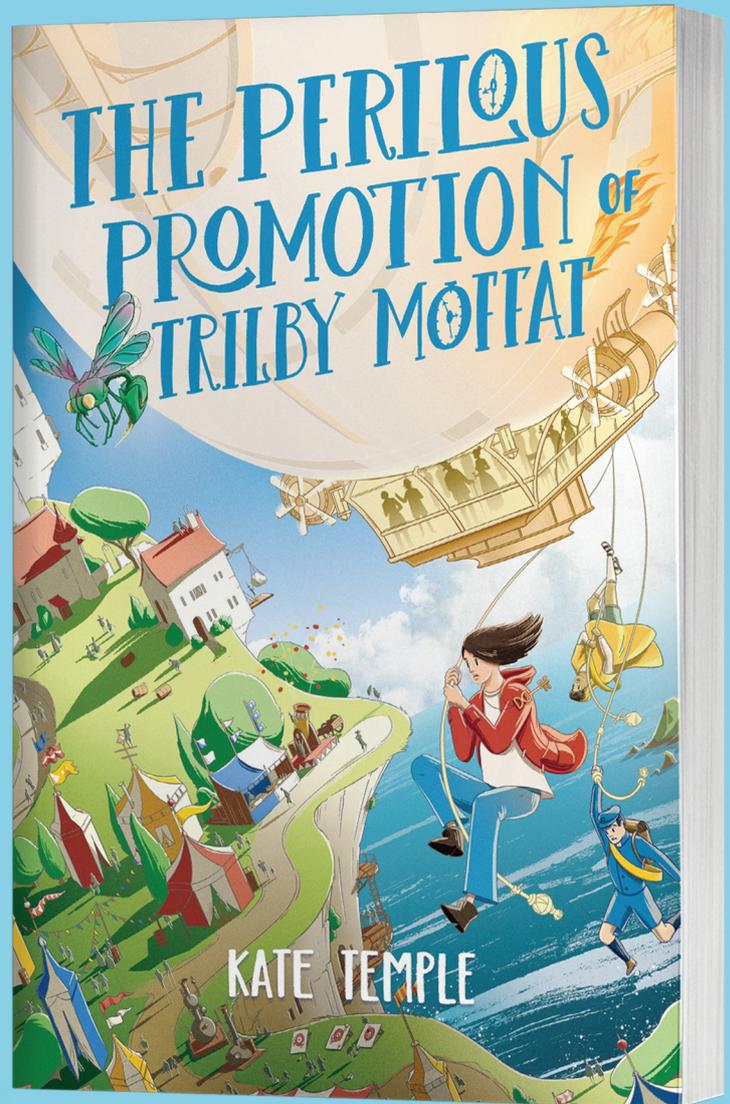
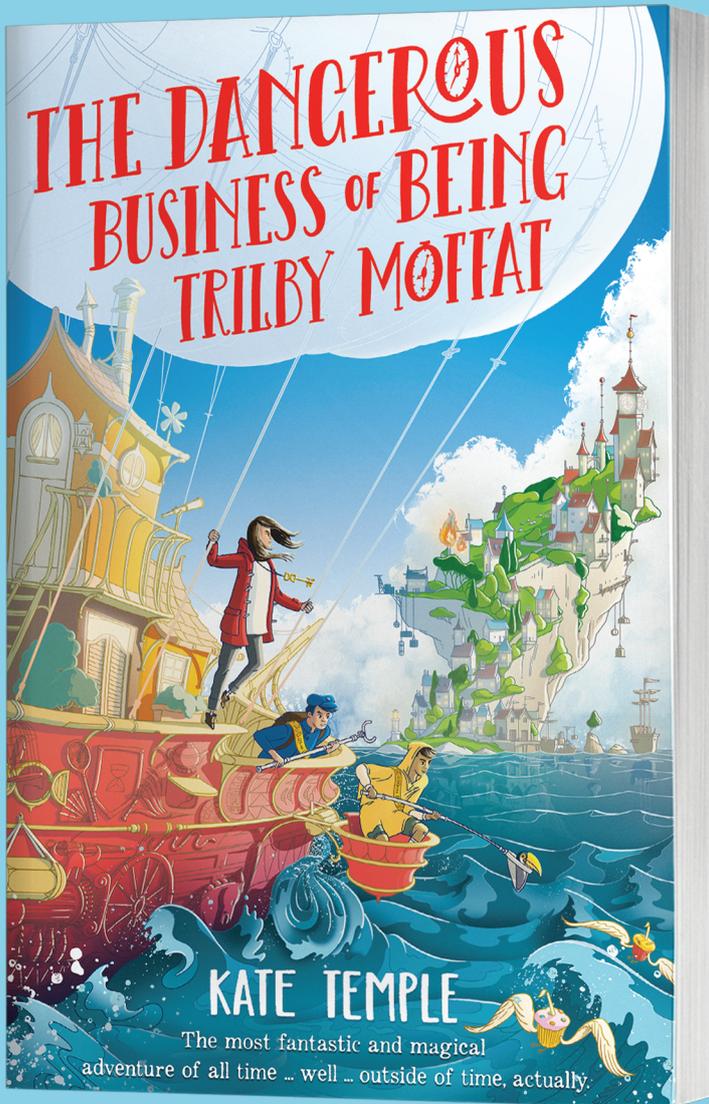


THE TRILBY MOFFAT SERIES

KATE TEMPLE



TEACHERS RESOURCES

THE TRILBY MOFFAT SERIES

KATE TEMPLE

Teachers Resources by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

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INTRODUCTION

This series tells the dangerous story of Trilby Moffat, who took on one of the most treacherous jobs of all time. Well . . . outside of time, to be precise. Fans of the Nevermoor and A Series of Unfortunate Events series will also love the Trilby Moffat series.

TITLE SUMMARIES

BOOK 1 THE DANGEROUS BUSINESS OF BEING TRILBY MOFFAT

‘This is a legal document. If you know anything at all about the law (which I do), you will know that notation is everything. Once something is written down, it becomes evidence . . . and evidence can be a very dangerous thing in the right hands.’ (p 5)

This is the dangerous story of Trilby Moffat, who took on one of the most treacherous jobs of all time. Well . . . outside of time, to be precise. Fans of the Nevermoor and A Series of Unfortunate Events series will love this series.

A mystery illness is making people speak ancient languages and bake old-fashioned cakes. It is because of this strange illness that Trilby Moffat and her mother find themselves sitting on a train.

Behind them are a number of things they will never see again, including a comfortable home, Trilby’s school, a regular job and all the people they consider friends. Ahead of them is a surprise relative, an unusual inheritance, an opportunity that will never be repeated and a man in a top hat who will try to kill Trilby . . . more than once.

This is the story of how Trilby Moffat flees to a fabulous island where time doesn’t exist and is accidentally promoted to one of the most important jobs of all time. The job of Time Keeper.

This is the dangerous business of being Trilby Moffat.

Warning: this book contains a truly ridiculous number of delicious cakes, a herd of rude cats, a ramshackle gang of kids, and a dangerous organisation determined to spoil things for everyone, even you.

BOOK 2 THE PERILOUS PROMOTION OF TRILBY MOFFAT

Trilby Moffat is looking forward to sitting down with a big slice of lemon cake and a crossword puzzle. But the job of Time Keeper is never done and the future has other plans for Trilby . . . perilous plans.

In grave danger, again, Trilby returns to the secret Island Between Time to search for her missing mother. A strange festival is about to take place and travellers from all over time are arriving to shop at its treasure markets, eat floating cupcakes and participate in a ludicrously fatal race.

But when innocent people start disappearing, Trilby and her friends must uncover what’s really going on . . . and try to find the mysterious cloaked figure who is showing up in all the wrong places.

Friendships will be tested. Loyalty will be stretched to the limit. And a skittish prehistoric bird named Anton will destroy Trilby's favourite jumper.

JUST WHEN TRILBY THINKS TIME IS ON HER SIDE, A PERILOUS PROMOTION COULD CHANGE EVERYTHING

BEFORE & AFTER READING THE NOVEL

- Examine the cover of *The Dangerous Business of Being Trilby Moffat*, the first novel in this series. What does it suggest about the novel's themes?
- After you have read the novel, examine the cover again: what does it suggest to you now?
- After you have read Book 1, *The Dangerous Business of Being Trilby Moffat*, read reviews and articles about the novel and use the notes below to further examine the text.
- Then read Book 2, *The Perilous Promotion of Trilby Moffat*, and answer the same questions.

THEMES & CURRICULUM TOPICS

Several themes relevant to curriculum topics (Humanities and Social Sciences [HASS], English Language and Literacy and Visual Literacy) might be identified in this series:

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (HASS)

Several themes and topics are relevant to the following Curriculum Area:

<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/humanities-and-social-sciences/hass/>>

LOST OR ABANDONED CHILD

BOOK 1

Key Quote:

"You're a child. A very wonderful child, but a child can't be alone with a sleeping mother for months or years. You know what would happen."

'They'd put you in a hospital and take me away,' said Trilby robotically. It was a line she'd heard her mother say too many times.

'Exactly. We couldn't let that happen. We need somewhere safe to stay while I get better. And I will get better. You do believe that, don't you, darling?' said Arwen, holding her daughter's hand tightly.' (Book 1, Ch 2, p 20)

Discussion Point: The idea of a child being left to embark on adventures and solve mysteries is a common narrative convention in children's literature. Not only does Trilby's mother succumb to a sleeping sickness but her great-great aunt Thumbelina Mince suddenly dies leaving her to confront the evil Mr Colin on her own. How does Trilby cope? What skills does she possess? Who assists her in her journey?

BOOK 2

Key Quote:

She couldn't help but think: these children were never supposed to meet. They came from times and places that would never collide. Yet they had become a family.

'So you were all just stolen out of your times, from your homes and your families?' said

Trilby, interrupting their noisy conversation. The children stopped and looked at Trilby. 'You don't understand!' exclaimed Maisy. 'It saved our lives,' she said, clasping Trilby firmly on the leg with her little hand.

'We all nearly died, in awful horrible ways,' said Koji. (Book 2, Ch 9, pp79)

Discussion Point: These children are unusually lost, not geographically, but 'lost in time'. Mr Colin 'rescued' them for his own nefarious purposes but also saved them from the historical events they were confronting. What might the challenges be should you find yourself lost in time?

COMING OF AGE & RITE OF PASSAGE

BOOK 1

Key Quote:

'How was she going to be able to help the children find the treasure and fix the Passage of Time when she was always running? Running away. Running for safety. Running for her life. Then it occurred to her . . . Perhaps that was the problem. Perhaps it was time to stop running.' (Book 1, Ch 17, p 149)

Discussion Point: As in most stories for young people Trilby develops new confidence in grappling with challenges in this novel. How does she change in the course of the narrative?

BOOK 2

Key Quote:

She was not going to perish alone. She wasn't going to perish at all. (Book 2, Ch 22, p174)

Discussion Point: Trilby faces not only the challenges posed by her enemies but also the doubts in her abilities expressed by some of her friends such as Maisy. How important is self-confidence in facing challenges as we grow up?

BUREAUCRACY

BOOK 1

Key Quote:

'I'm the Night Manager and I work for the Office of the Ministry of the Board of the Department of the Appropriate Division for the Committee of the Commission for the Corporation of the Agency of Association for Managers Administering Time. Otherwise simply known as O.M.B.D.A.D.C.C.C.A.A.M.A.T.' (Book 1, Ch 5, p 49)

Discussion Point: This novel parodies the workings of bureaucracy and the actions of managers such as Mr Colin:

'An induction, my dear, dim child is an official introduction. It involves pamphlets and handbooks and lots of little boring talks, usually in a room with a whiteboard and sometimes with little sticky-notes. It will be lovely.' (Book 1, Ch 14, p 124)

Humour is employed to satirise bureaucratic processes in this novel, for example, when 'Shut up Brian' speaks to Trilby at the Department of Box Maintenance:

"I was promoted,' he said flatly. 'Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to wander off without explanation.'" (Book 1, Ch 21, p 179)

The obligatory safety drill is also satirised:

“ATTENTION EVERYONE. Umm . . . This is a safety drill? All employees should exit the building in a . . . hysterical manner. BEEP BEEP.”

‘Oh, shut up, Brian!’ said Mr Colin from the top of the stairs, but it was too late. Doors from all directions flung open. Workers from various departments flooded the stairwell. Black hats everywhere. Bodies jammed in between the children and the sorters.’ (Book 1, Ch 23, p 190)

BOOK 2

Key Quote:

‘You’re here for Time Harvest Con of course,’ said Momo.

‘We don’t even know what that is,’ said Trilby.

‘Neither do we,’ said Momo, shrugging. ‘We’ve never had one before, but those paper pushers on the Isle of Administration said we’re having one, so, we’re having one.’

‘They make the rules!’ yelled the man up the ladder, who was now a bit tangled in the banner. (Book 2, Ch 7, p59)

Discussion Point: The street parade at Time Harvest Con includes a satirical list of floats assigned to different government departments with outlandish and meaningless purposes. (Book 2, Ch 18, pp 155–6) This parade again satirises the workings of bureaucracies in which sometimes purely announcing a purpose, no matter how ridiculous it might be, seems to be the goal of those employed.

Discussion Point: What are your thoughts on bureaucracy after reading this series?

TIME AND MEMORIES

BOOK 1

Key Quote:

‘It’s not *where* they came from, it’s *when*.’ (Book 1, Ch 10, p 88)

Discussion Point: What does this series suggest about time and memory?

BOOK 2

Key Quote:

Despite there being absolutely no time on the island, the children who had remained at the guild had missed their friends terribly. Now, many of you clever folk will take issue with that. After all, the Island Between Time has no time, and perhaps you believe you need time to miss someone, for the heart to become strained from not being with the people you love. This is false. It is possible to miss someone instantly. It is even possible to miss someone before they have even left. It has nothing to do with time. (Book 2, Ch 8, p67)

Discussion Point: Discuss the meaning of this quote.

Discussion Point: The children who join Trilby on this quest have all come from dangerous historical moments in history. For example, Koji remembers the bomb being dropped on Hiroshima on his birthday:

It was 6 August 1945. Monday. As the taste of cake filled his mouth, he seemed to slip through time. He felt a gentle breeze on his face. He could smell the muddy flats of the Ōta River that ran by his home. Koji sat on a timber veranda tying his black school shoes. He stopped, looked up. His ears were filled with the whirring engine of a single enemy plane flying across Hiroshima’s clear morning sky. There was a sickening calmness. The squeaking metal wheels of his brother’s tricycle coming to a stop. Fresh washing waving

on the clothesline. Then a horrifying white flash. Unbearable heat. Time stood still.

All the moments, all the voices, all the stories in the city converged, becoming one silent second that seemed to last forever. Everything was white. Everything disintegrating. (Book 2, Ch 15, pp 127–8)

Discuss this passage and how it evokes a moment in time so vividly.

EXTINCTION

BOOK 1

Key Quote:

. . . while it might come as a great surprise to you that this book is narrated in precise detail by a marsupial that has been extinct since 1936, it was less surprising to Trilby. (Book 1, Ch 5, p 47)

Discussion Point: What do you know about the extinction of the thylacine? Explore this topic further.

BOOK 2

Key Quote:

If you have never heard of a time hoop, you are not alone. Few have. I must admit, I had no idea what one was until I found myself tangled in its golden netting. I recall the concrete floor of my zoo enclosure, icy from the chill of a long Tasmanian winter. The webbing of the time hoop radiated warmth as it slapped down over my fur. It was 7 September 1936.

Some trivia enthusiasts may recognise this as the day the last known thylacine is said to have died in captivity, after which my species was declared extinct. But I prefer to think of it as the day the last known thylacine embarked on a sparkling and rewarding legal career. If you'd like to know more about my fascinating story, you'll have to wait. This is not that book. (Book 2, Ch 9, pp 76-77)

Discussion Point: Benjamin the narrator is an extinct thylacine. How does the theme of extinction relate to the novel's exploration of time?

VALUES

Key Quote:

'Trilby Moffat was a survivor, and she could swim, so she did.' (Book 1, Ch 9, p 73)

Discussion Point: Duty, self-sacrifice, bravery, honesty and empathy are all values shown in this series. Invite student to locate quotes in the series which illustrate any of these values.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

This is relevant to the following Curriculum Area:

<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/english/>>

Study the writing style employed in this series, and examine the following sub-topics:

NARRATIVE PERSON, NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE & TENSE

Discussion Point: This series is written in third person, past tense with Benjamin the thylacine as the narrator. How might it have been different had Trilby written it in first person?

(Note: A narrator is someone 'who tells a story. In a work of fiction the narrator determines the story's point of view. If the narrator is a full participant in the story's action, the narrative is said to be in the first person. A story told by a narrator who is not a character in the story is a third-person narrative.' ['Narrator', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, <<https://www.britannica.com/art/narrator>>])

Discussion Point:

Now you may be wondering how I am able to recant the details of the terrible mess that is to follow – after all, I was not on the boat. The short answer is: it is my job to know these things. I am the narrator. If you would like the long answer, you will need many more hours and a marshmallow cupcake or seven. (Book 1, Ch 8, p 66)

This is an example of metafiction wherein the narrator is discussing his role and limitations as a narrator. How does his self-reflection engage the reader's attention?

Discussion Point:

But perhaps you are wondering what any of this chair business has to do with the story. Perhaps you are thinking that stories don't start with prattle about chairs. Stories start with a nice beginning. Then they have a middle bit, and finally a happy ending of some sort, usually involving a boy on a bicycle named Horace Sidebottom. Well, there are no bicycles here, and certainly no one called Horace Sidebottom. If that's what you're after, you're in the wrong book. Let me remind you: this is not a bedtime story. It's not a story at all. This is a *legal* document. And that chair is not for parlour games, it's a murder weapon. Why does any of this matter? (Book 2, Ch 1, p 6)

This is another example of metafiction where the narrator is ironically questioning the conventions of a well-planned or structured story. Discuss metafiction or self-reflective writing with students. There are many examples of such texts, also in picture book format, such as *The Stinky Cheeseman and Other Fairly Stupid Tales* by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith (Viking, 1992) and many later titles. [See **Bibliography** for sources on metafiction.]

GENRE

Discussion Point: This series is an example of fantasy and magical realism in which reality and fantasy collide and overlap.

Discussion Point: Detail in fantasy helps to create a convincing secondary world. Arcane details regarding several subjects are mentioned throughout the book, for example,

Food:

'olden-day treats like bleeding eel or sparrow's feet' (Book 1, Ch 1, p 7);

'a flamingo-tongue pie' (Book 1, Ch 1, p 11);

'a jellyfish pie.' (Book 1, Ch 2, p 16);

'It's Smelt Pie! Little fishies, raw egg and sea nettle. Very popular in ancient Rome.'

(Book 1, Ch 2, pp 24–5)

‘What *are* those delicious looking cakes?’ asked Trilby, pointing to the cupcakes that bobbed in the air.

‘Hickories,’ said Brian. ‘Made specially for Time Harvest Con.’

‘But how are they floating?’ asked Trilby, craning her neck to look underneath them. There were no strings attached, the little cakes were levitating.

‘They have a special ingredient,’ said Brian.

‘Time,’ said Koji. (Book 2, Ch 14, p 124)

Places: Lost in Time Antiques on Nowhere Else Pier (p 14) and the Island Between Time. What other details made this world come alive for you?

Time:

‘Just imagine the problems you get when Donkey Kong pops up in Ancient Egypt or a prehistoric megalodon eats a jet ski. It’s a disaster.’ ... They didn’t know how to preserve time treasure, and more and more of it kept washing up. All these precious treasures were slipping out of time and disrupting everything in time. So, it was decided there needed to be a guild whose job it was to look after all these treasures, preserve them, restore them and put them back in the Passage of Time so that everything runs smoothly.’

‘Why you?’ said Trilby, taking a forkful of cheesecake. ‘I mean, you’re just kids,’ she added, through a mouthful of cake.

‘I guess there was a lot to learn, several lifetimes worth, so it makes sense for it to be children.’

‘And children can squeeze into tiny places and climb rope ladders,’ said Xipil. ‘They learn new stuff better,’ said Werner.

‘They’re not stuck in their ways,’ added Beatie. ‘And they don’t hold long boring arguments that go forever,’ said Maisy.

‘So, all the usual reasons kids are better than adults,’ said Trilby. The children all nodded.’ (Book 2, Ch 9, p 77)

Discussion Point: **Narrative Conventions** of fantasy (or mythic dimensions) include, for example,

Hero Invested with Special Powers: Trilby was an ‘ordinary’ girl until she was thrust into the role of heroine when her great-great aunt Thumbelina dies and leaves her to take on the mantle of Time Keeper.

Turning Point: ‘This moment is known as a fork in the road.’ (Book 1, Ch 7, p 63) Read the rest of this paragraph (Book 1, Ch 7, p 63) and discuss what it says about this particular narrative convention.

Quest: The Time Guild’s role is ‘to protect the Passage of Time’ (Book 1, Ch 11, pp 97–8) but they haven’t been doing that well and need Trilby’s assistance as the Time Keeper to help them to do their job better.

Clues: This was exactly where Trilby Moffat wanted to be. To be precise, she wanted to be between the letterboxes marked B and C. (Book 1, Ch 20, p 172)

‘*Little Bo Peep. You’ve already lost one sheep.*

Stay out or you’ll lose them all.’ (Book 2, Ch 2, p 19)

Mr Colin reveals that Arwen was meant to be the Time Keeper (Book 2, Ch 20, p 163)

Logic of Secondary World:

‘I have not approved any fires. Any fire here is unauthorised, unofficial and without permit. Therefore, it doesn’t exist.’

‘It might be unauthorised, but it’s happening!’

‘Is it, though? Think about it with your little bird brain . . . what does a fire need to survive? Oxygen, something delicious to burn like an Edwardian timber mantelpiece or an ancient oak tree, and one more thing . . . do you know what it is?’

Trilby shook her head.

‘Time. A fire cannot burn without time.’ (Book 1, Ch 19, p 161)

Time and Space Overlap: On the Island Between Time no time passes at all. ‘It was incredible to think that all these places, all these times, existed simultaneously – islands floating on the sea of time.’ (Book 1, Ch 20, p 172)

Discussion Point: What other narrative conventions of fantasy did you observe in this novel? [See for example, Jane Mobley’s ‘Toward a Definition of Fantasy Fiction’ in Bator, Robert, *Signposts to Criticism of Children’s Literature*, Chicago, ALA, 1983, pp 249–260.]

SYMBOLISM

Discussion Point: What symbolism did you notice in this series?

LITERARY DEVICES

Discussion Point: Literary devices can contribute to meaning in evocative ways. Read this passage and identify the forms of literary device which contribute to its meaning:

In Trilby’s hands the object hovered and danced. It smelled like warm rocky mountains and riding your bike down a country lane on an autumn afternoon. It felt like bedtime stories, reading in the bath and her mother’s smooth hands. It was balmy and light and, under that dark heavy coat, it transported Trilby to a far-away place that was foreign, but which she instantly understood completely. She was filled with a knowledge that felt old and also new – green like the shoots of spring leaves on an ancient tree. (Book 1, Ch 22, pp 183– 4)

Activity: Find examples of literary devices used in this series and fill in the table below.

Simile	<p>His heart was beating like a thousand bouncy balls on a trampoline. (Book 2, Ch 4, p 33)</p> <p>As the cat barge weaved through the tiny islets that surrounded the islands like broken biscuit crumbs. . . (Book 2, Ch 5, p 55)</p>
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<p>Metaphors</p>	<p>It was enough to make anyone lose their mind, but Trilby held her secret tightly, and that knowledge poked holes in the monotony, and through those holes the sun shone. (Book 1, Ch 21, p 175)</p> <p>Without facts, we are at the mercy of the elements. Facts are our umbrella in the acid rain. (Book 2, Ch 1, p 6)</p> <p>The sea below was a pool of ink (Book 2, Ch 23, p176)</p>
<p>Personification</p>	
<p>Other</p>	

Discussion Point: Discuss the meaning and relevance of the aphorisms which appear in this book, for example,

As I often say, a frog without a cigar is just a toad in fine trousers. (Book 1, Ch 3, p 29)

'It's like the old saying, if a tree falls in a wood and no one hears it, did it really fall?' (Book 1, Ch 7, p 62)

'If you love your job, you'll never work a day in your life.' *'Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the job.'* *'Make each day your masterpiece.'* *'The most powerful thing on earth is the human soul on fire.'* (Book 1, Ch 15, p 128)

As the old saying goes, a frog in pyjamas is worth two in the soup. (Book 2, Ch 12, p 104)

'Keep your friends close and your enemies closer.' (Book 2, Ch 12, p 102)

'No point running around like headless chooks.' (Book 2, Ch 14, p 122)

Discussion Point:

'Alphabetically? That would make no sense. No, no. These are organised by mood. If you want a book that makes you feel timid, that's over here.' Thumbelina pointed to a high shelf. 'If you want to feel swanky, look over here. Books to make you feel infuriated are there, and books to make you flummoxed are down here, right next to books that will

bamboozle. See?’

Trilby did see, and in a way, it made sense. (Book 1, Ch 3, p 33)

Discuss with students the idea of organising a library by mood. Try to classify a range of your favourite books by mood.

Discussion Point: Book 1 is filled with examples of Trilby’s obsession with crosswords, such as:

‘Valuable!’ balked Mr Colin.

‘Yes, you know, like, important, significant, prized or cherished,’ said Trilby, exercising her love of thinking in crossword clues. (Book 1, Ch 7, p 60)

Neither did Trilby, it was not her life that flashed before her eyes but crossword clues. Kick: boot, punt, hit with foot, strike with foot. Float: bob, drift, glide, tread water, parade display, moving exhibit, carnival sight. Breath: exhalation, blow, wheeze, aspiration, respiration, essence of life, what swimmers run out of. Rescue: liberate, save, set free, remove from danger, free from harm, pet shelter for destitute dogs. (Book 1, Ch 9, p 73)

Trilby had purpose. Amongst religious folk, this is known as ‘a calling’. On the sports field, they call it ‘motivation’, and we in the legal profession know it as ‘intent’, an unwavering desire to commit one single act. In this case, Trilby’s intent was to find that treasure. (Book 1, Ch 13, p 109)

Discuss the meaning of some of the words in these quotes and come up with your own synonyms.

Activity: In both books, each chapter title contains a crossword clue. Invite students to complete these crosswords. In Book 1, the answers are on page 217. In Book 2, they are on p 223.

Discussion Point: Word play can be fun, for example,

‘Are you *sure* you came from the *shore*? You seem *unsure* and *un-shore* is about as far away from the shore as you can get!’ said Koji. (Book 1, Ch 9, p 77)

Now, Trilby Moffat knew a lot of words – far more than most people. She could tell you when to take your jentacular, or where to catch a funicular, or how many eggs you’ll get if you ask for a quire, or where to put your Biedermeier, but she could not tell you what *maximise efficiency* meant.

‘What does that even mean?’ (Book 1, Ch 14, p 126)

‘Except for one small issue. You see, Mr Colin, in all the laws of time, there is one small clause.’

Now for those of you unfamiliar with the legal term ‘clause’, it does not refer to my razor-sharp ‘claws’, nor to the Christmas fellow who may or may not throw presents at children after invading their homes. A clause is an exception . . . it is the ‘but’ in a promise.

I continued. ‘A Time Keeper can’t work for *anyone*. So as long as Trilby Moffat is the Time Keeper, she cannot work for you.’

Mr Colin smacked the contract in anger.

‘You really should read the fine print, Mr Colin,’ said Trilby. (Book 1, Ch 24, pp 203–4)

‘Mr Colin, *Manager of Utterly Ridiculously Delightful Experiences, Right!*

‘You know that stands for M.U.R.D.E.R?’ said Trilby calmly.

‘Coincidence!’ shouted Mr Colin.’ (Book 2, Ch 11, pp 95–96)

What other examples of word play did you observe in this series?

Discussion Point: Benjamin refers to ‘A nuisance of fluffy white cats’ (Book 1, Ch 13, p 119). What other *collective nouns* for cats are there? Brainstorm collective nouns for other animals as well. [See **Bibliography.**]

HUMOUR

Activity: Identify different types of humour in the series. Add more quotes/examples to the table below.

<p>Sarcasm</p>	<p>Have you ever been chased to the brink of extinction? I have, and I can tell you, it's not as fun as it sounds. Survival is a terrible drag. (Book 1, Ch 24, p 196)</p>
<p>Irony</p>	<p>‘That’s because they’re working! If you want to talk, you go stand by the water cooler . . . everyone knows that. You’ll find it over there, near the tearoom.’ (Book 1, Ch 20, p 169)</p> <p>Life is never easy for an extinct animal. (Book 2, Ch 4, p 31)</p> <p>‘Someone’s trading a roly-poly?’ said Trilby, looking down the list. ‘That’s when you roll down a hill at top speed, right?’</p> <p>‘Yep. So right now, that knowledge is gone from time,’ said Koji. ‘No more roly-polys.’</p> <p>‘So children will walk by a big grass hill and not even think to lie down and roll like a high-speed sausage?’ said Trilby.</p> <p>‘It won’t even cross their minds. It won’t exist. It won’t be in stories, it won’t be in songs, no one will ever mention it, think about or do it!’ said Claudia. (Book 2, Ch 25, p 200)</p>
<p>Exaggeration</p>	<p>Trilby watched the water intently, the way a lost rabbit watches a game of beach volleyball – bewildered and in need of a snack. (Book 1, Ch 10, p 83)</p> <p>Shortly after, four children dressed in dark cloaks and black pilgrim’s hats with mesh brims that obscured their faces and made them look like they belonged to a sect of medieval beekeepers exited the guild. They carried two black balloons and were followed by an extinct bird. Nothing suspicious here! (Book 2, Ch 24, pp 187-188)</p>

Black Humour	Thumbelina's death is treated with black humour (Book 1, Ch 4, pp 38–39).
Satire	'Shut up, Brian!' 'We really can't demote him far enough, can we?' said Mr Colin, shaking his head and pointing to the lanyard which hung around Brian's neck, it read <i>Assistant to the Assistant to the Assistant of Someone Much More Important</i> . (Book 2, Ch 11, p 93)
Other	On this particular day, she wore denim jeans and a red woollen jumper. (It's not important, but for those of you who are interested, the wool was spun from a mammoth that had died some 11,000 years earlier. Fabulously soft. If you have the chance, do pick one up.) (Book 2, Ch 1, p 9)

STRUCTURE

The structure of a story can be analysed in terms of key narrative features used to engage the reader's attention and to shape the work:

- a) The map on the inside front cover of Book 1 outlines the journey which Trilby is about to embark upon and also the places in history from which the Time Guild children have escaped.
- b) In Book 1, p iv, there are three quotes which you might wish to discuss with students. They set the tone for some of the issues discussed later in the series.
- c) The Prologue to Book 1 (pp 1–3) opens with a significant incident which is repeated later in the novel. (Book 1, Ch 19, pp 157–62)

The Prologue to Book 2 (pp 1–3) is also revisited later in the novel. (Book 2, Ch 20, pp 161–7)

- d) Strong beginnings and endings to chapters are one way of structuring a narrative, for example:
Beginning: 'I've seen this door before!' exclaimed Trilby. (Book 1, Ch 12, p 100)
Ending: 'This tiny, cold, wet girl is Trilby Moffat. She's the new Time Keeper. She's here to save us!' (Book 1, Ch 10, p 91)

Beginning: A book that starts with a cliffhanger! How exciting – and rare. (Book 2, Ch 1, p 5)
Ending: But the moment of relief was shattered, just like the glass dome that broke into a thousand pieces behind them. (Book 2, Ch 4, p 51)

Which other opening or closing sentence was particularly gripping, in your opinion?

e) Suspense is the key to any narrative's structure. What elements of suspense were used in this series?

f) The open ending of each novel invites the reader to expect a sequel.

SETTING

Discussion Point: Description in setting can be evoked via a complex range of literary devices. The first time the reader views Lost in Time Antiques it is described in Book 1, as follows:

Next to the pier was a large wooden house sitting in a carpet of bright green moss. Half of the house clung to the moss and the other half hung out over the lake like it hadn't decided if it was going for a swim or not. It was an unusual place to build a house, but then it was a very unusual house. It was old and its timber had turned a ghostly grey, making it look tired yet elegant. It had a pitched roof at one end, topped with a tall clock tower. Wrapped around the house was a rickety veranda with fancy timber columns. On the second floor, little windows popped out like cuckoos. The house was dark. (Book 1, Ch 2, p 17)

In Book 2, it is described as follows:

From the outside, it looks like a grand old house that sat down at a party after too many cupcakes and decided not to get up. Faded and exhausted, but still wearing its dancing shoes. The shop's once-fine timber columns now lean at slightly odd angles, the wood bleached grey by time. The building is so close to the lake's edge that parts of it hang over the water. Reeds grow up through cracks in the veranda and ripples lap at the steps. It's hard to imagine how it hasn't sailed away. But it hasn't, and a good thing too – I doubt it was seaworthy. (Book 2, Ch 1, p 8)

What literary devices did you identify in these descriptions?

Discussion Point: Read the description of the Island Between Time (Book 1, Ch 10, pp 83–84). Discuss the devices used in this passage.

Discussion Point: Read and discuss this passage:

'It's beautiful,' exclaimed Trilby, looking around her as the garlands of hanging blooms got thicker. Strings of dripping petals in every shade of purple surrounded them. There were playful lilacs, joyous soft clouds of violet, faded lavenders and glamorous deep indigos. (Book 2, Ch 3, pp 22)

CHARACTERS

BOOKS 1 AND 2

Major Characters: Twelve-year-old Trilby Moffat, who becomes the Time Keeper; Benjamin, a talking thylacine; Xipil and Koji, two boys who are part of the Time Guild; Mr Colin, Night Manager.

BOOK 1

Minor Characters: Trilby's mother, Arwen Moffat; Thumbelina Mince, proprietor of Lost in Time Antiques and Trilby's great-great aunt and the previous Time Keeper; Carole, Assistant Vice Night Manager; Brian, Assistant to the Assistant Vice Night Manager; Momo; Maisy, Claudia and Werner, three of the children at the Time Guild; Crow and Byron, the children's missing friends are mentioned but not seen.

BOOK 2

Minor Characters: To the minor characters above, in Book 2 we meet an extinct bird named Anton, a 'Pouakai. Some call it Haast's eagle' (Ch 3, p 28); a creepy man in a cloak who is later revealed to be Crow, the missing child (Ch 26, p 210) a rude cat; Beatie, and Tove, two other children at the Time Guild; a woman in a hat who wants the trophy; Janet, the Vice President of Standing In Front of Doors; Neville, Associate Vice President of Standing In Front of Doors; and Brian is revealed to be Byron, the other missing child (Book 2, Ch 15, p 133).

Activity: Draw up a character chart and find key quotes which give a clear picture of any of these characters, and isolate events that demonstrate their natures. Then write a brief character study of the person using the quotes and events to illustrate the points made in your summary.

Question: Which character was most intriguing and why? Which character would you like to have heard more about?

WRITING TASKS

Activity: Write an acrostic poem using the letters in Time Keeper. [See **Bibliography**.]

Activity: Write a diary entry as if written by Xipil or Koji about meeting Trilby (Book 1, Ch 9, pp 75–82).

Activity: Write a poem in ballad form about Trilby's adventures in either novel. (This might be a group activity in which each student contributes a verse.) [See **Bibliography**.]

Activity:

The next column said *OCCUPATION*. Scanning down the entries, Trilby found the strangest collection of careers she'd ever seen. There were wig makers, warlords, princesses, a swan warden (whatever that was?), a pirate, an avalanche forecaster. Someone had even written, *Rich dude*. Was that even a job? Against her name, Trilby wrote, *Time Keeper*. (Book 2, Ch 16, p 135)

Make a list of ridiculous occupations like those included in the list of Race Against Time entrants that Trilby reads here.

Activity:

Trilby was left dangling ridiculously, dangerously, strangely, comically, treacherously and alarmingly off the side of the tower on a parlour chair. (Book 2, Ch 23, p 178)

Each of these adverbs ending in the suffix 'ly' describe Trilby's predicament. What other adverbs can you think of to add to this list?

Activity:

'What a terrifying and incredible journey you've been on! I don't suppose you saw Egg Shell Isle from up there?' asked Koji.

'No,' said Trilby. Koji sighed in disappointment, then Trilby added, 'Because it doesn't exist. At least, it's not an island.'

Trilby walked over to the chalkboard and rubbed off Mr Colin's brainstorm. In its place,

she wrote the numbers 3151 11345 663.

'Ring any bells?' asked Trilby. The children shrugged. 'It's the stupid serial number on Mr Colin's airship,' Trilby explained.

'That's very nice, Trilby, but I don't see what it has to do with Egg Shell Isle,' said Xipil. 'Stand on your head.' (Book 2, Ch 23, p 181)

Make up your own secret codes in which letters become numbers when turned upside down.

VISUAL LITERACY

This is relevant to the following Curriculum Area:

<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/the-arts/visual-arts/>>

Activity: The cover of each of these books has a 'retro' aesthetic suggestive of children's adventure stories of the past, which is in keeping with the 'timeless' quality of this story. Design a new cover for either book.

Activity: Create a graphic novel interpretation of an incident in the series [See **Bibliography**.]

Activity: Create a book trailer for this series. [See **Bibliography**.]

FURTHER QUOTES FOR DISCUSSION

BOOK 1

1. Context is just facts you haven't met yet. It has the power to change everything (or nothing). (Book 1, Ch 1, p 8)
2. ... it is not the book that matters, only the story. (Book 1, Ch 3, p 28)
3. 'There are always rules, sometimes they are hidden so you can't see them but always they are there. "No sorrys" is one of them. You can end up in all sorts of trouble around here saying sorry to the wrong person.' (Book 1, Ch 3, p 30)
4. This kind of feeling is best listened to. It is called instinct. Adults often train themselves out of hearing the roar of instinct so that they might accomplish important tasks, like finishing their tax or being pleasant to people they don't like at work. Children and thylacines have no such training, and for us it is painful to ignore our instinct. So, even though Trilby was afraid, she did not readily offer up the golden key, for one very specific reason: it felt wrong. Very wrong. (Book 1, Ch 6, pp 52-3)
5. You see, assumptions are like bear traps; they are to be avoided at all costs. (Book 1, Ch 9, p 72)
6. 'Trilby, think about it. The only thing that makes you older is time. So, if there's no time, there's no getting older. It's not that complicated,' said Koji. (Book 1, Ch 10, p 86)
7. Shame can be a very powerful stick. (Book 1, Ch 14, p 125)
8. 'These things don't just happen. You think they do, but they don't. They require paperwork, meetings and contracts. It is our job to manage things when things cannot manage themselves!' (Book 1, Ch 15, p 131)

9. You see, those of us in the legal profession do not make things up from thin air. We do not create fictions from fictions. We create fictions from facts. To do that, you need evidence and context and by now, you are familiar with the importance of context. (Book 1, Ch 18, p 151)
10. Opening a window of opportunity is much like opening a window on a submarine. If you are very lucky, the submarine is travelling on the surface of the water, and you will be bathed in much-needed fresh air and light. But submarines are not sailboats, and it is much more likely that you will be bathed in five million tonnes of ice-cold water, crushing you in one painful agonising moment. For this reason, many people avoid ever opening a window of opportunity. But, if you never open one, the alternative is worse; you are destined to sit on the other side of the glass breathing stale air as life passes you by. (Book 1, Ch 22, p 180)
11. Perhaps there were smarter, more sensible ideas, but sometimes a ridiculous idea is the best idea. (Book 1, Ch 22, p 182)
12. 'Priceless is the most expensive thing there is.' (Book 1, Ch 23, p 195)

BOOK 2

1. These were not ordinary treasures, like goblets and necklaces or sportscars or jewels. No, these were priceless time treasures that were stored in the Passage of Time for safekeeping. There were all sorts of things from all sorts of times: forgotten dances, lost crafts, secret ceremonies, erased languages and all manner of extinct moments in time. (Book 2, Ch 3, p 27)
2. The only difference between a surprise party and an ambush is how much you enjoy it. (Book 2, Ch 8, p 66)
3. 'Haven't you noticed that everything bad that's happened to us all started with Trilby Moffat?' said Maisy.
'You shouldn't blame Trilby,' said Xipil.
'It's the truth! Everything was fine before she became Time Keeper,' snapped Maisy.
'Or have you forgotten? Mr Colin didn't hate us. Thumbelina was still alive. No one got stolen in the Passage of Time . . .' (Book 2, Ch 8, pp69–70)
4. 'As you already know, nothing upsets the Passage of Time more than moving things from one time period to another.' (Book 2, Ch 9, p 76)
5. For these poor children, there had been no way out, until Mr Colin arrived with a better offer. No wonder they had trusted him for so long. (Book 2, Ch 8, p 80)
6. 'The Passage of Time would have been slightly different if we'd been left to perish,' said Maisy.
'Like, did you know, people would have had butterflies as house pets!' said Xipil.
'And breakfast cereal wouldn't have been invented,' said Werner seriously.
Trilby didn't know if they were telling the truth or not, but she guessed they probably were.
'It's a small price to pay,' said Koji.
'Not so small, breakfast cereal is disgusting,' said Xipil. Everyone nodded in agreement.' (Book 2, Ch 9, p 81)
7. You can tell a lot about a person by the way they knock on a door. (Book 2, Ch 11, p 92)
8. 'Paint!' shouted the man. 'What an insult. These are lost colours, little lady. The only

ones of their kind.'

Trilby gasped. The man was right. That green was nothing she'd seen before – almost pink, but still green. She couldn't describe it, and since I've never seen it, neither can I. What I can say is, if you could eat it, it would taste like a mint slice dunked in a cup of milky tea. If you could smell it, it would smell like snowball fights, and if it were a time, it would be 3.34 in the afternoon on a Sunday in July. You get the idea. (Book 2, Ch 13, p 116)

9. 'You can't force a good idea,' replied Trilby. And she was right. Sometimes finding a solution is like catching a seagull – they'll only fly away, and if you do manage to grab one, you may live to regret it. (Book 2, Ch 14, p 121)
10. The point is, Trilby was scared, but she wasn't dead. And while she wasn't dead, she was still alive, and while she was still alive, she could still think, and while she could still think, she could solve this puzzle, which is what she did best. (Book 2, Ch 21, p168)
11. 'They can't trade with real time treasure,' said Koji. 'That will create total chaos in time.' (Book 2, Ch 23, p 183)
12. There really aren't any words for moments like this, not legally speaking anyway. It's a rare feeling to miss something so grandly, so unbearably and to have it returned to you. Most of us just go on missing it forever and ever, living with its absence like a three-legged dog. (Book 2, Ch 26, p 204)

FURTHER ACTIVITIES

1. **Compare** this series to other junior fantasy series. [See **Bibliography**.]
2. **Design** a poster to advertise this series.
3. What **other titles** might the books have had?
4. **Debate** any of the topics covered in these notes or suggested by the novels in the series.
5. Locate and study **poetry** which explores the concept of time.

CONCLUSION

Trilby Moffat (aka Time Keeper) is a feisty heroine and this exciting and very humorous series is peopled by a range of quirky characters including Benjamin the talking thylacine who narrates the story. The story describes the dangerous and perilous business of being Trilby Moffat and both endings of Books 1 and 2 suggest that further thrilling adventures lie ahead!

Of course, Trilby and Arwen would have preferred to cosy up on a large velveteen sofa with hot chocolate and a ring-tailed possum named Cedric Fiddleback-Crump and catch up on everything that had happened, but inconveniently, humanity required a little saving. (Book 2, Ch 26, p 206)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kate Temple has had many dangerous jobs – from making hatpins out of darts to climbing ladders at midnight. Now Kate is in the dangerous business of writing books for children.

She has written more than twenty books with her writing partner, Jol, and *The Dangerous Business of Being Trilby Moffat* was her first solo book and *The Perilous Promotion of Trilby Moffat* is her second. Kate lives in Sydney with her two children. When she is not writing, Kate enjoys eating cake, and so do the characters in this series.

See: <http://katejoltemple.com/>

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Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright AM operates *justified text* writing and publishing consultancy services, and is widely published on children's literature, publishing history and Australian fiction. Her publications include *Paper Empires: A History of the Book in Australia 1946–2005* (co-edited with Craig Munro) (UQP, 2006). In 2011 she was recipient of the CBCA (Qld) Dame Annabelle Rankin Award, in 2012, of the CBCA Nan Chauncy Award for Outstanding Services to Children's Literature, and in 2014, the QWC's Johnno Award. In 2021 she was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia.