

QUEENIE *in*



SEVEN MOVES



by Zanni Louise



TEACHER'S NOTES

To Queenie, home is Peachy, the little house where she's lived forever. But when she and her mum have to leave Peachy, Queenie discovers that home isn't a place at all. It's making new friends and reconnecting with old ones, letting yourself be uncomfortable, and finding the courage to share your song with the world.

Suitable for 9-12-year-olds.



MEET THE AUTHOR

Zanni Louise has been writing stories since she was little, growing up in country NSW. She now lives with her family of four in the Byron Bay hinterland.

Author of over thirty-five kids' books, Zanni writes picture books, chapter books and books for 9-12 year-olds. Queenie In Seven Moves is her first middle grade book.

Her books have been long-listed for the CBCA Awards and short-listed for the Australian Book Design Awards, Educational Publishing and Speech Pathology Award.

Persistence (Five Mile) was highly commended in the Australian Education Publishing Awards and Human-Kind was voted best picture book series by Bookstagang (2020).

Archie and the Bear (Little Hare) was chosen for the International White Ravens catalogue in 2018. Zanni's books are published in over twenty foreign territories.

Zanni teaches writing to kids and adults around Australia.



INSPIRATION BEHIND THE STORY

In the beginning of summer 2020-2021, Zanni Louise was renting a rural property in Northern NSW, surrounded by friends and family. An idyllic place!

Because of COVID, people were moving out of the city into the Northern NSW region and other country areas. Zanni's place sold within a week, which meant Zanni and her family of four had to quickly find a new home.

Unfortunately, thousands of other people were looking at the same time, so homes were scarce. Zanni had to give away her cat, Mary, to make the process easier. Hundreds of people were at every house inspection. Hundreds of new people were joining accommodation community groups every day.

Luckily, Zanni's local community reached out and offered places for Zanni and her family to stay – a shed, a downstairs apartment, a house, a tent ... They moved seven times over a summer, living from small suitcases, as simply as possible.

During this time, Zanni discovered a lot about herself. Letting go of physical possessions and expectations meant she had more space and time for writing. Being uncomfortable and in new environments opened the creativity flood gates. She and the kids were reading more, and discovering new stories.

One day, driving past her old place, Zanni felt a knot of sadness in her chest, missing the way things were, but also reflecting on the positive changes that were happening. Queenie's story emerged, chapter by chapter, until Zanni got home and rang her writing friend Kiah Thomas who told her to "write it".

So she did. She spent the next few weeks fixed to the couch, writing until the story was complete. She wanted to capture the exact moment she was writing in; the summer of 20-21. The exact feeling. Queenie is not Zanni and the moves are different from Zanni's moves but the feeling was much the same.

DISCUSSION



1. Have you ever moved house? What feelings came up for you during this time?
2. COVID impacted everyone differently. How was your family impacted by COVID?



EXERCISE

During the writing of *Queenie in Seven Moves*, Zanni discovered the meaning of home: for her, home comes with you wherever you go. This thought is comforting, Zanni finds, because even when you are in a difficult moment, you can turn to those things that bring you comfort.

What does home mean to you?
Write or draw your reflections.

DISCUSSION

1. How do people's interpretation of home differ?
2. Mostly, home is talked about as experiences and feelings, rather than a physical description. Why do you think this is?

TAKING A WIDER LOOK



With rising rent prices and a shortage of dwellings, Australia is currently experiencing a period of exceptionally low rental vacancies. At the end of last year, there was a shortage of approximately 173,000 affordable dwellings.

Over 100,000 Australians will be homeless tonight. 42% of people experiencing homelessness are under 24 years old. Over 17,845 are children under 12 years old.

EXERCISE

Conduct research into homelessness and housing issues in your local council or state. Write a brief report about the current situation.



DISCUSSION

1. How do you think it might feel to not have a home for the night, or perhaps longer?
2. Make a list of possible ways homelessness and housing issues could be addressed in Australia.



MUSIC

Queenie loves music. In the beginning, she stays home a lot listening to her favourite musician, Billie Eilish. Through the story she discovers song writing, and later, performing her own songs. You can listen to these songs on Spotify. These have been written by Zanni Louise and Gregor Hacska, sung by Jamie Lamont and produced by Brett Canning.

EXERCISE

Have a go at writing your own songs!
Read pages 27-29 to get inspiration.

DISCUSSION

1. What are your favourite singers and songs?
2. Describe your relationship to music. Is it a comfort for you, the way it is for Queenie?

SCAN THE QR CODE TO
LISTEN TO THE SONGS:



STEPPING OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE

Queenie is forced out of her comfort zone in the beginning of the story. She loves comfort, so Queenie finds this challenging. But being outside her comfort zone means Queenie starts making new friends, developing confidence to perform and stretching her creativity.

DISCUSSION

1. Can you think of a time you've had to step outside your comfort zone?
2. What good things did you discover during this time?

