

IN THE LAMPLIGHT

DIANNE WOLFER
ILLUSTRATIONS BY BRIAN SIMMONDS
ISBN (HB): 9781925591224
YEAR LEVEL: Y5–9

ABOUT THE BOOK

From fighting for the right to vote to nursing Australian soldiers, Rose's life changes forever when World War I arrives in the peaceful English village of Harefield. With an influx of wounded Australian soldiers, the villagers rally to provide care and comfort, despite suffering their own casualties and grieving for their own losses. Training to nurse Australian soldiers like Jim the Light Horse boy is hard work, but with it comes much for Rose to treasure – in the gaining of a vocation, in confidence won and in finding love in a new land. *In the Lamplight* is a companion title for *Lighthouse Girl* and *Light Horse Boy*.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dianne Wolfer is the acclaimed author of books for teenagers and young readers spanning multiple genres. Her book *Lighthouse Girl* served as inspiration for PIAF's *The Giants*, featured in events commemorating the centenary of the departure of the first AIF from Albany and has recently been adapted for the stage by Black Swan State Theatre Company. One of Dianne's picture books, *Photographs in the Mud* (set along the Kokoda Track), is used as an international peace reference and has been published in Japanese; it is also a recommended resource for the National History Curriculum. Her young adult title *Choices* has been translated into Polish.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

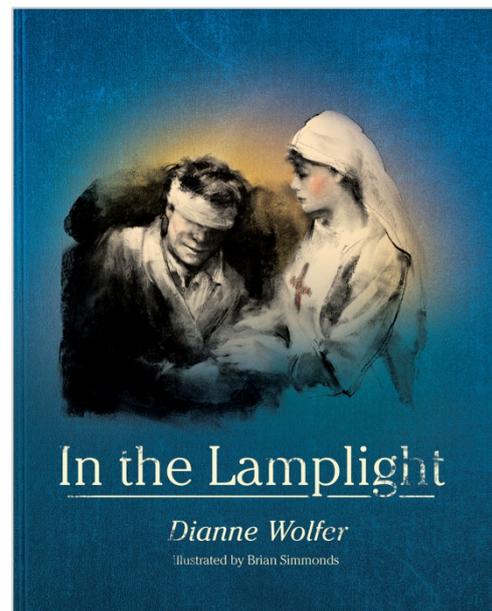
Brian Simmonds was born in Subiaco and worked for many years as a lithographer in the printing industry while studying art in the evenings. He has a Bachelor of Arts in Fine Art from Curtin University and worked for *The Sunday Times*, *New Idea* and an advertising agency before he became a professional artist in 1990. He has exhibited his work many times and won numerous prizes for drawing, oil painting and mixed media works. His work can be found in many private and public collections in Australia.

THEMES

- WWI
- The Anzacs
- WWI 100th anniversary commemorations
- The Home Front
- Patriotism
- The suffragette movement
- Changing roles of women
- Women's Land Army
- Nursing
- WWI hospitals
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Resilience
- Animal mascots
- Armistice
- Spanish Influenza
- The Soldier Settlement Scheme

AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Y5–9 English
Y5–9 History
Y5–9 Visual Art
Y5–9 Drama



USEFUL WEBSITES

- Author's website: diannewolfer.com
- Illustrator's website: www.briansimmonds.com.au
- Australian War Memorial website: www.awm.gov.au
- Australian suffragettes: www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/austn-suffragettes
- Harefield History Society: harefieldhistorysociety.webplus.net
- Harefield Junior School: www.harefield-jun.hillingdon.sch.uk/community/our-anzac-story
- St Mary's Church and Anzac cemetery: stmarys-harefield.org.uk
- Harefield Hospital: www.rbht.nhs.uk/about/our-work/history/the-history-of-harefield-hospital
- Quarantine Stations in Victoria and Western Australia: albanyregion.com.au/quaranup and nepeanhistoricalsociety.asn.au/history/quarantine-station

CLASSROOM IDEAS

Discussion questions

1. What are some of the particular challenges of writing historical fiction? Create a list of key components of historical fiction as a genre.
2. Make a list of the major characters and the secondary characters. Which ones do you feel are most believable? Which provide the most effective windows for readers to understand that era? Do you have a favourite character? Explain why.
3. This story alternates between third-person narration, Rose's first-person diary entries and letters/postcards from Alice and Jim. What is the effect of combining these points of view? How would the story be different if it were told only in the third person? Or if we had only Rose's diary? Choose one of the third-person narrative pages and retell it as a diary entry.
4. *Yesterday I reread my old diaries and barely recognised that young girl waiting to tie up her hair.* (p. 81) Compare and contrast the character Rose at the beginning and end of the book. How have her priorities, beliefs, values, ambitions, fears and personality changed? Is there a particular incident in your own life that has fundamentally changed you?
5. How are the themes of bravery, resilience and forgiveness portrayed in the book? What other themes stood out to you? What did you enjoy most about the story?
6. Consider the charcoal illustrations, black-and-white photographs and assortment of newspaper clippings, postcards, telegrams and letters in the book. What is their impact on the reader?
7. How would you describe the attitudes of the following Harefield townsfolk towards the war at the beginning and end of the story? Provide quotes to support your answers.
 - a. young men
 - b. families of recruits
 - c. society in general
8. *They say the war will be over soon, but three soldiers died today and for those brave lads it never will be.* (p. 80) What do you think Rose means by this line in her diary entry for 9th November 1918?
9. Rose criticises Charlotte for giving white feathers to men who aren't in uniform: *I don't think shaming lads is fair. I wouldn't want anyone's death on my conscience.* (p. 14) Do you agree? Or do you think Charlotte's actions are justifiable? Why do you think Rose eventually decided to forgive Charlotte?
10. What is the significance of the book's title, *In the Lamplight*?

History

1. What were some of the reasons for the outbreak of WWI?
2. Why were Jim and other Australians participating in a war so far from home?
3. Edna claims *women won't give up their jobs after the war.* (p. 10) What was the suffragette movement? How and why did gender roles change as a result of WWI?
4. Jim is part of the Light Horse Regiment – what role did they play in WWI? Why was Jim so upset to learn that the Australian warhorses would not be returned home?
5. Research WWI animal mascots. Why do you think soldiers took animals to war?
6. Chart Rose's journey from Liverpool to Melbourne by ship.
7. Rose helps Matron nurse soldiers with *trauma blindness* and *shell-shock*. Describe the causes, symptoms and treatment for these conditions during WWI. How are they treated today?

- Rose nurses patients with *trench foot* and *Spanish Influenza*. Describe the causes, symptoms and treatment for these conditions during WWI.
- Compare Australia in 1917 with Australia today, using quotes from the book to support your answer. Consider areas such as technology (communications, travel, transportation, weapons) and society (jobs, urban development, gender roles).
- Research the 1st Australian Auxiliary Hospital in Harefield, England, during 1914–1919.

Visual art

- Create a charcoal illustration in the style of Brian Simmonds. Use photographs from the Australian War Memorial website's WWI collection as inspiration.
- Research WWI cartoons, choose an historical topic and create a suitable cartoon of your own. Then design a contemporary cartoon based on a current issue.
- Look at portraits of WWI soldiers and nurses. Select one and recreate it using another technique or style such as pointillism, cubism or surrealism.
- Compare Will Longstaff's painting *Menin Gate at Midnight*, John Singer Sargent's *Crashed Aeroplane*, Otto Dix's *Stormtroops Advancing under a Gas Attack*, and George Bellows' *The Germans Arrive*. Discuss the themes and perspectives each painting conveys.
- Choose an iconic battle such as Lone Pine, Polygon Wood or Beersheba and create a WWI themed painting (you could use the above artists as inspiration).
- Research propaganda posters then design your own.
- Compare the WWI art of May Gibbs and Norman Lindsay.

Creative writing, Debate and Drama

- Write a letter to Lawrie from the point of view of Rose, describing how you feel about him joining the army.
- Research Australian suffragettes, then write a persuasive speech advocating universal suffrage.
- Choose a photograph from the text and use it as inspiration to create your own short story or play set in WWI.
- Imagine that you or someone you love has been presented with a white feather. Write this moment as a scene in a play using two or three characters, rehearse it then perform the scene for an audience.
- Choose a controversial issue relevant to war – such as conscription, taking animals to war, medical treatment of enemy wounded or war souveniring (from dead enemy soldiers or stealing national art) – and hold a public debate.
- Imagine yourself back in 1890s Australia, choose a position and debate the benefits (or not) of universal suffrage. Try to use the more formal language of that era.
- Write a paragraph from the point of view of one of the animals on pages 40, 41, 43, 57 or 90.
- Select a photograph and use it as inspiration for writing a comic strip.
- Write a diary entry from the point of view of Charlotte, Edna, Lawrie or Mam following the declaration of war. Then rewrite the same content as a third-person narrative. Read both to a partner. Talk about the differences in tone and impact.

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