



TEACHERS' RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Secondary students
(ages 12+; years 7+)

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KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English, Humanities and Social Sciences
- **General capabilities:** Literacy, Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social Capability, Ethical Understanding, Intercultural Understanding

THEMES

- Historical accuracy
- Memory
- The idea of being 'sensible'
- Family conflict
- Love
- The interaction between personal and political
- Isolation
- Perceptions of wealth and social standing

PREPARED BY

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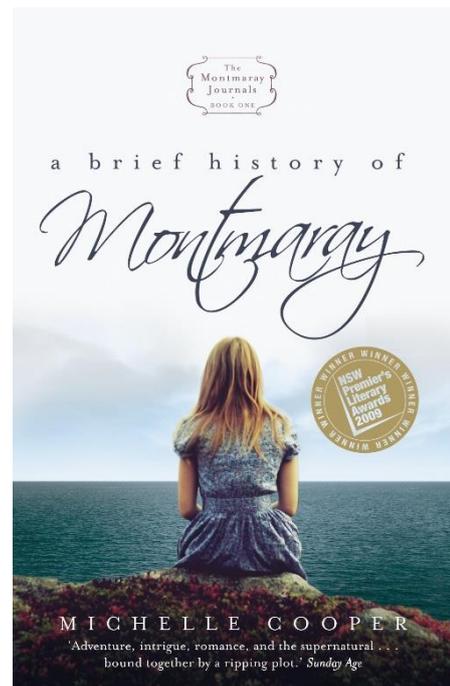
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A Brief History of Montmaray Michelle Cooper

ABOUT THE BOOK

'History, I've learnt, can take many forms' (p. 286).

A fable, an adventure, a romantic thriller, and a historical fiction, this novel is also a seriously charming story about growing up. Sixteen-year old Sophie FitzOsborne's diary details a collection of tales past and present about the 'history' of the tiny kingdom of Montmaray, an island in the Bay of Biscay between France and Spain, and of Sophie's aristocratic if slightly decaying royal family. Fairy tale motifs frame the action, which features pirates, shipwrecks, orphaned children, ghosts, sinister strangers and lost treasures. Sophie writes her own family's story little realising that she herself is a character in a grander narrative, and that her life will never be quite the same again.

PLOT SUMMARY

Set on Montmaray, this novel describes the experiences of a family living in a crumbling castle, on the brink of changes both personal and political. The orphaned Sophie lives there with her tomboy ten-year-old sister Henry; her beautiful and intellectual cousin Veronica, who is a little over a year older than Sophie's sixteen years; Veronica's mad father King John; two aging villagers with a child; and a family retainer named Rebecca Chester. Rebecca's son, Simon, is

working for the family solicitor in England; Sophie's brother, Toby, is also in England, studying at boarding school.

The year is 1936 and the world is engaged in conflicts which will result in the catastrophic World War Two. Two mysterious German visitors arrive in search of mythical hidden treasure and the family's bravery is sorely tested. Sophie's dreams of Isabella, the long-departed wife of John, seem to be symbolic of threats from the outside world. Sophie's brother returns from England with Simon, and several further disasters ensue before they're rescued.

This is also a catalogue of the events which took place in Europe in the 1930s. It traces the international and intra-national conflicts that led to WWII, such as the Spanish Civil War, the demise of several European monarchies, the emergence of the nation-state, conflicts between Communism and Fascism, and the rise of Nazism.

It's a novel which describes the experiences of anyone whose life is interrupted by world events. But most of all it's about the human condition. It's about how we all live in a world defined by those closest to us. The FitzOsbornes are on one level a rather odd family but on another they are just like everyone else. They are people under duress who are simply trying to cope, as best they can.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michelle Cooper is the author of *The Rage of Sheep* and *The Montmaray Journals* trilogy. The first Montmaray book, *A Brief History of Montmaray*, won a NSW Premier's Literary Award and was listed in the American Library Association's 2010 Best Books for Young Adults. Its sequel, *The FitzOsbornes in Exile*, was shortlisted for the NSW and WA Premier's Literary Awards, named a Children's Book Council Notable Book and listed in Kirkus Best Teen Books of 2011. *The FitzOsbornes at War* concludes the Montmaray Journals.

THEMES

Themes in this novel include:

Historical accuracy or truth

Shown on p. 286.

Activity

- How much of what Sophie tells the reader about history is accurate? Choose an incident she mentions and try to discover other versions of its history.

Memory

Sophie reflects of Veronica that: 'every significant memory of my life features her . . . She's part of all the big memories – and all the little ones, too.' (pp. 60–1) and reflects on how little she knows of her mother Jane (pp. 71–2). Life is made up of a series of incidents properly or improperly recalled. Sophie's diary is a catalogue of such incidents.

Questions:

- Is memory reliable?
- Is childhood memory always like this – full of vivid details and just as many gaps? Reflect on your own memories.

The idea of being 'sensible' as opposed to romantic or fanciful

Shown on p. 12.

Question

- Is being sensible a fitting ambition in life, or would you prefer to be fanciful?

Family conflict

'She doesn't care about any of this any more. About any of us.' (p. 70)

Question:

- Is the FitzOsborne family a happy one despite the conflicts amongst them?

Love's power and the mysteries of sex

Shown on pp. 7–8; 13; 100–1.

Activity:

- Discuss the various loves mentioned in the book. Which of them is a happy relationship rather than an imagined affection, or a failure?

The interaction between the personal and the political

Questions:

- Veronica and Simon discuss whether Montmaray should take part in the political discussions taking place between various nations. Who should undertake such a role on behalf of Montmaray?
- Could one young woman play a part in such talks?
- Would Montmaray be able to influence international affairs, as Sophie tells us it has in the past?



Isolation

Montmaray is a tiny (imaginary) island in the Bay of Biscay between France and Spain. The family live in a castle, but it is presented in Sophie's diary as a paradox – a place that is not the romantic retreat imagined by some of their short-lived tutors (p. 17) but is 'simply home' (p. 14). This setting is symbolic of the family's isolation, which is interrupted only by passing ships until the outside world really encroaches on them with the arrival by aeroplane of Julia, the sister of Toby's friend Rupert, and her fiancé Anthony. Later the bombing of the island by German aircraft is a further threat. The contrast between the island and their new home in England is also made clear in descriptions of their arrival. Sophie has never seen electric lights, or cars before (pp. 284–5). 'I take a deep breath, scenting not salt and sand, but leather upholstery and cut grass and new brick.' (p. 286)

Questions:

- Does the novel suggest that island life is idyllic, or that it's too closed and insular?
- Is the lifestyle of the FitzOsbornes sustainable?

Perceptions of wealth and social standing

Aunt Charlotte's life of social engagements and country houses in England, recounted by Toby in his letters (pp. 105–6, 108, 126) is shown in direct contrast to the asset-poor, hard-working FitzOsbornes on Montmaray, though Aunt Charlotte is full of 'reproaches about our idle, extravagant lives' (p. 50). Contrast the actual lifestyle of the FitzOsbornes with their social standing, when Sophie says: 'Heavens, what a snob I sound! But it's not my fault I'm a princess . . . I can't help all the rules and regulations that govern those born into our noble and ancient family.' (p. 13)

Activity:

- Invite students to select any one of these themes and to write an essay exploring the theme as it's reflected in the novel.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

WRITING STYLE, GENRE AND STRUCTURE

Narrative styles and genres are referred to constantly:

Sophie's diary

Sophie's diary is a work of fiction based on her own memories and observation written in the first person. As a reader we only see the story through her eyes, except for a few other brief texts. It is her voice we hear

throughout the narrative. Sophie also imagines the things she doesn't know e.g. Isabella's suitors (pp. 70–1).

'I need to write down what has just happened. I need to set down the truth. If I write lies or if I write nothing at all, this journal is worthless.' (p. 170)

Discussion:

- How much of what Sophie says is true? How much does she think is true, but which the reader finds is false? Is she a reliable narrator? Discuss.

Activity:

- Write a diary entry in the first person expressing Veronica's feelings, instead of Sophie's. How might she have described the arrival of Simon and Toby, for example?

Non-fiction genre

Veronica's *Brief History* is a work of fact or non-fiction referred to throughout the novel, which also includes references to many real figures explained on the author's website (www.michellecooper-writer.com/montmarayhistorical.html). As readers, though, we never read Veronica's work; it is simply referred to. 'Veronica likes facts, especially fresh ones.' (p. 27)

Activity:

- Write a description of the bombing of the island as if it was a part of Veronica's history. She would write about it in a different way to Sophie, for example, in that she would have referred to the political background to it in more detail.

Adventure genre

An adventure novel includes stock types such as pirates, spies and ghosts; or plot conventions such as wrecked ships, drowned people, lost treasures, rescues and secret caves.

Question:

- Many of these elements are included in *A Brief History of Montmaray*. Would you describe it as an adventure novel? Why, or why not?

Activity:

- Choose any of these types or plot conventions and write a story based on it.

Romance genre

Romance novel conventions are played with here in Sophie's self-conscious and ardent confessions of infatuation for Simon, despite the social barriers that exist between them. A sub-text is added by the underlying suggestion that the beautiful Veronica may be more attractive to Simon, despite their avowed



antipathy to each other, and then this suggestion is dashed in a climactic scene when his parentage is revealed. Meanwhile Daniel's letters to Veronica hint at a possible liaison. As in every romance novel there are 'dark secrets', such as the doomed love of John for both Isabella and Rebecca; and in Sophie's suspicion that 'the love that dares not speak its name' (pp. 243–4) may exist between Simon and Toby.

Questions:

- Are any of the suggested romantic sub-plots likely to come to fruition in a sequel?
- Will Sophie's crush on Simon prove long-lasting?
- Will Daniel and Veronica meet again?
- Are Simon and Toby really an item?
- What references did you notice to their closeness?
- Could they have been misinterpreted by Sophie?

Academic referencing

Shown on pp. 64–5.

Activity:

- Write a brief essay on one of the historical events or issues mentioned in this novel, using this footnoted reference style.

Letters

Letters feature in the text as well, including Toby's letters (pp. 1–2; pp. 104–8); Aunt Charlotte's letter (p. 4); Daniel's letters to Veronica which are referred to (p. 152–3, p. 157) but which we never see.

Activity:

- Imagine if Sophie wrote a letter to Toby about the death of Hans, and she and Veronica disposing of the body. How might it have been constructed differently to the way she tells him in person? How might Veronica write about Hans' death to Daniel?

USE OF LANGUAGE IN STYLE

Literary references

Literary references appear throughout the work. For example: Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*; Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (pp. 46–7); Veronica says darkly that Simon 'has Ambitions' (p. 35) and later Sophie hears her 'muttering something under her breath about Uriah Heep' (p. 63), a character in *David Copperfield* by Charles Dickens. Sophie compares them to 'orphans in Dickens' (p. 65); refers to *The Brown Book of the Hitler Terror* (p.73); to the Brontës (p. 85); to *Treasure Island* (p.113); to *Northanger Abbey* (p. 122); to *A Christmas*

Carol (p. 141); to Lady Macbeth (p. 190); to Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* (p. 242); to Hamlet and Ophelia (pp. 246–7); to the medieval German *Parsifal* and Richard Wagner's opera (p. 164).

Questions:

- What effect did these references have on the reading?
- Why does Veronica refer to Uriah Heep in relation to Simon?
- What similarities do you see between Sophie and Veronica and the heroines of novels such as *Pride and Prejudice*, *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*?

Literary quotations

Literary quotations appear as well: 'The spent deep feigns her rest' from *The Bell-Buoy* by Rudyard Kipling (p. 18); 'Full fathom five, thy father lies, of his bones are coral made, those are pearls that were his eyes – nothing of him that doth fade, but doth suffer a sea change, into something rich and strange. Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell . . . Hark! Now I hear them! Ding dong bell!' from *The Tempest Act 1, Scene 2*, William Shakespeare (p. 119); 'Kind hearts are more than coronets, and simple faith than Norman blood' from *Lady Clara Vere de Vere* by Alfred, Lord Tennyson (p. 125); 'and there awhile it bode' from 'The Holy Grail' in Alfred, Lord Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* (p. 158); 'For on my heart hath fallen confusion . . .' and 'The King is sick and knows not what he does' from 'The Passing of Arthur' by Alfred, Lord Tennyson (p. 168–9); 'They went to sea in a Sieve, they did . . .' from *The Jumblies* by Edward Lear (p. 269–70); 'There are more things in Heaven and Earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy' from *Hamlet Act 1, Scene 5* by William Shakespeare (p. 282).

Question:

- Discuss each of these quotes and their meanings.

Imaginary texts

Even imaginary texts are referred to, such as Edward de Quincy FitzOsborne's collected works (p. 158) and his 'The Voyage of King Bartholomew' is actually quoted (p. 156).

Activity:

- Write a poem in Edward's florid style describing the heroic rescue of Rebecca and Veronica at the end of the novel.

Literary devices

Examine the use of different literary devices in the novel such as: *similes* ('It splashed like black ink down her back' (p. 72); 'a bit like treacle, if treacle were a



sound' (p. 59)); or *metaphors* ('a united front with Toby' (p. 59)) or *personification* ('The weather is miserable and so am I' (p.110); 'Poor journal, I've been neglecting you.'(p. 123)); or a *malapropism*, which is the incorrect use of a word by substituting a similar-sounding word with different meaning, usually with comic effect. Henry is prone to saying things like this which are not quite correct, but which amuse her family greatly. Examples include: 'totem of his affection' (p. 26) instead of token; 'I'm just the escape goat' (p. 103) instead of scapegoat.

Activity:

- Research the origin of the word 'malapropism'. Who was the original Mrs Malaprop?

Secret languages or codes

Secret languages or codes are another aspect of literacy mentioned. 'Kernetin' is the secret language used by Sophie, Toby and Veronica to communicate. It's said to be 'based on Cornish and Latin, with some Greek letters and random meaningless squiggles thrown in to be extra-confusing. Also it is boustrophedonic . . . which means you read one line left to right, then the next right to left.' (p. 3). The Brontë sisters and their brother Bramwell were said to use such a secret language.

Activity:

- Research secret languages, and discover other books which use such languages. Write a passage in a code of your own devising.

Objects

Objects in the FitzOsborne home are catalysts for story writing, e.g. the Fabergé egg or the silver framed photographs.

Activity:

- Ask students to take a picture of an object that has significance in their own family's history, and write a short story about its origin to accompany the photo. Create a class display of the stories and photos.

NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

The novel is structured as a chronological narrative signposted by Sophie's diary entries, but these are punctuated with flashbacks and references to long past events as well.

Question:

- How else might it have been structured? Imagine, for example, if it began with Sophie's arrival in England and then consisted of flashbacks to the island.

MOTIFS AND SYMBOLS

Fairy tale or archetypal tropes

The novel is rich with fairy tale or archetypal tropes. Examples include: island; castle; characters of fairy tale [See Characters below]; journey; escape and rescue; renewal.

Activity:

- Discuss with students the parallels between this novel and several fairy tales.

Superstitions

Superstitions are referred to in: Rebecca's beliefs (p. 78); traditional Cornish prayer 'From ghoulies and ghosties and long leggedy beasties, And things that go bump in the night, The good Lord deliver us.' (p. 169); Rebecca tells the bees John's died, which Sophie says is an old Cornish custom (p. 246); Sophie's dreams which feature Isabella (p. 18, 40, 120–1) may be a prophecy, for later Sophie believes that Isabella saves them all when they are making their way to the ship (pp. 279–80).

Activity:

- Read about Cornish history and superstitions.

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

HISTORY

Many historical topics are raised in the book. Students might further examine any one of them. Note: The author's website provides background on the historical events she has referenced in the novel:

<http://www.michellecooper-writer.com/montmarayhistorical.html>

Spanish Civil War

The issue of the Spanish Civil War (pp. 37–9) features throughout. It began in 1936 when Franco led a rebellion against the democratically elected government of the Second Spanish Republic. The rebel forces were supported by Italy, Germany and Portugal, and the republicans by the Soviet Union and Mexico. Many others from the UK and the US supported the ideals of the rebels as well. A sub-issue would be the Non-Intervention Treaty. In the novel Anthony is outraged that his government has outlawed British businesses from selling weapons to the Spanish government (p. 93).

Question:

- What was the British government's stance on the Spanish Civil War?



Communism, Fascism, Monarchy and Capitalism

Conflicts between Communism, Fascism, Monarchy and Capitalism (pp. 44–5; pp. 73–5; pp. 98–9) in the lead-up to WWII are viewed through the prism of the FitzOsborne family and their friends, and include sub-issues such as the formation of the British Union of Fascists led by Oswald Mosley (p. 127).

Activity:

- Compare the FitzOsborne family to the aristocratic Mitford sisters, who were famously divided along these political lines.

European Monarchies

The stories of European Monarchies are fascinating sources of history (such as the Russian monarchy, see p. 32, 44) and the Salic Law of Succession is another sub-issue (p. 211).

Activity:

- 'I could always argue that there's a fine line between gossip and history, when one's talking about kings.' (p. 100) Discuss in relation to events mentioned in the novel (such as the Spanish Civil War) and then in relation to the contemporary world (e.g. conspiracy theories about Lady Diana's death; the fall of Iraq and the death of Saddam Hussein; the celebrity deaths in our culture dating from that of James Dean to Heath Ledger).

Nazism

Nazism includes sub-stories such as the research of the Ahnenerbe Deutsches into the superiority of the German race. 'It was developed to research the anthropological and cultural history of the Aryan race, and later lent itself to experimentation and voyages intent on proving that prehistoric and mythological Nordic populations had once ruled the world.' (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahnenerbe>)

Activity:

- Discuss such beliefs.

Question:

- Is Otto Rahn a real figure? What happened to him?

Bringing history to life

Facts as fables

Historical events are related in stories or fables in this novel, rather than as a boring listing of facts and events. Examples include the founding of Montmaray by Bartholomew FitzOsborne (p. 21) in 1542; the Fabergé egg story (pp. 30–1); the secret talks between Britain and Spain held at Montmaray in 1710 which

resulted in the Treaty of Utrecht and the gift of the Laocoön statue (pp. 74–5)

Activity:

- Write a story about any historical event mentioned in the novel from the point of view of one of the characters involved. See **Worksheet 1**.

Historical details

History is also made vivid via interesting details. Examples include: swords were christened (p. 22); 'Veronica explained that Montmaray was, strictly speaking, a fortified house rather than a true castle, having been built in the sixteenth century rather than in mediaeval times.' (p. 88)

Questions:

- What historical detail in this story was new to you and which you found interesting?
- What is history?
- Who should tell it?
- Is Sophia's diary a 'history' as much as Veronica's researched *Brief History* is?

RELIGION

The novel mentions religion in a variety of contexts. For example, Otto Rahn is studying the 'Sacred Geometry' which dates back to the Druids and was worshipped by those of the Cathar Faith, who were said by the Roman Catholic Church to be French heretics. 'They worshipped the Sun, and that is why the Church, the Roman Church, was against them' (p. 163).

Activities:

- Research the Cathar faith. Read Catherine Jinks' Pagan series, particularly *Pagan's Daughter*, which tells how Cathar Perfects observed a branch of Christianity which was widely popular in 12th century France, but which the Roman Catholic Church (via several crusades and inquisitions) had effectively wiped out by the late 13th century. Cathars called themselves 'Good Christians', arguing that they were the only true practitioners of the faith.
- Explore the links between Christian beliefs and early so-called 'pagan' faiths such as those of the Druids.

Sophie comments on religion: 'But even though I'm fond of many bits in the Bible . . . I find it hard to believe that a real God is behind them. Isn't it enough that they're beautiful stories . . . Besides, religious people can be so unpleasant.' (p.10) Later she writes of George: 'If he'd believed in any god, it would have been



Neptune or Poseidon, not the God of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer' (p. 118).

Activity:

- Discuss in relation to the character of Rebecca Chester and her beliefs. And then in relation to events such as the Holy Wars and to the types of punishment meted out by various religions. Has religion shaped Montmaray?

LEGENDS AND MYTHOLOGY

The legend of the Holy Grail appears in many works of literature and is the subject of countless stories of intrigue and speculation. It 'may combine Christian lore with a Celtic myth of a cauldron endowed with special powers' (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Grail). See (pp. 158; 163-4) for conflicting explanations: 'Well, in Tennyson, Sir Percivale said it was the cup that Christ drank from.' 'Yes,' he said. 'There is also in mediaeval German, *Parsifal*, have you heard of it? And the opera by Wagner, too. But they are not right, the Grail is before Christ. There was the legend of the Grail and then the Church tried to make it their own.' 'Then what is it?' 'The Grail of the Cathars, the Pure Ones?' he said. 'Perhaps a perfect crystal to hold the sun.' (p. 164) In this novel Herr Otto Rahn has written a book *Crusade Against the Grail* (p. 154; p. 163) and has arrived on Montmaray in search of it.

Activity:

- Research the legend of the Holy Grail and the various searches which have been undertaken for it. Find out more about Otto Rahn's book and where his search for the grail took him in real life.

GEOGRAPHY

This book might also be related to a study of islands, and their geography and topography, and of buildings such as the castle in which the family live.

Activities:

- Find the Bay of Biscay on a map and imagine where the island might be located. Michelle Cooper's website says 'The map coordinates are roughly 47N 7W, if you'd like to draw it in your own atlas.'
- Draw a map of the island based on the references in the novel. Mark on it landmarks such as the drawbridge, the 'Green', the village, the war memorial, the wharf, etc. (See pp. 14-5 for Sophie's description.)
- The layout of the castle could also be studied. Read Sophie's references to its layout, including her description of the rooms upstairs such as the Solar (pp. 66-7). Have the students sketch plans of the castle and then draw them to scale using a basic

computer program. Research the features of castles – what was the purpose of the curtain wall, for instance; what is the difference between a parados and parapet?

CHARACTERISATION

Character analysis

Sophie is both narrator and central character: 'Do you not know what your name means?' he asked. 'Wisdom. Sophia. What so many have searched for, so many years.' (p. 164)

Question:

- This is a rite-of-passage or bildungsroman novel – discuss the line between childhood and adulthood and whether Sophie reaches it. Is Sophia a wise person? Does she 'become Sensible' (p. 123) or 'a grown-up' (p. 190)?

Activity:

- Try to create a FitzOsborne family tree starting with the main characters and then tracing those they are descended from.

Characters in the novel can be compared to those of Fairy Tale convention: these include Cinderella (Sophie); mad king (John); orphaned children (Toby, Sophie and Henry); beautiful princess (Veronica); illegitimate or abandoned child (Simon); abused servant and wicked stepmother (Rebecca).

Activity:

- Create a table of the characters and the fairy tale types they relate to. **See Worksheet 2.**

Characters are constructed as parallels to literary figures too: Elizabeth Bennet and Mr Darcy (Veronica and Simon) (pp. 46-7); Uriah Heep (Simon) (p. 63); Hamlet and Ophelia (Rebecca and John) (pp. 246-7).

Question:

- Are there other literary characters that any of them remind you of?

Character values and beliefs

Discussion questions:

- The accidental murder of Herr Rahn's offsider, Hans Brandt, was committed by King John in his madness. Should Sophie and Veronica have reported this murder to someone, rather than hiding the body?
- Veronica's disdainful treatment of Simon is partly driven by snobbery, rather than suspicion of his motives. Would such attitudes make her a good historian? Discuss in relation to Sophie quoting



Alfred, Lord Tennyson's 'Kind hearts are more than coronets, and simple faith than Norman blood' (p. 125).

- Should George have kept Isabella's death a secret?
- Is Rebecca a bitter woman because of her treatment in life? Is she typical of women in service?
- Is Toby likely to become a good leader? Why/why not?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- This novel is said (by highly regarded writer Kate Forsyth) to be an instant classic. Discuss the connotations of the word 'classic' – and then whether you'd regard this as fitting the definition, and why.
- Women in this novel have fewer options than today; Veronica loathes the idea of being presented in society and 'finding a good match', but knows that such a future is what Aunt Charlotte has in mind for Sophie and her. 'Aunt Charlotte also has a horror of over-educated females.' (p. 51) Do you think they'll do as she expects?
- Isabella and Rebecca's lives have also been bleakly contained by King John's madness. Discuss the picture this offers of women's lives in the 1930s. How and why did that change during World War II?
- What sort of country is Montmaray? It seems to be a monarchy. But without a viable leader is it something else? Is it a Fascist state ordained by tradition? Is it a metaphor? Compare it to a country like Monaco or Liechtenstein.
- Who was your favourite character in this novel and why?

IN-DEPTH TASKS, ESSAY TOPICS, OR ASSIGNMENTS

- Compare this novel to others about a people living in isolation or in a world under threat or siege. For example: *How I Live Now* by Meg Rosoff; Dodie Smith's *I Capture the Castle*; Ursula Dubosarsky's *The Red Shoe*; Nina Bawden's *Carrie's War*; Nancy Mitford's *Love in a Cold Climate* or *The Pursuit of Love*; Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief*; Jane Gardam's *A Long Way From Verona* or *Bilgewater*. Write a comparative essay about this and another of these novels. What literary devices does the author use to convey this sense of isolation or threat?

- Write your own description of the events taking place in Spain during the time in which the novel is set.
- Is the cover an enticing introduction to the work? Design your own cover for the book.
- Create a website for the kingdom of Montmaray as if you were attempting to attract tourists to it in the present day. What features would you include on it? Write a summary of the menu, text for the home page, and links to be included.
- Create a diary account of the days after Sophie arrives at Aunt Charlotte's. What issues might arise? Who might visit?

CONCLUSION

Montmaray is a novel about a family, and the secrets they keep from each other. It's about the road from childhood to adulthood. It's a charming insight into life in the 1930s, and into the fraught political nature of European society prior to World War Two. It's a teenage girl's attempt to understand where she's come from and where she might be heading in life. Sophie's history of the FitzOsborne family is a brief one; but it has had a lengthy gestation, and it's more than likely that she's not finished the story just yet!

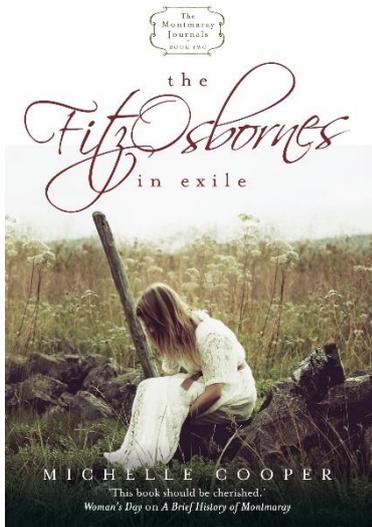
FURTHER RESOURCES

See Author Notes (p. 290) for a further bibliography of influential works.

- Ahnenerbe Deutsches
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahnenerbe>
- Cornish Folklore, Myths and Legends
<http://www.cornwalls.co.uk/myths-legends/myths-legends.htm>
- Crystal Palace
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Crystal_Palace
- Homing Pigeons
<http://www.pigeoncote.com/homing/homing.html>



FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA

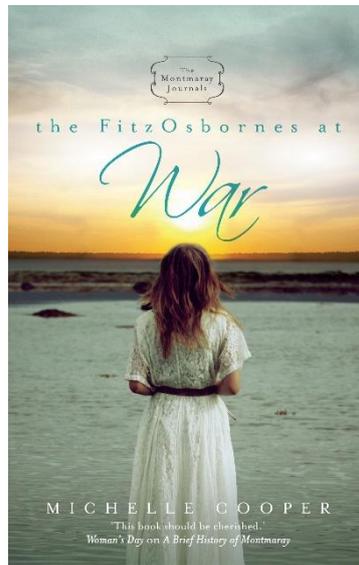


The FitzOsbornes in Exile
by Michelle Cooper

Forced to leave their island kingdom, Sophie FitzOsborne and her eccentric family take shelter in England. Sophie's dreams of making her debut in shimmering ballgowns are finally coming true, but how can she enjoy her new life when they have all lost so much?

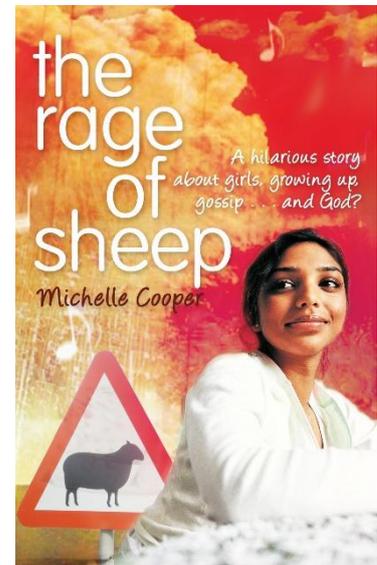
Aunt Charlotte is ruthless in her quest to see Sophie and Veronica married off by the end of the Season, Toby is as charming and lazy as ever, Henry is driving her governess to the brink of madness, and the battle of wills between Simon and Veronica continues. Can Sophie keep her family together, when everything seems to be falling apart?

An enticing glimpse into high society, the cut and thrust of politics as nations scramble to avert world war, and the hidden depths of a family in exile, struggling to find their place in the world.



The FitzOsbornes at War
by Michelle Cooper

Sophia FitzOsborne and the royal family of Montmaray escaped their remote island home when the Nazis attacked. But now war has come to England and the rest of the world as well – nowhere is safe. Sophie fills her journal with tales of a life in wartime. Stories of blackouts and the blitz. Dancing in nightclubs with soldiers on leave. And desperately waiting for news of her brother Toby, last seen flying over enemy territory. But even as bombs rain down on London, hope springs up in surprising places, and love blooms. And when the Allies begin to drive their way across Europe, the FitzOsbornes take heart. Maybe, just maybe, there will be a way to liberate Montmaray – to go home again at last. Sometimes heart-stopping, sometimes heart-breaking, Sophie's story will, as always, capture readers' hearts.



The Rage of Sheep
by Michelle Cooper

It is 1984 and fifteen-year-old Hester Jones is not having a good year. Her best friend has moved away and, even though Natalie and Lynda are allowing her to hang out with them, Hester's struggling to keep up with her cool new friends. Plus, she has the most embarrassing dad in the world, who's never, ever going to let her go to the birthday bash Natalie's planning. Worst of all, her Science teacher's making her work on a project about evolution with that weird Joshua Mason . . .

When everything goes wrong and the world stops making sense, Hester has to decide: is it better to be a sheep, or a goat?



WORKSHEET 1: HISTORICAL EVENTS

Ask students to identify the real and false/or imagined events in this novel on the table below.

Date	Event	Page	Real/False
1066	Battle of Hastings	52	
1542	Baron Bartholomew FitzOsborne is forced by King Henry the Eighth to flee his Cornish estate and is washed up on an island he calls Montmaray, 'mountain of the sea'	21	
1542	King Henry the Eighth beheads his wife Catherine Howard for adultery	21	
1631	Queen Matilda's stand against Moroccan pirates	79	
1713	Treaty of Utrecht	74	
1809	Portuguese–Montmaravian Alliance	16	
1868	Champion pigeon flies from St Sebastien to Liege – 615 miles in one day	253	
1914–1918	Death of 158 Montmaray men during WWI	44-5; 161	
1918	Influenza epidemic	162	
1931	King Alfonso the Thirteenth of Spain is forced into exile when Spanish people voted for a Republic	37	
1936	King Edward of Britain falls in love with a married American woman (Wallis Simpson) and abdicates to marry her	100 , 126, 131	
1936	'Madrid was under attack, the Nationalists had closed Spain's border with France, and the Basques established a separate autonomous government in the north' (p. 33)	33	
1936	Crystal Palace burns down	126	
1936	Montmaray signs a policy of non-intervention in the Spanish conflict	107	



WORKSHEET 2: CHARACTERS

Complete this table of main characters by locating a key quote to describe the characteristics. Then choose one of the characters and use the quote as the basis of an essay describing how the character's nature is revealed and how it relates to the themes of the work.

Character	Characteristics	Key Quotes
King John (FitzOsborne) the Seventh of Montmaray	Mad with grief and wartime pain; not really loved by anyone except for Rebecca.	'I'd never noticed how strongly it related to our own king . . .' (p.168) 'The King is sick and knows not what he does' (p. 169) 'he was such a small part of our lives' (p. 207)
Veronica FitzOsborne	Beautiful and intellectual; bitter re her mother's defection and father's indifference.	
Isabella FitzOsborne, mother of Veronica and wife of King John	Only appears in Sophie's dreams and Veronica's recollections. Estranged from King John; left Montmaray and has not been heard from.	
Aunt Charlotte, sister of Robert and John FitzOsborne	Only appears in letters; wealthy widow; overbearing and opinionated.	
Toby FitzOsborne, eldest of three orphaned children of Robert and Jane FitzOsborne (killed in Seville bombing (pp. 130-1))	Flippant, witty, light-hearted, never serious.	'Must not ever acknowledge that death exists . . . Froth and fairy floss, that's what Toby's letters are.' (p 128)
Sophia (Sophie) FitzOsborne	Forthright, witty, but lacks self-confidence because of her beautiful cousin and feels isolated by her location. Thinks she's ugly and worries that she's too fanciful. Trying to be 'sensible'.	
Henrietta (Henry) FitzOsborne, youngest sister of Toby and Sophie	Wild and impetuous, a tomboy.	'(I'm not concerned about Henry, <i>she's</i> pretty much indestructible. She fell off a cliff once and didn't do anything but scrape her elbow a bit.) She always runs wild when Toby leaves for school each year – not that she's much better behaved when he's here at Montmaray.' (p. 11)
Rebecca Chester, housekeeper	Dotes on King John; grumpy and unkind to all but he and Simon, her son.	



Simon Chester, Rebecca's son, a law clerk in London to family solicitor	Handsome, hard-working, ambitious.	'Simon was clever and ambitious, genuinely concerned about Montmaray and even more interested in himself. He was neither as courageous as Veronica, nor as charming as Toby, but was nevertheless compelling in his own way.' (pp. 227–8)
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Note also the minor characters including: Alice Smith, villager and widow (p.15); Jimmy Smith, Alice's son who is a bit older than, and plays with Henry; George Spenser, uncle to Alice and Mary, great-uncle to Jimmy, former manservant to Sophie's grandfather King John the Sixth and 'knows more about Montmaray than anyone else alive'(p. 15), 'Dear old George . . . in awe of him.' (p. 26); Mary Spenser, Alice's sister and George's niece; Julia Stanley-Ross, the vivacious and enthusiastic sister of Rupert, Toby's friend; Anthony, Julia's fiancé, a wealthy and well-meaning but naive Communist; Otto Rahn, a German historian; Hans Brandt, Rahn's rather aggressive offsider and nephew of the Fuhrer's personal physician (p. 201); the Basque Captain Zuleta who is kind to the children; and Daniel Bloom, former tutor of the FitzOsbornes and correspondent with Veronica.

You may wish to discover quotes about them as well.



WORKSHEET 3: INTERPRETATION OF EVENTS

This is a timeline outlining some of the key events described in the novel. Choose any event on this timeline and write about it in third person from another character's point of view, rather than in Sophie's first person.

Dates	Event	Page
1918	King John returns from war and meets 18-year-old Isabella.	211
1919	Veronica and Toby born six weeks apart.	211
23 October 1920	Sophia born.	
1926	Sophia's parents, Robert and Jane, are killed by a bomb in Seville.	130-1
1928	Isabella leaves Montmaray and her family; George's part in Isabella's death is described.	68-9; 213-5
October 1936	Toby has been thrown out of Eton and sent to a new school where he is in MarchHare House.	1-2
23 October 1936	For Sophie's 16th birthday, Toby gives her a leather-bound journal and she receives a letter from Aunt Charlotte suggesting she and Veronica go to London to make their debut.	2-11
2 November 1936	Simon arrives with reports of Toby's need for money and the political talks in London; Sophie suggests they sell the Fabergé egg.	28-39
4 November 1936	Sophie finds two photos in the Solar which are mysterious.	62-80
6 November 1936	Simon leaves, and Julia and Anthony fly in.	81-95
23 November 1936	George dies.	114
25 November 1936	George's funeral and Sophie's vision.	116-122
15 December 1936	Alice announces she's leaving the island.	135
Boxing Day 1936	Otto Rahn and Hans Brandt land on the island in search of the Grail.	141
29 December 1936	Hans is killed by King John and Veronica and Sophie take the body and throw it off a cliff into the ocean.	170-191
1 January 1937	King John is dead.	207
5 January 1937	Toby comes home with Simon and the Reverend Webster Herbert.	217
7 January 1937	Rebecca reveals Simon's true parentage and halts John's funeral.	234
8 January 1937	Herbert leaves as Mr Davies-Chesterton from the British Foreign Office arrives.	246
8 January 1937	Toby breaks his leg and dislocates his arm.	248-51
10 January 1937	Aeroplane arrives with Anthony to rescue Toby and Henry.	255
12 January 1937	German aircraft bomb Montmaray.	261
12 January 1937	Simon and Sophie take a raft to get the rowboat, and return for Veronica and Rebecca. They are all rescued by the Basque Captain Zuleta.	280
14 January 1937	Sophie goes to Aunt Charlotte's home.	284-6



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