

HARMLESS

JULIENNE VAN LOON

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YEAR LEVEL: Y10 TO 12

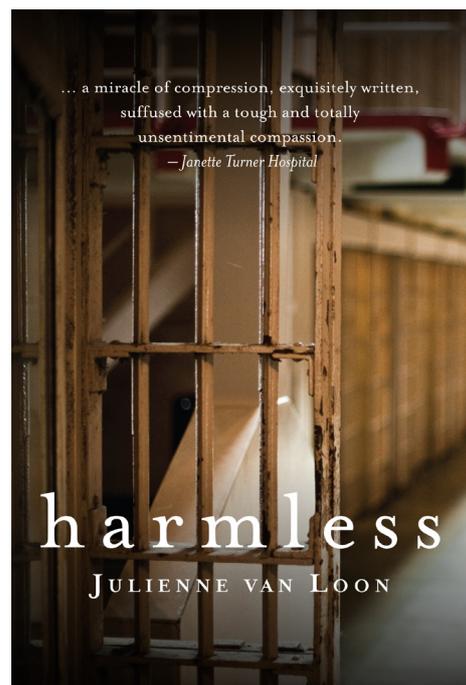
AGES: 15+

CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITY: ASIA AND AUSTRALIA'S
ENGAGEMENT WITH ASIA

About the Book

Full of suspense, *Harmless*, is the tightly woven story of eight year old Amanda, whose father is in prison, and Rattuwat, a Thai man burying his daughter in a strange land.

Abandoning their broken-down car on the way to the prison's visiting hour, Amanda and Rattuwat venture into the trackless scrub of Australia's outer suburbs. As the day heats up, the sense of menace intensifies and each of them enters the no-man's-land between safety and peril.



Australian Curriculum: English

Students engage with a variety of texts for enjoyment. They interpret, create, evaluate, discuss and perform a wide range of literary texts in which the primary purpose is aesthetic, as well as texts designed to inform and persuade. These include various types of media texts, including newspapers, film and digital texts, fiction, non-fiction, poetry, dramatic performances and multimodal texts, with themes and issues involving levels of abstraction, higher order reasoning and intertextual references.

English Year 10: Examining literature

Identify, explain and discuss how narrative viewpoint, structure, characterisation and devices including analogy and satire shape different interpretations and responses to a text (ACELT1642)

Analyse and evaluate text structures and language features of literary texts and make relevant thematic and intertextual connections with other texts (ACELT1774)

Source: *The Australian Curriculum: English v5*

Student activity

Award-winning English author Ian McEwan has described the **novella** form as being:

between 20,000 and 40,000 words, long enough for a reader to inhabit a world or a consciousness and be kept there, short enough to be read in a sitting or two and for the whole structure to be held in mind at first encounter.

Read *Harmless* and the accompanying Book Club Notes. Research the novella form. Write a short article explaining why this is a novella rather than a short story or novel.

Useful links:

- Ian McEwan is quoted in the article 'Novella is on the short side but in fine form' by Geordie Williamson in *The Australian*. Read the full article: www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/review/novella-is-on-the-short-side-but-in-fine-form/story-fn9n8gph-1226526625601#sthash.fNoilmcl.dpuf
- Book Club Notes for *Harmless* are freely available online from Fremantle Press: www.fremantlepress.com.au