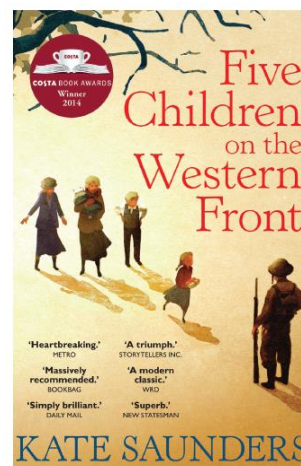


2016 Carnegie Medal shortlist reading resources

Title: **Five Children on the Western Front**

Author: **Kate Saunders**

Publisher: Faber



TALKING POINTS

Setting

The book is set a hundred years ago. Think about the way Kate Saunders captures that period through:

- The children's lifestyles
- The descriptions of the household
- The dialogue

Even if it's a hundred-year-old setting, do you think it tells us something about our lives today?

The Psammead

Why has he come back?

How are the values of his time different from those of the children's day?

The Psammead is vain, bossy, selfish, and grumpy. So why do you think the children like him?

What does the Psammead learn from each of the wishes he grants?

The Psammead can grant wishes, but they have to expire at sunset. What would you wish for?

The Pembertons

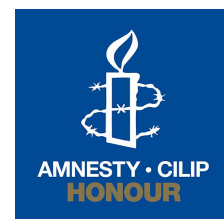
How do the Pemberton's parents attitudes towards their children's lives change over the course of the book?

Three of the Pemberton siblings get little love stories in the book: Anthea meets Ernie, Cyril meets Mabel, Bobs falls in love with Lilian. What do these relationships add to the main story about family and war?

"You know my theory," says Jane. "I think we need the Psammead at least as much as he needs us." Why do you think she feels this way?



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The War

The author wants to make her readers think about war and understand how brutal it can be. Why do you think she uses a fictional story to do this?

Why do you think Kate Saunders chose to dedicate the book “To all the boys and girls 1914-1918”?

Near the end of the book, the author kills off a much-loved character. Why do you think she does this?

Read the author’s brief “Afterword”. Does anything in it make you think differently about the book or the characters?

E. Nesbit’s books

Kate Saunders was a fan of E. Nesbit’s Pemberton books as a child, and wanted to return to her story.

- Have you read the books that inspired this? If so, what do you think they added to your reading of this book? (If not, does this book make you want to?)
- Have you ever loved a book so much that you’ve wanted to go back to the characters and work out what happened next?

And finally...

Is it a happy ending?

TALKING ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights themes in this story

Peace and order to enjoy rights and freedoms; equality; conflict; education; women’s rights; freedom from slavery

Human rights questions

We have the right to be equal

Why are Mr and Mrs Pemberton against Anthea marrying Ernie, or Jane becoming a doctor?

How does the story remind us that all human beings are equal regardless of their actions?

We have the right to a fair trial and not to be treated in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way



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How do you feel when the Psammead is revealed to have done terrible things?

When Anthea asks how many he killed, he says: 'I don't know. A few thousand. Numbers don't matter.' How then does the Psammead gain redemption?

What do you think of the sand fairy's final scene?

Should we hope for the possibility of change in those who commit human rights abuses?

We have the right to make our own decisions about our future

During World War One, how did life change for women?

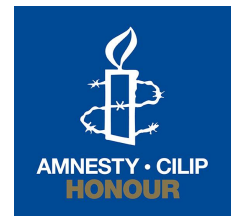
Has life moved on further for women today?

- For a full version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights go to www.amnesty.org.uk/udhr

For more free teaching resources from Amnesty International go to www.amnesty.org.uk/education



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