

RANDOM HOUSE TEACHERS' RESOURCE KIT

Cattra's Legacy

Anna Mackenzie

The story begins with 13-year-old Risha leading a simple life in an isolated mountain village. Her scholarly but taciturn father is her only family. When Pelon dies suddenly, Risha is left homeless, with only one woman in the village prepared to show her any support or kindness. Disguised as a boy, Risha leaves the village with a group of traders, on a quest to find out the truth about her mother and her heritage.

Her departure from Torfell proves to be the beginning of a grand and sweeping adventure as Risha is caught up in dangerous pursuits, intrigue, trickery and betrayal. Left for dead, she must hide from those who wish her harm. As her strange adventure continues it is almost impossible for Risha to be sure of who is friend and who is foe.

Then Risha finds out by chance that her mother's name was Cattra. But who was this mysterious Cattra, and why do so many wish to find her long-lost daughter? By the end of this exciting historical fantasy adventure Risha is a confident 16-year-old who has discovered at least part of the truth about herself. But as a result she faces new dilemmas, including problems of who to trust and who to love.



Anna Mackenzie is a teacher of creative writing and a magazine editor. This is her seventh novel; she wrote it for her daughter.



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Readership: 12+

RESOURCE KIT CONTAINS:

- Before Reading
- Close Reading
- Style and Techniques
- Vocabulary
- Characters
- Themes
- Creative Responses

Price (GST inclusive) and author details are correct at the time of writing but are subject to change without notice. Visit www.randomhouse.co.nz for up-to-date information.

Before Reading

1. What does the cover picture indicate about the book's content?
2. When and where might the story be set?
3. What does the title suggest to you?

Close Reading

Chapter One

1. What mood does the opening line create (p. 9)? What expectations are set up in your mind after reading the first page?
2. What are your initial impressions of Risha based on the first three pages of this book (pp. 9–11)? What hints are there that she is not like the other villagers?
3. Who do you think Nonno is (p. 12)?
4. What is your first impression of Bram (pp. 12–14)? What evidence is there that he may be lying to Risha?
5. What clues are there from the contents of Pelon's chest that there is some mystery linked to both him and Risha (pp. 14–20)?
6. Why might Pelon have been angry with Risha for playing thought-picture games with the mysterious Nonno (p. 15)?
7. Why is Risha so fond of Ganny (p. 17)? What makes Ganny so appealing to Risha?
8. How would you describe the relationship between Emmett and Risha (p. 19)? Why might it have changed over time?
9. What are your impressions of the village of Torfell from this opening chapter?

10. What clues are there in this first chapter about the genre of this novel?
11. Now that you have read this chapter, what is the significance of the title, *Pelon's Gift*?

Chapter Two

1. What is your first impression of Barc, the trader (pp. 23–28)?
2. What do you think Barc meant when he said, "My business lies in not knowing and not asking" (p. 27)?
3. Why do you think Marit agrees to let Risha travel with them (p. 32)?

Chapter Three

1. What are your initial impressions of Amos and Sulba in this chapter (pp. 34–36)?
2. What do you think Geet means when she says, "At least the ones (predators) we meet here don't pretend to be anything other than they are" (p. 36)?
3. What do we learn about Geet from this chapter (pp. 35–41)?

Chapter Four

1. Why are the cities considered to be a trader's nightmare (p. 43)?

2. Barc tells Risha that “People are mostly not what they seem”. Which of the characters in this chapter seem trustworthy to Risha and how does she make these choices?
3. What evidence is there that Polton is not a happy place (p. 47)?
4. Why did Geet offer to employ Risha (pp. 48–49)? If it is just for practical reasons, why are the other traders surprised?

Chapter Five

1. Why do you think Geet told Risha that she should “look after your mule first, your feet second, and everything else third” (p. 50)?
2. How do the traders make their money (p. 51)?
3. Why does Geet tell Risha that “being able to go unnoticed is a useful skill” (p. 52)? Do you think that Geet knows more about Risha than she lets on?
4. Why do you think someone may have stolen the manuscript from Risha (p. 54)? Who appears to be the chief suspect?
5. What clues are there that Risha is linked to the prisoner in some way (pp. 55–56)?

Chapter Six

1. Why does Sulba follow Risha (p. 61)?
2. “Does he know who you are?” Olli asks Risha (pp. 64–65). What indications are there in this chapter that Risha may be more than a poor village girl with no parents?
3. Now that you have read this chapter, what is the significance of the title?

Chapter Seven

1. What do you think may be Cattr’s heritage

and legacy (p. 66)? Why might people be hiding it from Risha?

2. What do you think Barc might mean when he says to Risha, “Don’t let Sulba’s sacrifice be wasted” (p. 69)?
3. Why does Olli agree to help Risha cross the lake, despite his earlier promise to Barc (p. 72)?

Chapter Eight

1. What precautions did Olli take in order to smuggle Risha across the lake without being caught by the guards (pp. 73–75)?
2. Why do you think Fenn agrees to help Risha (pp. 78–81)?
3. What do we learn about both Fenn and Risha from this exciting chapter?

Chapter Nine

1. Describe the city of Elion in your own words (pp. 85–86). Why do you think Risha was disappointed by it?
2. Why do you think scholars are banned from associating with women (pp. 87 & 91)?
3. What do you think Meredus means when he says to Tadeus, “It is worth reminding ourselves, at times, of that which has fallen from view” (p. 93)?
4. What does Risha learn about her family from Meredus (pp. 94–95)? To what extent is he able to ‘fill in the gaps’ for her?

Chapter Ten

1. How is Fenn able to trick the guardsman (p. 101)? What does this tell us about Fenn?
2. Why does Risha agree to go with Muir and his men (p. 106)? Should she trust him?

3. What is your first impression of Muir (pp. 106–107)?

Chapter Eleven

1. What makes Risha suspicious of Muir (p. 110)?
2. After Risha cuts Muir, Gorth says that Risha's actions confirm her likeness to her father (p. 111). What does this suggest about Risha's father and does this fit with what we already know about Pelon?
3. Why does Muir tell Risha to keep the knife (p. 112)?

Chapter Twelve

1. How does Risha's opinion of Muir once again change in this chapter?
2. Why does Risha turn down the opportunity to learn about navigation by the stars (p. 117)? Is she being short-sighted?

Chapter Thirteen

1. How does Risha feel upon first arriving at the citadel (pp. 119–120)? What is her first impression of the place?
2. Describe Risha's first impressions of Cantrel and Fretha (pp. 120–121).
3. Why do you think Risha is required to take lessons in a wide variety of subjects (p. 123)? What clues are there about Risha's possible future?
4. What does Risha think of Timon now that she's had the opportunity to meet him properly (pp. 124–125)? What clues are there that they have a strong link of some type?

Chapter Fourteen

1. What are Risha's first impressions of Donnel (pp. 131–132)?
2. According to Donnel, "Greed is behind much injustice" (p. 135). To what extent do you agree with Donnel's statement?
3. Who are Somoran and Goltoy (pp. 135–136)?
4. What do you think Risha means when she says of Donnel, "He is accustomed to being a leader" (p. 136)?
5. What do you think Donnel means when he says, "rule is responsibility" (p. 140)?
6. What clues are there that Donnel knew Risha's mother well (pp. 139–140)?

Chapter Fifteen

1. Why does Somoran want to marry Margetta, even though she is just a child (p. 143)?
2. Why does Risha foolishly ride off on a strange horse (p. 144)?
3. Is Risha right to place her trust in the enigmatic Muir (p. 147)?
4. What clues are there about Barc's true identity (p. 149)? Should Risha still regard him as a friend?

Chapter Sixteen

1. What does Cantrel mean when he says to Risha, "We each must live the life laid before us" (p. 154)?
2. Why does Cantrel suggest that Risha should go with him to tour Le Marc (p. 155)?

3. What does Risha learn from the contrast between life in the two duchies (p. 156)?
4. Why does Emmett go in search of Risha (p. 158)? Should he be trusted?
5. Why is Risha shocked to discover that Pelon has letters written to him by Cantrel (p. 163)?
6. Having read this chapter, what is the significance of the title?

Chapter Seventeen

1. Why do you think Muir is suddenly so curious about Risha's childhood in Torfell (pp. 164–165)?
2. Why does Risha think that she may be illegitimate (p. 168)?
3. Why do you think that no one seems prepared to tell Risha the truth about her past (p. 169)? What effect does this have on her?
4. What does Muir mean when he talks about the "dispossessed" farmers (p. 173)? How is this related to the actions of Somoran?
5. What indications are there that war is inevitable (p. 174)?

Chapter Eighteen

1. Why won't Muir tell Risha the truth about her father (p. 179)?
2. What hints had there been earlier in this novel to suggest that Pelon was not Risha's birth father (p. 181)?
3. Why do you think the truth was hidden from Risha for so long (p. 181)? Were the motives for this deception reasonable?

4. Why does Muir defend Donnel's actions (p. 184)?
5. Who is Nonno and what significance might she have for Risha (p. 186)?
6. According to Cantrel, the men Goltoy placed in the Sitting "proved strangely accident-prone and had a habit of falling prey to illnesses of the mind" (p. 186). How may this statement be linked to the vision Risha has of a woman with her hands clasped?

Chapter Nineteen

1. Why do Muir and his men agree to help Barc rescue Margetta (pp. 188–189)?
2. Why are the hill people forced to steal? What plan does Risha come up with to help them (pp. 192–194)?
3. Was Risha's attempt to rescue Muir unwise and foolhardy (pp. 197–198)? Why did she risk her own life in order to save him?

Chapter Twenty

1. Why do you think the little boy helps Risha and Muir (p. 205)?
2. Outline the ways in which Clik helps Risha and Muir to survive in this chapter.

Chapter Twenty-one

1. What evidence is there in this chapter that Risha has changed and matured since the opening chapter of this novel?
2. Why was Risha unable to put Torfell out of her misery (p. 220)? What does this suggest about Risha?

Chapter Twenty-two

1. Why does Risha initially think that the

mysterious old man might be Death (p. 222)?

2. Why do you think Blor helped Risha and Muir (p. 223)?
3. Why does Risha think that Blor knows more than he lets on (p. 228)?
4. How do Marsh people feed themselves and manage to live in such inhospitable surroundings (p. 229)?
5. Why is Risha so keen to spend time with Ira (p. 231)?

Chapter Twenty-three

1. What skills does Risha learn from the Marsh people (pp. 232–234)?
2. To what extent do you think Muir is correct when he says that they shouldn't have attempted to rescue Margetta (p. 235)?
3. Why was Ira reluctant to answer all of Muir's question about the Nan-Irem (p. 236)?

Chapter Twenty-four

1. What appears to have happened to Le Marc while Muir and Risha were with the Marsh people (p. 241)?
2. Why is the woman initially reluctant to help them and why does she change her mind (pp. 244–247)?
3. Why is Risha so upset by the sight of the blacksmith's horse (p. 248)?

Chapter Twenty-five

1. Why is Risha reluctant for the fighting to continue (p. 251)?
2. Why does Donnel initially tell Muir that he

is to be detained on charge of treason (p. 253)?

3. Why does Donnel want to reinstate all the royal houses (p. 255)?
4. What is it about Risha that enables her to win the loyalty of numerous men (p. 256)?

Chapter Twenty-six

1. To what extent do you agree with Risha's view that war appeals only to men (p. 257)?
2. Why is Muir so hostile to Barc (p. 258)?
3. Why does Risha make Margetta's happiness her main priority (p. 259)?
4. Why do you think that Muir suggested to Emmett that he should go with him to war (p. 262)?

Chapter Twenty-seven

1. Why does Risha seek out Captain Galyn (pp. 266–268)?
2. What does Risha find out about her mother in this chapter?
3. What is Harl's attitude to war (pp. 274–275)?

Chapter Twenty-eight

1. How does Emmett prove helpful (p. 276)? How has he changed since he arrived at the citadel?

Chapter Twenty-nine

1. How successful is the decoy strategy (p. 284)?
2. How realistic do you think Risha's plan is (pp. 286–289)? Should she have put the lives of children in danger?

3. How effective are the defence plans of Risha and Cantrel in this chapter?

Chapter Thirty

1. What do you think part of Cattr's legacy to Risha might be (pp. 299–302)?
2. Describe the different types of strategies and weapons used during the defence of the citadel in this chapter.
3. Why do you think Risha is eventually successful in contacting Timon through her thought game (p. 308)?
4. What qualities does Cantrel say Risha has inherited from her parents (p. 309)?

Chapter Thirty-one

1. Why does Timon display signs of wary tension (p. 316)?
2. How does Timon think Risha has changed since their first meeting (p. 320)?
3. What signs are there that there is conflict between the Council and the military forces of Haven (pp. 321–325)? How might this be to Risha's advantage?
4. Why is Ferron keen to have Risha travel to Havre and why is she reluctant (p. 323)?

5. Why do you think Captain Nolan is so keen to help Risha (p. 328)?

6. Why does Risha make a point of dressing up for the dinner (p. 333)?
7. To what extent do you agree with Lyse's comments about how to impress men (p. 334)?
8. At this point in the novel Risha appears to be appealing for more than just friendship from Muir (pp. 339–340). Why do you think he holds back even though it is apparent that she wants more than just loyalty from him?

Chapter Thirty-two

1. What signs are there that Emmett may be a little in love with Risha (p. 342)?
2. What signs are there that Goltoy will make further trouble for Donnel and Risha in the future (p. 345)?
3. Why does Donnel want the young Margetta to rule Fretton (p. 345)? Wouldn't he be a better ruler?
4. Why does Cantrel tell Risha that she will need to temper Donnel in his attempts to achieve his twin goals (p. 348)?

Style and Technique

1. *Cattra's Legacy* combines elements of historical fiction with elements of fantasy fiction. Create two lists commenting on which parts of this novel read like history and which parts read like fantasy. Then write a paragraph explaining why you think this novel is more one genre than the other. You could try comparing it to other novels, e.g. *Lord of the Rings* by J. R. R. Tolkien and *The Other Boleyn Girl* by Philippa Gregory, to help you come up with an argument supporting your opinion.
2. This novel is written from the omniscient narrator point of view but the writer has adopted a limited omniscient perspective so that we learn mostly about Risha's thoughts and opinions. How effective do you think this narrative style is? What limitations are there with using this perspective?
3. Throughout literature it is usually possible to identify a number of common plot patterns (also known as archetypes). Some of these include:
 - the inner quest - a journey towards self discovery;
 - the journey in search of a hidden treasure or in search of vital information;
 - ambition - a character or group of characters may be desperate to attain power over others or to achieve a particular goal;
 - the need for revenge - a central character may seek to avenge a wrong doing;
 - mixed identities - characters may conceal their real identities for some reason or they may be unaware of who they really are;
 - romantic complications - characters find it difficult to acknowledge their attraction to other characters or there may be obstacles that stand in the way of true love;
 - survival - the main characters may be in danger of losing their lives and must find ways to overcome life threatening perils;
 - the outsider - a stranger may arrive whose presence causes change, conflict or even transformation.How many of these patterns can you find in *Cattra's Legacy*? Think about other novels you have studied or read and see if you can identify similar patterns.

Vocabulary

This novel contains many words you may not have come across before. Find out what these words mean and create a glossary for the novel. You may like to add other words in this novel that are new to you, particularly words which have their origins in medieval society:

- tithe man
- camaraderie
- sequestered
- pawn
- circumspection
- sardonic
- mullioned
- chatelaine
- parapet
- seneschal
- etiquette
- armoury
- apoplexy
- usurper
- coalesced
- alluvial
- elucidate
- lintel
- fug
- pragmatic
- defeatist
- mangonel
- burghers
- ram
- trebuchet
- escalades
- grapples
- portcullis
- scaling tower
- barbican
- prosaic

Characters

1. Select four adjectives to describe each of the following characters:
 - Ganny
 - Emmett
 - Barc
 - Sulba
 - Muir
 - Timon
 - Ira
 - Lyse
 - Margetta
 - Donnel
 - Cantrel
2. How would you have described Risha at the beginning of the novel? Select four key events in the novel that you think are turning points for Risha and describe the effect of each of these events on her.
3. Emmett is another character who changes in the novel. What was he like at the beginning and how has he changed by the end? How would you describe his relationship with Risha?
4. There are a number of strong, independent women in this novel including Geet, Fenn, and Ira. Why do you think each of these women chose to help Risha?
5. Compare and contrast the lives and personalities of Margetta and Risha. Use quotes from the novel to support your points.
6. There are a number of male characters who could potentially end up as romantic partners for Risha. Which man do you think is most likely to end up being the romantic hero, presuming this book is the first in a series? Use quotes from the novel to support your opinion.
7. Although Cattrra is already dead by the time the novel starts, how does the author create a strong sense of personality for this character?
8. Compare and contrast the character of Pelon with Risha's birth father, Donnel. What clues are there to suggest that both men had very different plans for Risha? Use quotes from the novel to support your opinion.
9. Which character did you particularly like or dislike? Why?
10. Nonno is a character often referred to in the novel but very little is known about her. What do you think she is like? What clues are there that she may still be alive?

Themes

Discuss the following themes and find examples from *Cattra's Legacy* which illustrate:

- The search for personal identity and one's place in the world
- Loyalty
- Justice
- Lust for power
- The rights and responsibilities that come with leadership
- Parental love
- Coping with grief and loss
- The importance of history in shaping societies and character
- Betrayal
- Romantic love
- The corrosive nature of secrets

Creative Responses

- Using the map at the front of this novel as a starting point, illustrate it and mark on it Risha's travels and adventures. You could begin by photocopying and enlarging the map.
- Write a back story for Clik, explaining how he came to be where he was when he rescued Risha and Muir. For example, do you think he was mute from birth or did something happen to him that caused him to become mute? Does he have any family?
- If this novel was turned into a movie what songs or music do you think would be appropriate for the soundtrack? Explain why you would use particular music/songs to accompany specific events in the novel.
- Draw a picture or plan of the interior and exterior of Sair's house in the marshes.
- Draw a picture or plan of the interior and exterior of the citadel.
- What do you think could or should happen in the sequel to this novel? Write a one page outline of the plot for the sequel you would write. Be sure to include a possible title for this sequel.
- Find other books which have young adult characters finally discovering the truth about themselves. Write a comparative review where you compare and contrast *Cattra's Legacy* with at least one other novel dealing with this theme.
- Write a review of the book, aiming it at the readership of your favourite magazine, newspaper or website.
- Rewrite one of the scenes between Risha and Muir as a play script. If your school has filming or recording equipment, produce your scene.
- Write a series of diary entries about one of the main events in the book from the point of view of three of the following characters:
 - Risha
 - Timon
 - Muir
 - Lyse
 - Ira
 - Fretha
 - Cantrel
 - Donnel
- Create a timeline that shows the main events of the novel.
- Choose and research one of the topics from the list below. Present your findings as a formal report, a powerpoint or in poster format:
 - The construction and function of castles in medieval times
 - Medieval warfare
 - Medieval maps
 - Life for women in feudal times
 - Fantasy fiction for young adult readers
 - Historical fiction for young adult readers
 - Famous women in medieval history, e.g. Eleanor of Aquitaine, Isabella of Spain, Elizabeth the First, Joan of Arc
- Attempt to summarise the plot of this novel in a 140 character tweet.