

# JANE DOE AND THE CRADLE OF ALL WORLDS

## TEACHERS NOTES

Written by Jeremy Lachlan

Published by Hardie Grant Egmont in August 2018

### SYNOPSIS

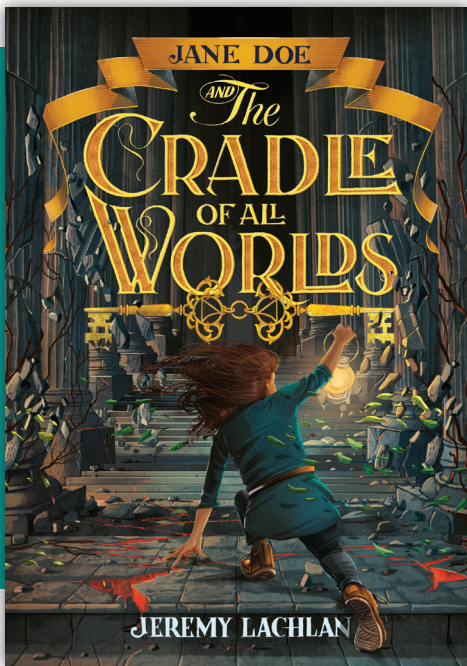
*With its towering columns and crummy stonework, the Manor looks more like an ancient ruin than anything. A gigantic gargoyle crowning the island, born of the cliffs themselves, as old as the sea and sky. Crumbling statues flank its windowless walls. Dying vines creep up its sides. For thousands of years, the people of Bluehaven worshipped it, praised it, journeyed through it to the Otherworlds, but it has stood like this – dormant, lifeless, closed to all – for well over a decade now. Fourteen years to be precise. Ever since me and Dad came to town.*

Jane Doe is all but alone in a world that hates her. Outcast from the day she and her father tumbled down the sacred steps of the Manor into Bluehaven, bringing earthquakes and destruction to the town, fourteen-year-old Jane is surrounded by people who hold her responsible for their misfortune. She and her father live in a basement owned by the Hollows, a local couple who take every opportunity to remind Jane that she is a curse upon the land. Jane's only allies are Violet, the Hollows' precocious and rebellious eight-year-old daughter; and her father, John Doe, who has been trapped, mute and unmoving, inside his own skin for as long as Jane can remember. She can feel an invisible thread connecting them, but her dad is unable to offer her any answers or comfort.

The Hollows think she's a freak, and resent her presence in their lives. The townspeople are worse: Jane is banned from entering public buildings or attending school, she is taunted and abused when she sets foot outside the house, and every year the Manor Lament marks the anniversary of her arrival (aka the Night of All Catastrophes) by burning giant effigies of Jane and her dad.

Jane doesn't know anything about her past, where she comes from, who her mother is, or whether she is truly the curse everyone believes she is. She doesn't know what giant responsibility fate has in store for her – doesn't know that everything is about to change.

But everything does change on the day of the Manor Lament, when Jane is lured from the basement by a scribbled message on the back of an old photograph of her father. It's from the Mayor of Bluehaven, Eric Atlas, who has made no secret of his deep disgust towards Jane and her dad. She knows it's probably a trap but, desperate for answers, she sneaks out of the house anyway and heads to Atlas's house. The mayor isn't there, but his son, Eric Jnr, is. Jane is trapped and afraid. She runs, too late, ending up



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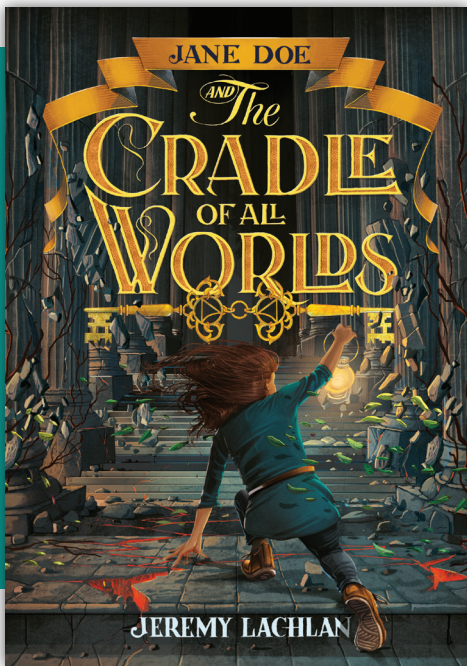
surrounded by leering fishermen on the jetty. And at the peak of Jane's fear, the jetty topples beneath her, sending her crashing into the water. Unable to swim, Jane is caught in a nightmare. The water is eerily quiet for a moment, and Jane thinks of her dad, lying in the basement at the mercy of people who hate him. Alone. Hungry. Waiting. Worrying. But then she is tugged from the water and lifted through the air. Saved. But not for long.

Jane's saviour is Winifred Robin, the strange robed explorer who has been watching Jane most of her life. She promises Jane that she's looking out for her – even as she hands her over in a cage to Mayor Atlas, who intends to offer her up as a blood sacrifice on the Sacred Stairs of the Manor during the festival. But Winifred knows more than she's letting on, and has more planned for Jane. As Mayor Atlas hauls Jane up onto the stairs, Winifred appears in the crowd with a strange hooded figure leaning heavily on her. Jane recognises the leaning stoop of her father and is overwhelmed by rage as the crowd descends into chaos. Atlas starts swinging a knife and, as she lunges to protect Violet, Jane's palm is sliced to the bone. Her hand hits the Sacred Stairs and something snaps. Jane can feel the cracks in the stone. She can feel the whole island shaking to its core.

Overwhelmed and frightened, Jane tries to run to safety with Violet, but she can't see her dad anywhere. And then she does. Jane's dad – her mute, immobile dad – is somehow scrambling up the Stairs, entering the Manor before Jane can do anything to stop him. The door closes behind him. There is nothing Jane can do.

After her dad disappears, Winifred Robin takes Jane to the Museum of Otherworldly Antiquities and shows her a second entrance to the Manor – the mysterious portal to the Otherworlds. She must follow her dad, Winifred tells her, although her fate is greater than she realises. Jane is to be the saviour of Bluehaven – of all the Otherworlds.

Time is strange inside the Manor, and it is filled with traps and surprises. It doesn't take long for Jane to feel disoriented, exhausted and alone. She is surprised when she comes across another person, Hickory, who kidnaps her, steals her boots, then saves her life. He's not a great ally, but he's the only one she's got, so Jane follows him, letting it slip that Winifred gave her a key that, so far, has opened all of the doors in the Manor. As soon as he sees it, Hickory can't tear his eyes from the key. And when she sees how much he wants it, Jane promises to give it to him – on the condition that Hickory helps her find her dad. Jane



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thinks Hickory's desperation for the key, which he hopes to use to escape from the Manor, will make him loyal. But Hickory – like Winifred, like Jane's dad, like the Manor itself – is full of secrets, and he will betray Jane more than once before their adventure is over.

Jane's quest through the Manor is epic, as she journeys over dangerous terrain with her unreliable companion. The Manor is rife with booby traps and strange creatures: ravenous dog-like Tin-skins, their eerie and dangerous masters, Leatherheads, and Spectres that paralyse people and live on their fear. But more terrifying than all of those combined is the mysterious Roth, an immortal from an Otherworld whose breath poisons the very air around him. Roth, who is hunting for Jane's dad. Roth, who is coming for Jane.

At least Jane is not alone. She has Hickory, in a way, and Violet, who appears inside the Manor six years older than the last time Jane saw her thanks to the inconsistent shifting of time within the Manor. And she finds her dad, eventually, although he too has secrets to share that Jane won't like ...

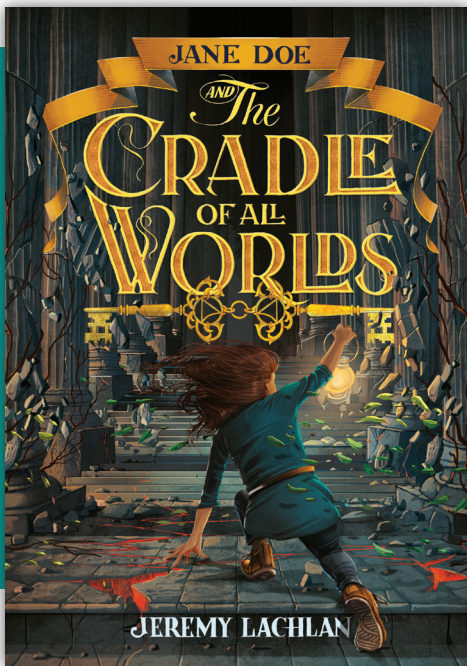
Jane Doe doesn't know who she is or where she's come from but, like it or not, she's about to find out. This is a quest of epic proportions, with beautifully imagined complex characters that defy stereotypes. Jane faces monsters, uncertain terrain and heartbreaking betrayal, and there are a great many ways for readers to explore and engage with her extraordinary journey.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Jeremy Lachlan** was born and raised in Griffith, country New South Wales, Australia. He completed his Honours degree in creative writing at the University of Canberra in 2004, and now calls Sydney home. As yet, he has won no writing prizes, but he did once take home \$100 in a karaoke competition. He's super proud of this. He came up with the idea for *Jane Doe and the Cradle of All Worlds* while lost in the Cairo Museum. It is his debut novel.







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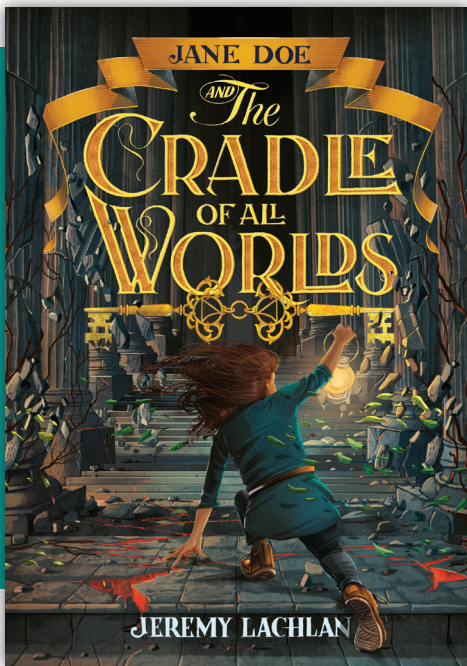
### GENERAL COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

#### Before reading the book:

- Look at the cover design of the book (consider the image, the blurb, the style of the text and the title).
- What genre do you think Jane Doe and the Cradle of All Worlds is?
- What makes you think this?
- What do you expect from books in this genre?
- What kind of ending do you predict?
- What do you know about the name 'Jane Doe'? What does this name tell you about the protagonist? Do you think she will be a hero? Why/why not?
- The opening quote from the book reads as follows:  
*'One cannot map these hallowed grounds.  
This is a place between places, and a deadly  
one at that. Adventurers beware: only the  
worthy may pass between worlds.'* — Arundhati Riggs and the Colossal Door  
Do you think this quote is from a real or fictional person? What makes you think this?
- What does the quote tell you about the book?
- Does it fit with the predictions you made based on the front cover?

#### As you're reading the book:

- What do we learn about Winifred from the prologue?
- What does Winifred find in the chamber? Why is it meaningful?
- What techniques does the author use to develop suspense?
- What does the prologue tell us about what will follow?
- Why did the Hollows take Jane and her father in? Why do they believe that she's a curse?
- What is important to Jane? What do you think her dad's afraid of?
- What risks does Jane take to follow the instructions on the back of the photograph?



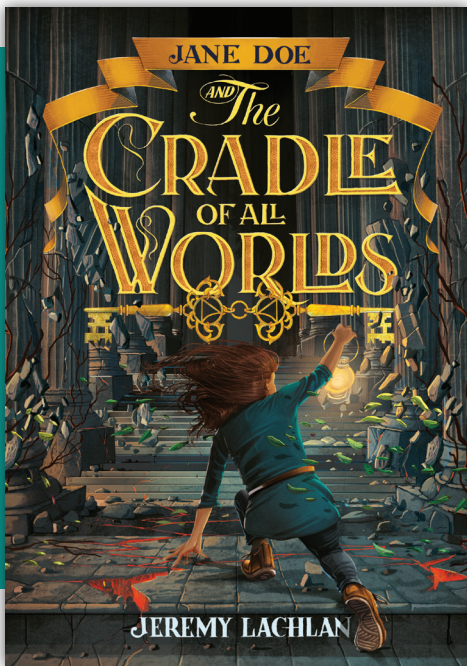
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- What are the Three Laws of the Manor? What do you think they mean?
- What have Jane and her dad done to deserve having effigies of them burnt in the town square?
- What is wrong with Jane's dad?
- Does anybody know where Jane and her dad came from? If not, where have the stories about them come from? Have you ever been the subject or a rumour, or started one about someone else? How did that make you feel?
- How do you think Jane feels when she is cornered on the jetty? Do you think she expects to be saved? Who saves her? Why?
- What do you know about blood sacrifices? What were they traditionally used for? What does Mayor Atlas believe his sacrifice will achieve?
- What is the meaning of the word 'outcast'? Is Jane the only outcast in the story? What do you think it feels like to be an outcast?
- What kind of things do you think Mayor Atlas says to the crowd to 'stir them up' (p65)? Is he being honest or manipulative?
- When Jane talks to Violet in the cart (p67), what does she say about the festival? What does she want to say? Why doesn't she say this?
- How do you think Jane feels when her dad runs up the stairs?
- Who caused the earthquake?
- What does Winifred tell Jane about her destiny? Does she tell her everything? Why/why not?
- How does Jane feel about undertaking a quest? What convinces her to go?
- How many gateways are there to the Manor? Who can access them?
- What does it mean when Jane discovers snow in the Manor? (p124)
- How is the phrase 'forward is the only way' used throughout the book? What does it mean?
- Why might John Doe (Jane's dad) have wanted Winifred to keep the key to the Manor a secret? Why is the key the '*kind of treasure people would kill for*' (p129)?
- What rules does Jane come up with for exploring the Manor? Are they good rules? Are there any you would add? What is the reason for each rule?
- What are Otherworlds? Are they the same as Bluehaven?



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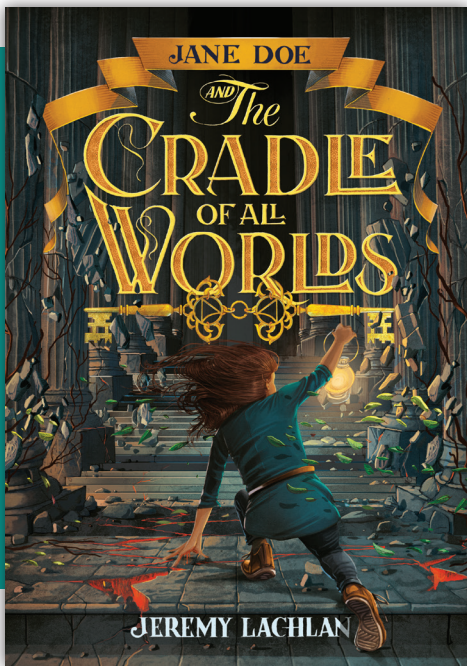
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- What is the fortress? Who lives there?
- Why does Jane think forgetting Bluehaven might be a good thing? What makes her change her mind?
- Hickory says '*Manor gives life*' (p154). Is this a good thing or a bad thing? What does it mean for Hickory? How does Hickory know that something is wrong with the Manor?
- What do memories give us? Why are they important? What happens to our sense of identity when we lose them?
- How does Jane learn that Hickory is betraying her? Does she truly believe in his betrayal?

### After reading the book:

- *Jane Doe and the Cradle of All Worlds* is the first book in a series. Based on the first book, what are your predictions for the rest of the series?
- What questions do you have from the first book that still need answering? Do you have any guesses about the answers?
- Discuss the cliffhanger ending. Why do you think authors use a cliffhanger? Are there any negatives to leaving a story with a cliffhanger? What was your response to the ending?



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### THEMES

The themes of this book are explored in a number of complex ways, although many are common to novels that follow a quest. Some of these themes are: courage/bravery; family; loyalty/betrayal; destiny; heroism; fear.

Choose one or more of the above themes, and find an example in the book (beyond the examples provided below) that explores the theme(s).

- Who is involved?
- How does it relate to the theme? What insight does this example give you into some element of the story?

#### **Courage/bravery:**

*'...You have suffered, oh yes, but this suffering has made you strong – far stronger than you realise.'* (p98)

#### **Family:**

*'To you, Eric, he is nothing. To Jane, on the other hand, he is everything.'*

*She pulls back the hood, and the invisible thread tugs again, pulling my insides so hard I almost pass out.'* (p70)

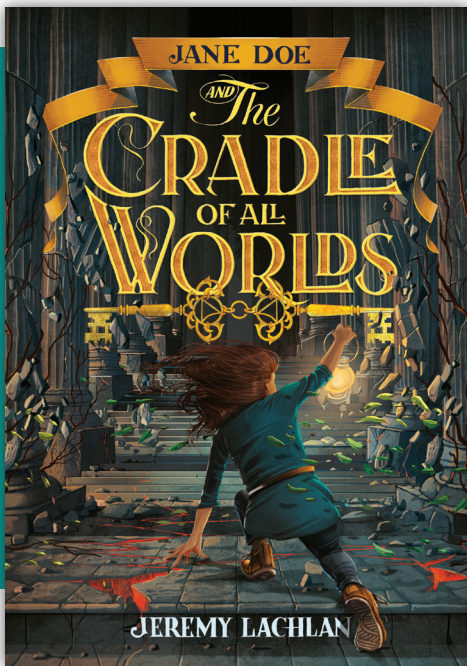
- How is family used as the catalyst for the story?
- Who is Jane's family?
- Is family important? Can heroes undertake a quest when they have a happy family?

#### **Loyalty/betrayal:**

*'Honour's one of the few things I have left.' He steps around me. 'I'm helping you because I said I would.'* (p183)

- Is honour truly important to Hickory?
- Can you be honourable and still betray someone?





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### Destiny:

*But then the pain begins to fade. The spasms ease. I stop fighting, overcome by an irresistible sense of calm. So this is what it's like to drown. (p379)*

### Heroism:

*'Most importantly, you are alive, Ms Doe, and seeing as though the future of Bluehaven now rests upon your shoulders, that is a very fine thing indeed.' (p98)*

- Is heroism a choice?
- Is there more than one hero in the story?
- What do you think it takes to be a hero?

### Fear:

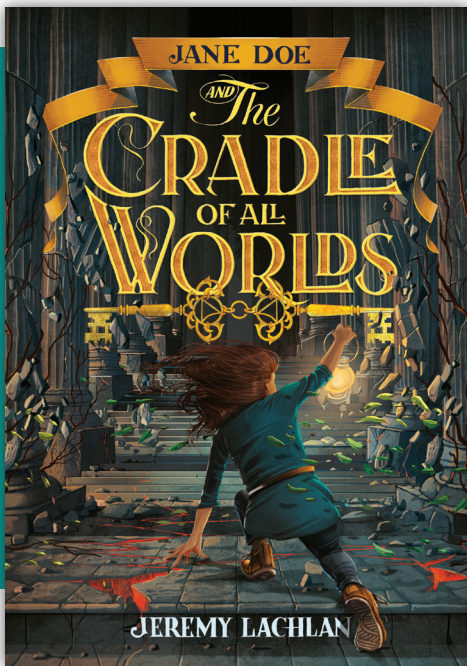
*I plunge into the water, swallowed by darkness.*

*Let go, a voice whispers. A woman's voice. Mum's voice, I can feel it.*

*I cry out to her. Water fills my lungs. I'm choking, drowning, and then —  
(p172)*

- Where do Jane's nightmares take place?
- Why do you think they frighten her so much?
- What is significant about them?
- What is the connection between the Spectre and fear?
- What are you afraid of?
- Has fear ever helped you? How?
- What do you think Jane is most afraid of? What about Winifred?
- Write a letter to your greatest fear as if you're speaking to your best friend.
  - What new insight does this provide into your fear?
  - How might your fear become the starting point for a new story?





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### CHARACTERS

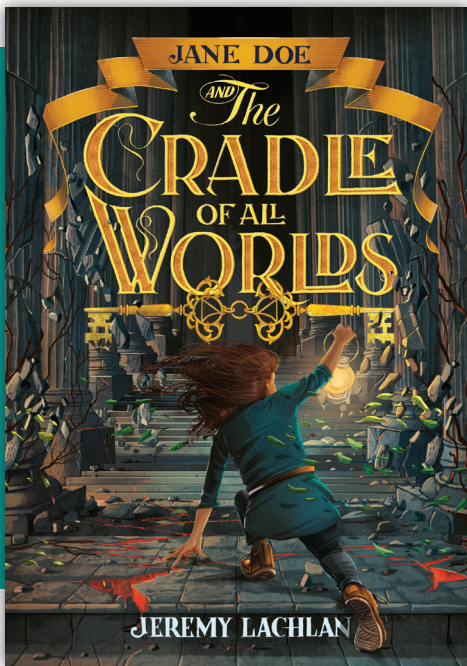
This novel contains many memorable and complex characters. Choose one (or more) characters and explore their traits and personalities based on the questions below.

#### Jane

*Sure, I wish he'd snap out of it and steal me away from this place, but wishes are dangerous, distracting things. This is our life. Always has been, probably always will be. At least, that's what I used to believe.*

*Now I'm not so sure. (p14)*

- What does Jane wish for?
- Is she brave?
- What does Jane know about herself? Does she want to know more? How do you know this?
- Jane has a tendency to describe others using animal qualities. For example, Mrs Hollow is a 'six-foot-tall praying mantis on the edge of a nervous breakdown' (p10). Her husband, Bertram is 'a little weasel of a man' (p11). Later, Hickory is described as having the qualities of a wild animal.
  - What does describing characters in this way do?
  - Are these descriptions purely physical, or do they offer additional insight into the characters?
  - What other kind of similies could you use to develop a character?
  - Come up with some similies to describe two or three people you know (be nice!).
- Jane describes herself as having 'street smarts' (p30).
  - What are 'street smarts'?
  - Are they something you learn, or are you born with them?
  - Are they useful?
  - What kinds of things might you know if you're 'street smart'?
- Winifred tells Jane that once she enters the Manor, her destiny will become clear (p106).
- If what she says is true, though, maybe the puppet strings have been there all along. Maybe everything really has been building to this.
  - Does destiny mean that you have no control over your life?



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- Do you think Jane feels in control at this moment?
- Who or what is she being controlled by?
- Once she knows her destiny, what is Jane's responsibility to others? Does she owe them any action or explanation? What if she just decided to walk away?

### Winifred

*The old woman in red, Winifred bloody Robin, who stalks me from the shadows nearly every time, walking when I walk, stopping when I stop, vanishing the few times I've doubled back to tell her off. (p19)*

- What is the difference between the Winifred we meet in the prologue, vs the Winifred described in this paragraph?
- Who do you think Winifred is looking out for? Is it Jane?
- How important is Winifred to the story?
- How do you feel when she is reintroduced after the prologue?
- Do you think Winifred is a threat to Jane?

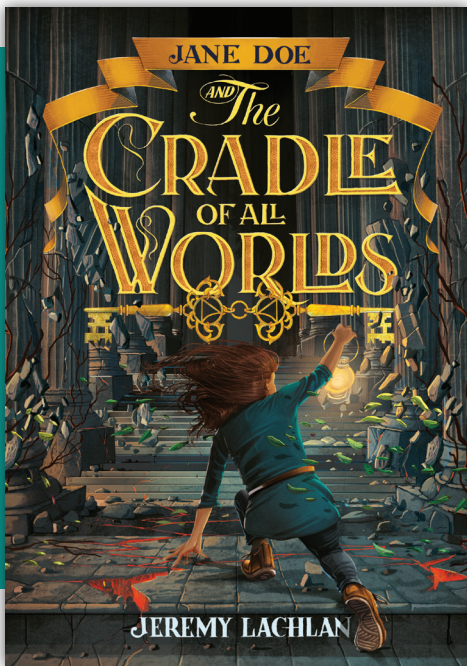
### Violet

*Bless her little boots. She hacks away at the rope around my hands, chewing on her tongue. She always chews on her tongue when she concentrates. Her parents hate it. Actually, they seem to hate everything about her. Maybe they love her deep down, but they never show it. Truth is, they've resented her ever since she became friends with the girl in the basement. (p49–50)*

- Why do you think Violet became friends with Jane?
- What does she see in her?
- Why don't her parents like her? What do you think about her?

*She will tell the girl she will not see Jane for a very long time, but her role in this tale is far from over. Her training shall begin at once. (p115)*

- What is Violet's role in the tale?
- What training does she need to undertake? Who will train her?



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*I reckon she's about my age. I can see bits of dark hair beneath her scarf. She doesn't look frightened at all. Wary, yes, but not scared. And her eyes really are flat out — (p207)*

- Who is Jane referring to in this description?
- Why doesn't she recognise her?
- How has the dynamic between Jane and Violet shifted since they last saw each other? How long ago was that?

### Hickory

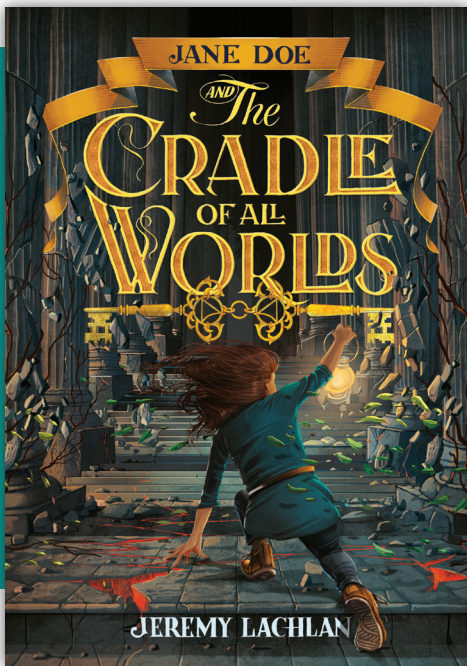
*A raggedy pair of boots. A man standing over me with an empty black bag in his gloved hands. I can't see his face, just a scarf and pair of goggles. I can't cry out, can't run, can't move. Not even when he reaches down and slips the black bag over my head. (p130)*

- What are your first impressions of Hickory?
- Is he a friend or foe?
- What does he do that makes Jane trust him? Is she right to trust him?
- What do you think Hickory is afraid of?
- Jane and Hickory have a number of things in common, in terms of lost identity and loneliness. Both have lost a sense of where they come from, and have found anchors to keep them going.
- What are Hickory's anchors?
- Is he trustworthy?
- How is he similar and different to Jane?

*Even though I've always felt alone, I guess I never was. Not as alone as Hickory. Hell, I've finally met someone worse off than me. (p167)*

- Is Hickory truly worse off than Jane? Why?
- How does Jane describe Hickory? Do her descriptions change over the course of the book?
- How do you think Hickory would describe himself?
- How might others describe him?





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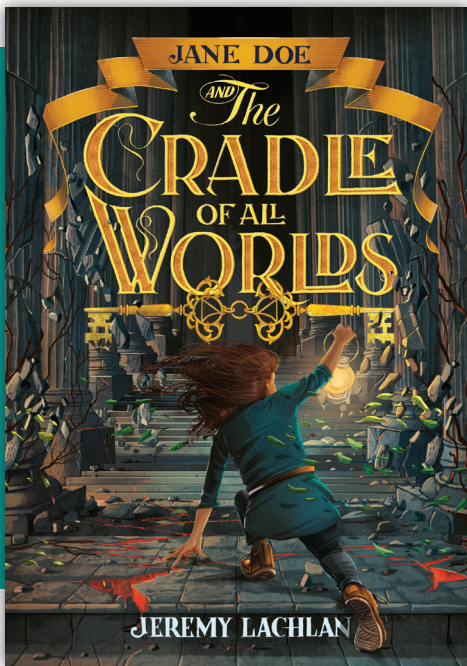
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- What has the Manor taken from Hickory?
- Who is the 'real' Hickory?

### Character archetypes

Character archetypes are typically found in narratives that follow the 'hero's journey' structure. You can find out more about these ideas here (<https://mythcreants.com/blog/the-eight-character-archetypes-of-the-heros-journey/>). Character archetypes are not stereotypes – they don't tell us who the character is, they tell us what their role is in the story. Characters can take the role of more than one archetype. The eight character archetypes found in the hero's journey are:

- The hero – the hero is the protagonist of the story, who leaves their home and journeys through unfamiliar terrain, saving the day.
  - The mentor – the mentor helps the hero learn the rules of the unfamiliar terrain, and teaches them survival skills.
  - The ally – the ally is the friend of the hero who helps them survive their quest.
  - The herald – the herald sets the hero's journey in motion, and signals towards the challenges that they will face.
  - The trickster – often exists for humor, but also operates as a pathway for alternative insight into the story.
  - The shapeshifter – the shapeshifter is a questionable ally. At times they are onside with the hero, and at times they unexpectedly betray the hero's trust.
  - The guardian – the guardian blocks the way of the hero at a crucial point in the story. Defeating or besting them in some way allows the hero to prove their worth before saving the day.
  - The shadow – the shadow is the villain, but also offers some insight into/reflection of the dark side of our hero.
- 
- What roles do each of the characters in Jane Doe and the Cradle of All Worlds play?
  - What is the difference between an archetype and a stereotype?



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- What stereotypes can you think of that these archetypes often fall into?
- How does the author avoid these stereotypes and write characters that are complex and surprising?
- If Jane is the hero of the story, what other heroes can you think of? How is Jane similar to these heroes? How is she different?
- Choose another quest story, and come up with a list of archetypal characters – how are these roles filled in similar and different ways to Jane Doe?
- What does Jane's role in the story tell you about what is likely to happen to her?

### ACTIVITY:

Using the following prompts, write a character profile:

What is their name?

What age are they?

What are they most afraid of?

What do they want?

Where do they come from?

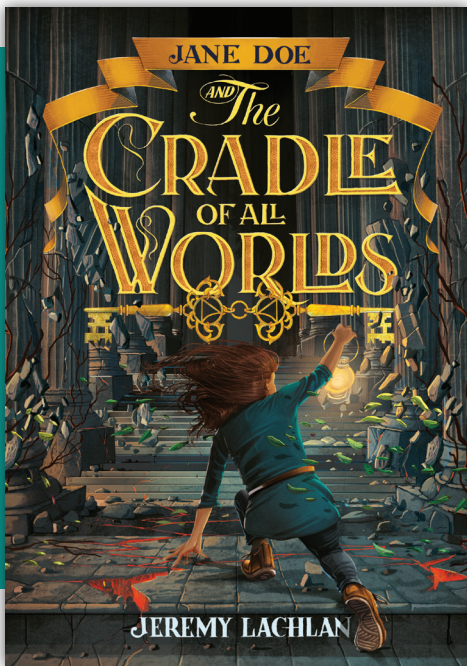
Who is important to them?

What is their role in the story?

### SETTING

*The island of Bluehaven is riddled with abandoned mines and passages, but this one has sat here in secret for thousands of years, sealed off from the world. (p2)*

*Bluehaven's a hole. A crumbling mess of ramshackle houses and dead-end alleyways sandwiched together all the way around the rocky shore of the island. Wooden beams support bulging walls and sagging eaves. Potholes mar the narrow streets. The quakes have taken their toll. (p18)*



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- What details tell you that this is not our world?
- How is the description of Bluehaven different in the prologue than in Jane's description?
- Is Jane's description reliable? Why/why not?

The Manor is one of the major settings in the book, but it is unpredictable and constantly changing.

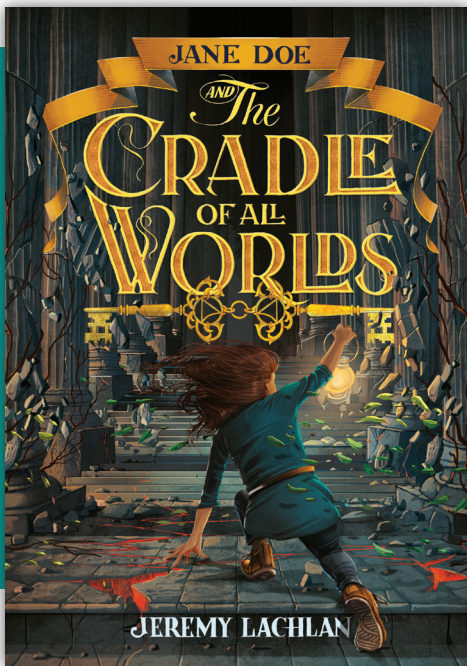
*'The gateway could take you anywhere within the Manor. Nobody has even come close to exploring it all — to do so would be impossible, for it simply has no end — but I have seen more than most.' Winifred gazes down at the hole, gets all nostalgic on me. 'You will see, Jane. An infinite number of corridors and chambers intertwined. The walls themselves buzzing, so vibrant, as if the stone itself were alive. In each new room a mystery. A surprise around every corner. So many secrets waiting to be uncovered. So many new worlds to find.'* (p109)

- What is the Manor? What is your response to it?
- What dangers do you think might be inside?
- Why might the Manor be filled with devices whose only purpose is to kill?
- What kind of traits do you think make a person worthy to pass between the worlds?
- Is the Manor an evil place?
- Is the Manor more like a setting or a character? How does it behave like each?

Writers often use physical settings to set a mood, or to create an emotional setting for a piece. What emotions are brought out or created by the following paragraph?

*It's cramped and musty in the catacombs. The ceiling's so low Winifred almost has to duck when we step out from behind a heavy tapestry hiding a secret passage door. To our left, a wall lined with flickering torches. To our right, dozens of shadowy archways. Tombs filled with stone-carved coffins and statues of strange winged creatures. I shudder.* (p107)





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- What mood is created by this paragraph? What elements does the author describe to create this mood?
- How are light and dark used?
- What physical objects help to set the emotional tone?
- What other elements could you use to create an emotional setting for a piece?

### STRUCTURE

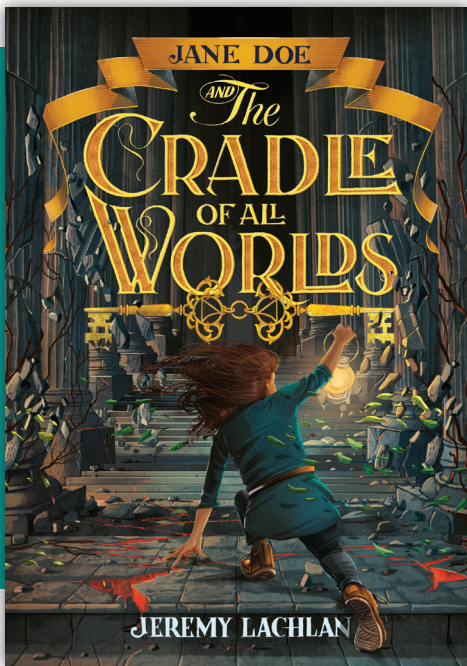
The book starts with a title page that reads *'This is not the beginning.'*

- What does this suggest about the story?
- How important are chapter headings to you? What do they add to the story?
- What is the 'right' place to start a story? Is there only one? What happens to a story when we start it in an unexpected place?

*Her lantern chases shadows through the dark. Cobwebs tear at her fingertips; spiders flee. She runs a hand over the stone wall of the tunnel and breathes in deep, savouring the damp, the dirt, the unknown. She has missed this. People call her an old relic, but they are fools. Winifred Robin is one of the Great Adventurers. She may be old, but her story is far from complete. Tonight, something has changed. She intends to find out what, and why. (p1)*

In class, have a discussion about the role of an opening paragraph.

- What should the opening paragraph of a story do?
- What information should we learn in an opening paragraph? Should writers just tell us? How do they give us this information instead?
- What does the phrase 'show don't tell' mean?
- What do you learn from the opening paragraph (above)? Think about:
  - place
  - character
  - the story



# JANE DOE AND THE CRADLE OF ALL WORLDS

## TEACHERS NOTES

Written by Jeremy Lachlan

Published by Hardie Grant Egmont in August 2018

*I'm in trouble again. Occupational hazard when you're known as the Cursed One, the Unwanted, the Bringer of Bad Juju, a Djinn. Bad weather, spoiled crops, missing pets – I always cop the blame. I don't have a clue what I've done this time. All I know is, Mrs Hollow's performing another cleansing ritual at the top of the basement stairs, spitting on the landing, flapping a sprig of thyme. Muttering things like 'repugnant abomination' and 'catastrophic blemish of unfathomable proportions' under her breath. (p9)*

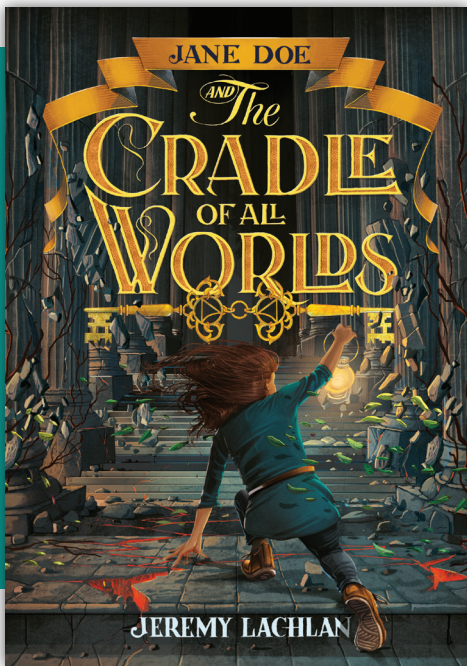
- How is the opening to chapter one different from the opening of the prologue?
- Who is telling the story?
- What perspective is being used?
- What information is provided in this opening piece? What, combined with the earlier information, does it tell us about the story? Is there any conflict or tension between the two?

### ACTIVITY:

What did you do yesterday? Write down as much as you can remember, ordering your narrative from the time you woke up to the time you went to sleep. (If you did absolutely nothing at all yesterday you can choose another day, but choose one that's recent enough that you can remember plenty of details).

Break your piece up into scenes (you could do this by breaking them up into times, or into specific events, but keep them in chronological order).

- Is your piece interesting? Are you interested from the very beginning?
- Choose the scene from your day that you found most interesting, and rewrite the piece beginning with this moment instead. Does this change make your piece more interesting? Does it make you see the story differently? What other changes do you want to make?
- If you were to use this as a starting point for a short story, what would it be about? Who would be in it?



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### ESSAY TOPICS

- Destiny provides a pre-set pathway for individuals that cannot be changed. Discuss, with reference to the text.
- People are either all good or all bad. Discuss, with close reference to one of the characters from the text.
- The hero's journey provides a framework for a quest story. Does this mean that there is no room for imagination or surprise? Discuss, with reference to the text.
- Discuss the ways that setting can be used to create an emotional mood, with reference to the text.