THE BOOK AND BEYOND
An educator's guide for exploring children's and YA literature

AUCKLAND WRITERS FESTIVAL

Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa
NATIONAL LIBRARY
OF NEW ZEALAND

Title: Mophead Tu - The Queen's Poem   **Author(s):** Selina Tusitala Marsh   **Illustrator(s):** Selina Tusitala Marsh

The aim of The Book and Beyond is to inspire an interest and passion for books and reading. This section is for your thoughts, questions and notes about different aspects of the book and to consider how you might frame discussion with students.

The book

Physical object

- A weighty, matte hardback with title debossed on cover and spine which gives a good sensory feel.
- It is larger in size/dimension than standard novel or memoir and appears like a journal or graphic novel.
- Heavy paper stock that feels luxurious and is very white in contrast to the thick, inky print.

Design & cover

- The cover is dominated by Selina's cartoon-drawn face / wild hair (repeats from *Mophead*). There is a signature white streak in her hair.
- The brushstrokes in broad ink pen style give energy / make it striking.
- The title and subtitle label are nestled in her wild hair.
- Endpapers: front has 'Unity' poem — introduction to the ensuing story; back shows Selina's journal pages and notes.

Illustration

- A spare 3-colour palette — black and purple on white = impact.
- Purple is a colour associated with royalty, reflecting the storyline.
- Illustrations in energetic, strong line/pen strokes and are spare and simple, mixed with chaotic parts.
- The words and pictures often intertwine to add impact.
- Pages often interconnect with breaks across sections.
- Often visually comic e.g. the crown off-centre on back cover.
- Balance of space and text, styled for emphasis (e.g. p14/15, 'bullied', 'COLONIALISM').
- Some text illustrated rather than typeface.

Characters

- Selina (or Mophead) as the main character. She is curious, brave.
- Selina appears as a 'Little Moppy' character to provide thoughts and comments. In purple to explain / break down complex terms and ideas.
- A cast of characters such as the Queen, colleagues, characters that represent Pacific Island nations, Prince Harry in cameo, the Crown/Palace representative.

Plot

- Selina tells the story of being invited to write and perform the Commonwealth poem for the Queen.
- She unpacks the process of writing 'Unity', meeting the Royals, reactions from colleagues and grappling with how this positions her, and explores concepts of colonialism.
- Tusitala = storyteller.

Setting

- New Zealand currently and in the recent past.
- Features and represents some Pacific Islands.
- United Kingdom — London, the Palace and Westminster Abbey.

Theme & message

- Explores the idea of finding your place in the world, that you can be in the middle and see both sides with integrity. It explores how where you stand matters.
- Selina refers to this sequel as 'Colonialism-101 for kids'. Important concepts in this theme are broken down / explored.
- The creative process of writing and the power of poetry.

Language

- Strong visual imagery/symbolism link to the narration of events/feelings.
- Playing with the concepts of royalty and sovereignty. The Queen Bee links to her colonies = colonial.
- Lovely play on words with Tu = to stand with integrity and Two = Mophead book 2.
- Plays with rhyme, informal language, sound patterns, the make-up of words.

Mood & feeling

- Told in a narration, i.e. 'being told this' or 'read aloud', combined with the graphic, or comic image layout.
- The story is playful in tone, yet questioning and pushing through the difficulty of being made to adopt a stance / take a side.
- It is a call to understand alternate histories.

Genre & format

- A graphic memoir.
- It fits as a sub-genre of the graphic novel or non-fiction graphic novel.

The inquiry

Rich question(s)

This section is for creating and exploring questions that might guide an overall inquiry for a particular book. These questions might be inspired by ideas in the book section and/or personal responses and/or the NZ Curriculum and/or available resources.

How does understanding the past help us with creating the present and a better future?

How are stories from other times and places about me?

How do you decide where to stand on an issue?

What does it mean to belong?

How does poetry work?

Make connections

The aim of The Book and Beyond is to inspire an interest and passion for books and reading. This section is designed to help students use the book as inspiration to share, wonder, question, and explore ideas, possibilities, connections, feelings, experiences and other viewpoints — either alone or together.

Personal

Create
- Blackout poetry and visual art journal entries.
- Prompt students to look at the endpapers of the book and use the blackout poetry page for the Commonwealth Service programme. Scaffold them to create blackout poetry by repurposing old book pages.

Watch
- Book trailer for *Mophead Tu* on AUP website
- YouTube video of Selina performing the whole poem for the Queen

Explore
- Our Topic Explorer digital resources that link in to the Mophead theme of identity — Me, Myself, I

Read
- Selina's response to Amanda Gorman's Biden inauguration poem 'The Hill We Climb'

Read more

Read the next in the series
- Read the poem 'Unity' (find it in the front endpapers of the book)
- Look out for *Mophead 3*.

Read another book by the same author
- Read or re-read *Mophead*.
- Download/listen to audio of Selina performing 'Fast Talking PI' — with a background musical beat, at the New Zealand Electronic Poetry Centre NZEPC.

Read another book with the same idea/topic/genre
- Search in the library for other books on the theme of Identity.

Listen to an audio version of the book

Social (share your experience)

Share
- Set five rules for writing a poem then write your own poem.
- Swap rules with others and write a poem to their rules.

What connections can you make to yourself, other texts, the world?

Text to self

Ask students to think/share about:
- being the middle child in a family and what that means to them
- being caught in the middle in a disagreement
- being from one or many cultures, countries or families.

Text to text

Text to world

NZ Curriculum

This section is intended as a prompt for thinking about how the book might relate to the NZ Curriculum. For example, is it a story about *cultural diversity*? What *language, symbols and text* tell the story?

Learning areas		Principles		Values		Key competencies	
● English	○ Maths & Statistics	● High expectations	○ Future focus	● Excellence	○ Community & participation	● Thinking	● Relating to others
● The Arts	● Science	○ Treaty of Waitangi	● Learning to learn	● Innovation, inquiry, curiosity	● Ecological sustainability	● Using language, symbols & text	○ Participating & contributing
○ Health & PE	● Social Sciences	● Cultural diversity	○ Community engagement	● Diversity	● Integrity	○ Managing self	
● Languages	○ Technology	● Inclusion		○ Equity			