important literature from the past. You might already be familiar with it, or it might be completely new to you. The following activities will help you think about why Joseph Coelho chose to borrow from the past.

1. Borrowing from William Blake's poetry

William Blake published 'A Poison Tree' in 1794. It is one of the most-read poems from his well-known 'Songs of Experience' collection.

- Read the poem at least twice. Write down your thoughts about how the poem connects to *The Girl Who Became a Tree*. You might like to think about emotions expressed and hidden, particularly words and phrases, and so on. If possible, share your thoughts with someone else.
- Flick through the book and see if you can find any words and phrases that come directly from Blake's poem. To get you started, you might like to look at 'Monstrous' on page 130.
- In role as Joseph Coelho, write down a few ideas about why you decided to reference 'A Poison Tree' so much in your book.

A Poison Tree

I was angry with my friend;
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
I was angry with my foe:
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I water'd it in fears,
Night & morning with my tears:
And I sunned it with smiles,
And with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night.
Till it bore an apple bright.
And my foe beheld it shine,
And he knew that it was mine.

And into my garden stole,
When the night had veil'd the pole;
In the morning glad I see;
My foe outstretched beneath the tree.

2. Borrowing from William Blake's illustration

William Blake was an illustrator as well as a poet. Here is the original illustration to 'A Poison Tree'.

- Write down your thoughts about how it is similar or different to the illustrations by Kate Milner in *The Girl Who Became a Tree*.
- Flick through the book and identify any illustrations that remind you in particular of Blake's illustration. What do they have in common?



2. Borrowing from Greek mythology

References to the story of Daphne, from Greek mythology, are scattered throughout the book. Some of the poems tell the story directly; other times the references link to the present-day story, both the 'realistic' elements in the library, and the fantastical elements, when Daphne has descended through the hole.

- Read this short explanation about the story of Daphne in Greek mythology. It is adapted from Wikipedia.

Daphne (Greek: meaning "laurel"), a minor figure in Greek mythology, is a naiad, a variety of female nymph associated with fountains, wells, springs, streams, brooks and other bodies of freshwater. She is said by ancient sources to have been a daughter of the river god Peneus and the nymph Creusa in Thessaly.

There are several versions of the myth in which Daphne appears, but the general narrative is that due to a curse made by the god Cupid, son of Venus, on the god Apollo, she became the unwilling object of the infatuation of Apollo, who chased her against her wishes. Just before being kissed by him, Daphne pleaded to her river god father for help. Her father transformed her into a laurel tree, thus foiling Apollo.

From then on Apollo developed a special reverence for laurel. At the Pythian Games which were held every four years in Delphi in honour of Apollo, a wreath of laurel was given as a prize. For this reason it later became customary to award prizes in the form of laurel wreaths to victorious generals, athletes, poets and musicians, to be worn on the head.

Below are some possible reasons why Joseph Coelho chose to draw on the Greek myth of Daphne and to call his own lead character Daphne.

- Choose one or two possible reasons that you are particularly interested in. Jot down your thoughts about them. If possible, share these with a partner.

Coelho wants to suggest that the issues facing girls growing up in the modern age are not so different from those facing girls throughout history, even those represented in myths.

Coelho wants readers to reflect on how his modern-day Daphne's life has parallels with that of the Daphne in Greek mythology.

The Greek myth story of Daphne is a useful metaphor for adolescents retreating into themselves and withdrawing from the world when they have problems. Coelho wants readers to reflect on this.

Coelho uses the Greek myth of Daphne to help readers to reflect on the relationship between people and nature.

Did something happen between Daphne and Euan that parallels what happened between Daphne and Apollo? Perhaps Coelho uses the Greek myth to help readers think about how modern-day Daphne might have been afraid of facing up to her feelings about boys.

Exploring relationships

Much of the novel centres around Daphne, However, there are several other characters who feature prominently.

- Remind yourself of the role played by each of the following characters.

Daphne's father	Euan	Apollo	Librarian
Daphne's mother	Hoc	Eros	Greek Daphne

- Draw a picture of Daphne in the middle of a large sheet of paper.
- Arrange the names of the other characters around the edge of the sheet.
- Draw lines from Daphne to the other characters. Write on the line the nature of the relationship.
- Now draw lines between other characters where relationships exist that do not involve Daphne. Write on the line the nature of the relationship.
- Finally, write a short piece on your own with the title: What the novel shows about human relationships.