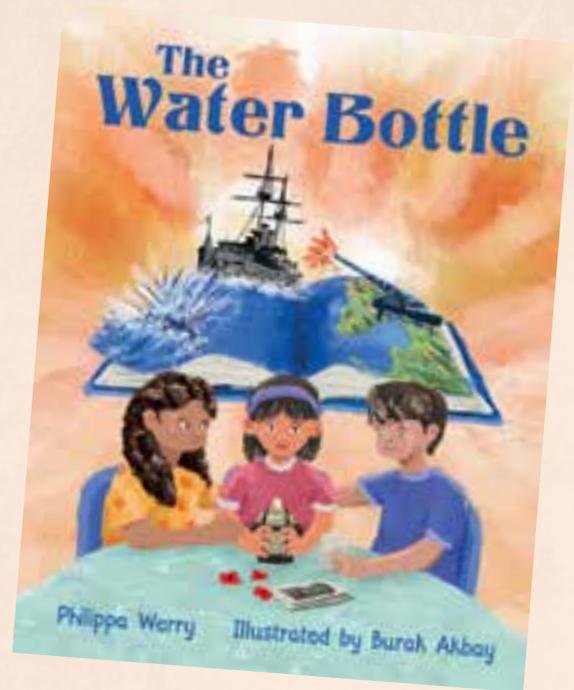


The Water Bottle

Philippa Werry

Illustrated by Burak Akbay

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Teacher Resource



'My great-great-uncle Claude went to fight in Gallipoli,' Tom says. 'That's in Turkey, isn't it?' 'We call it Gelibolu,' I tell him. 'My great-grandfather Hasan fought there too.'

The Water Bottle is the story of three children: Tom, Airini and Derya. They come from different backgrounds, but maybe their families are connected in ways they don't yet know.

Discussion

In their new home, Derya's mother unpacks their family treasures. What are your family treasures? What are your own, personal treasures? What would you hate to leave behind if you could only pack a few belongings?

Discussion continued

In a picture book, words and pictures are equally important. The illustrator brings his or her own ideas to the text. Can you see some places where the illustrator has done this in *The Water Bottle*?

Have you ever been in a situation where you didn't know anyone? How did you make friends? How do you make new people at your school or neighbourhood feel welcome?



Questions

- Derya, Tom and Airini are names from different cultures. What do you know about where your name comes from, or what it means?
- Have you ever been to an Anzac Day service? Have you been to a dawn service?
- How would you describe this story to someone who hasn't read it?
- What words would you use to describe the illustrator's style? Which is your favourite illustration? Why do you like it?
- The story is set in both the present and the past, and in two different countries. How do the writer and illustrator show you the different settings?
- What emotions did you feel at different points in the story?
- Why do you think it's meaningful that *The Water Bottle* has a New Zealand writer and a Turkish illustrator?



Activities

- 1 Tom and Airini's families have Anzac Day traditions. Derya has her own traditions, such as making up a peace song with her friends. Make up a song or poem about peace with your friends.
- 2 Write a letter home as if you are a Turkish soldier or an Anzac soldier at Gelibolu/Gallipoli.
- 3 Is there a war memorial in your local community? Visit it if you can, or try to find out what it shows and what is written on it.
- 4 Team up with someone else to write and illustrate a story together.

The story behind *The Water Bottle*

In World War I, over 100 years ago, New Zealand and Turkey fought on opposite sides. This book is about how we can show compassion even in difficult times, and how we can reconcile differences from the past.

There are several stories of Anzac and Turkish soldiers sharing food or water or rescuing each other. Some people say these are myths and that the events didn't happen, but there are examples in newspapers and diaries. The photos might be staged, but they might also be authentic, or based on things that actually happened.

'One case is told where a Turk dressed the wounds of a British soldier under fire. Another left a water-bottle with a wounded Australian. Another Australian, who was taken prisoner but escaped, states that he was very well treated.' (*Sydney Mail*, 30 June 1915)



Gallipoli Peninsula, Turkey. An Australian soldier giving a drink to a fallen Turkish soldier.

(Argus Newspaper Collection of Photographs, State Library of Victoria)

Activities for the mature and advanced reader

- Gaba Tepe at Gallipoli is now called Anzac Cove, or Anzak Koyu. Can you think of any places in New Zealand (or the world) where names have been changed, or changed back to what they were before?
- We know the story of Gallipoli from the point of view of the Anzac soldiers. This book also shows the point of view of the Turkish soldiers. Choose a well-known story or legend and retell it from the point of view of a different main character.
- 21 September is International Day of Peace. Read more about it here:
<https://www.un.org/en/observances/international-day-peace>
<https://internationaldayofpeace.org/get-involved/>
Create a private or public activity or poster for Peace Day, or related to people or communities who have worked for peace.



Background information about the Gallipoli campaign

During World War I (1914–18), thousands of young men from New Zealand and Australia went off to fight on the other side of the world. For many of them, Gallipoli was their introduction to war.

In April 1915 the war had been going for eight months, but it had come to a standstill. Russia was fighting on the side of Britain and her allies. Turkey had entered the war on the side of Germany and Austria-Hungary. The aim of the Gallipoli campaign was to open up a supply route to Russia through the Dardanelles into the Black Sea. Then Russia could attack Germany from the east.

On 25 April 1915, the first Anzac troops landed on the beaches of the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey. The plan was to capture the Peninsula, but it went wrong from the start. The soldiers landed at Gaba Tepe where the beach was narrow, the cliffs were steep and Turkish forces held the high ground. The Turkish soldiers defended their homeland with fierce determination.

The Gallipoli campaign lasted for nine months (260 days) and the allies never got further than 1–2 kilometres inland. The last troops left in December 1915.

Ironically, the evacuation was one of the successes of the campaign and few people — and not one New Zealander — died. Soldiers rigged up weapons triggered by ingenious devices, such as sand running out of a tin can, so the sound of gunfire would make the Turks think they were still present.

Thousands of men died on both sides in the Gallipoli campaign. Today, Turkish gardeners look after the Anzac cemeteries, which are very beautiful with many trees and flowers.

On Anzac Day, 25 April, we remember and honour everyone who has served or died in war. The first Anzac Day was held to commemorate the Gallipoli landings. Turkey has a special day on 18 March to commemorate a different battle. This marks Çanakkale Zaferi (Çanakkale Victory and Martyrs Commemoration Day) when the Ottoman Army stopped the English and French navies from getting through the Dardanelles on 18 March 1915, a month before the Anzac landings.

Mustafa Kemal (later named Atatürk, or Father of the Turks) became the founder of the modern Republic of Turkey, and was its first president from 1923 until his death in 1938.

