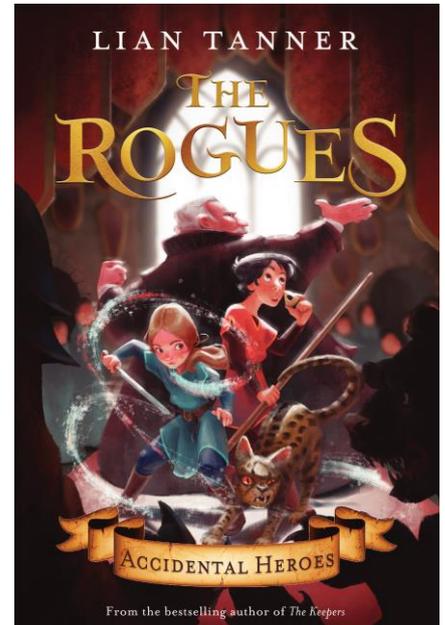


Accidental Heroes:

The Rogues 1

By Lian Tanner

October 2017 ISBN 9781760293529 hardback
Recommended for 9-13 year old readers



Summary

Duckling wants her villainous grandpa to retire, but he insists on one last Scheme, which he swears is not dangerous. And to make that Scheme happen, he needs a disposable boy.

Meanwhile, Pummel has come to the city looking for work so he can send money home to his ma. When he finds himself in trouble, Lord Rump and Duckling help him out, and offer him a job as companion to the Young Margrave of Neuhalt. Pummel accepts, thinking how kind they are.

But there are invisible forces at work in Neuhalt, and no one is quite what they seem. Soon, Duckling and Pummel find themselves caught up in a plot to kill the Young Margrave. If they want to protect him, and save themselves from an awful fate, the two children must learn to use the magic that no one else believes in.

Set in the same vividly realised fantasy world as the best-selling Keepers series, but with all new characters, this is a great fantasy-adventure for 9 to 13 year olds. Lian Tanner is an award-winning author who knows her readership and gives them an exciting and gripping plot with strong male and female characters to both love and loathe.

Use in the curriculum

In the English classroom, *Accidental Heroes* will work well as a stand-alone novel study or as part of a unit of work on the fantasy genre. Duckling and Pummel make for excellent character studies as they grow and change. They and the rest of the cast are clearly drawn individuals, with traits worth analysing and discussing. Students can work on their understandings of the use of language in literature—to develop a fantasy world and characters, and create tension and mood. The connection between the quest and fantasy genres and the themes of friendship, courage and identity can be explored.

Themes

- adventure
- fantasy
- friendship
- courage
- identity

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In the classroom

Comprehension Questions

Chapter 1:

- Why does Lord Rump describe Duckling as, 'young and cynical'?
- What does Duckling want her Grandpa to do more than anything?
- What deal does she strike with Grandpa?
- What do you think the term disposable means here?

Chapter 2:

- Describe what a Snuffigator does.
- Why has Pummel come to Neuhalt?
- What happens when someone steps into a snare and who is responsible for setting the snares?
- Captain Rabid is very adamant that snares are not the result of what?
- What is the worst thing you can be accused of, according to Pummel?

Language and Literature

- Read Chapter 3 and find examples of the following literary devices that make this chapter extra creepy:
 - Anthropomorphism
 - Personification
 - Metaphor
 - Simile
 - Imagery
 - Foreshadowing
- The Australian Pocket Oxford Dictionary (4th Edition), defines the word rogue as, 'a dishonest or unprincipled person'.
 - Ask students to come up with ideas why Lian Tanner might have wanted to call her series 'The Rogues'.
 - Apart from Duckling and Lord Rump, name other dishonest or unprincipled characters who appear in this story.
 - Some characters do dishonest things for principled reasons. List three scenes in the novel where this occurs.
- The Monomyth is a literary theory that proposes many stories from around the world fit one simple pattern: a hero ventures from a normal world to a supernatural region where they encounter fabulous forces, have a decisive victory and return to their world with new powers or wealth. The films in the Stars Wars series, for instance, fit this pattern. In a class-wide discussion ask students to come up with other films or books that follow this same pattern. Now ask students whether *Accidental Heroes*, too, fits this pattern and to give specific examples from the book that prove their argument.



Character Study

- For much of the novel Duckling and Pummel are polar-opposite characters. Ask students to draw two lines down the middle of a page in their exercise book to create three columns. Head the first column Characteristic, the next Duckling, and the last, Pummel. List the following characteristics in the first column, and in the corresponding columns fill in how much each character displays this characteristic, using specific incidents from Chapters 1-25.
 - Naïve
 - Cynical
 - Trusting
 - Selfish
 - Cunning
- Ask students to start a new page and write a paragraph on who or what in Duckling and Pummel's background might have influenced the sort of people they are.
- 'For the first time, she understood just how shameful it would be to escape from the Strong-hold and leave Pummel to take the blame for the murder of the Young Margrave.' p. 175. Ask students to list three things that Duckling does after this point in the novel that show she has changed from the person she was earlier in the story.
 - Extension Question: At what dramatic point in the novel does Pummel change from a naïve and trusting character?

Prediction

Explain to students that *Accidental Heroes* is the first book in a three-part series and that the end of the story here is the beginning of another to come out in 2018. Encourage students to come up with some 'what happens next' scenarios which include Duckling, Pummel, Otte, Arms-mistress Krieg, devious Lord Rump and the mysterious Sooli.

In the author's own words

'This started out as a completely different book called *The Lost Brother*. It should have been interesting, but it wasn't, and about a third of the way through the first draft I realised that I was horribly bored with the main character, a girl called Sooli.

'I spent a couple of weeks trying to make her more interesting, and it just didn't work.

'So I read back through what I'd written, and tucked away in a barely-noticeable corner I found two children – a sly, devious girl called Duckling and a much-too-honest country boy called Pummel. Both of them were far more interesting than Sooli, and more fun to write about, too. So I threw out most of what I'd written, and started again, with Duckling and Pummel as the main characters in a story of trickery and betrayal. And this time it worked.

'I thought that was the end of Sooli, and that I'd never see her again. But then, at the very end of the very last draft, she suddenly turned up. And she wasn't boring any more – far from it! Now, she was very determined, and very dangerous. (But we won't know quite how dangerous until the next book.)'

— Lian Tanner

About the author...

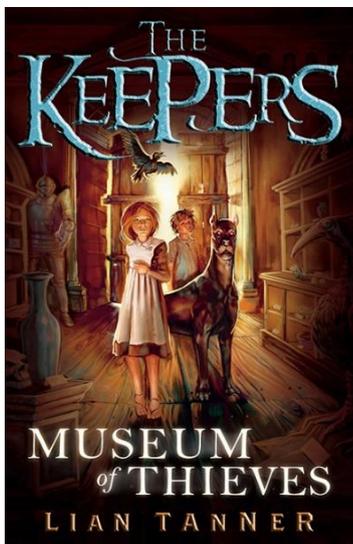


About the author

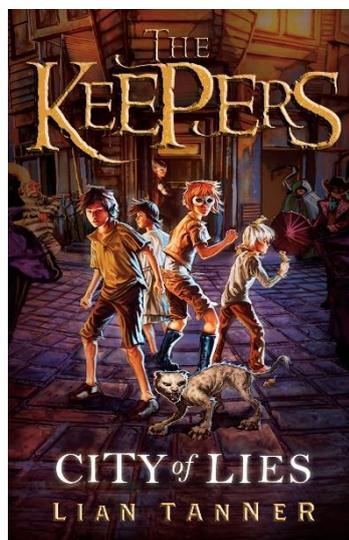
Lian Tanner has been dynamited while scuba diving and arrested while busking. She once spent a week in the jungles of Papua New Guinea, hunting for a Japanese soldier left over from the Second World War. She likes secrets, old bones, and animals that are not what they seem. Nowadays she lives by the beach in southern Tasmania with a large fluffy tomcat called Harry-le-beau.

Other books by Lian Tanner

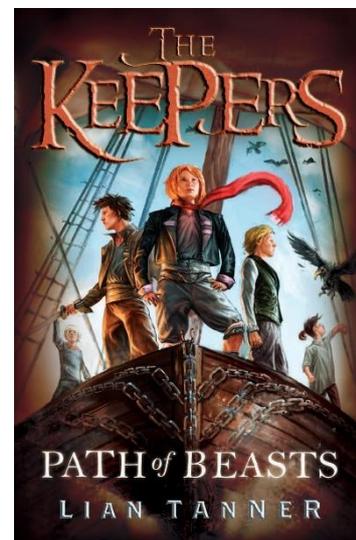
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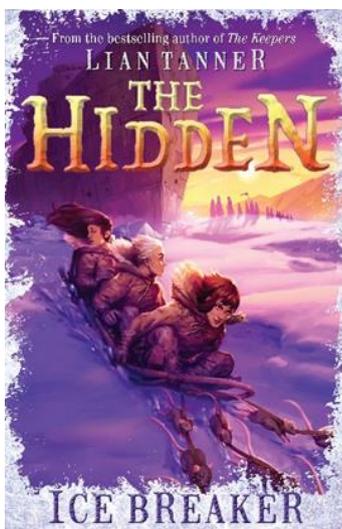


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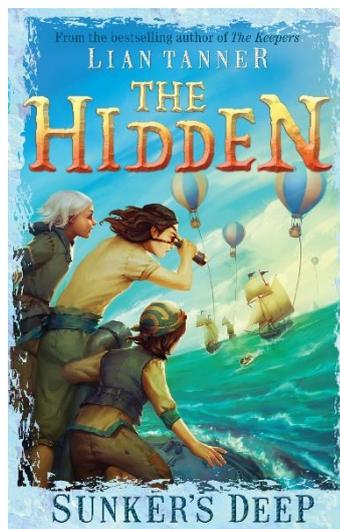


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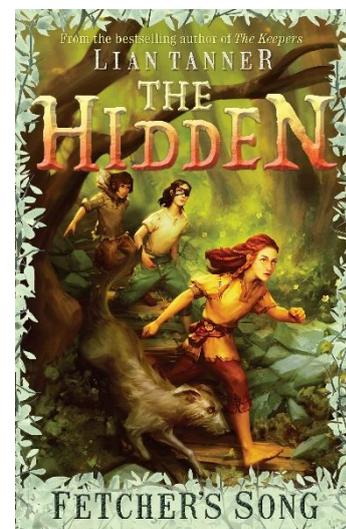
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