

## These notes are for:

- Secondary
- 14+ yrs old

## Key Learning Areas:

- English
- Health
- Science
- Art
- ICT

## Example of:

- Graphic Novel
- Illustrated Fiction

## Experience of:

- Reading & Writing
- Reflecting on text
- Listening & Speaking
- Research
- Visual Literacy

## Themes:

- Eating Disorders
- Self-Esteem
- Friendship
- Peer Pressure
- Graphic Novel
- Health

\*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

Walker Books Australia  
Locked Bag 22  
Newtown, N.S.W., 2042

Ph +61 2 9517 9577  
Fax +61 2 9517 9997

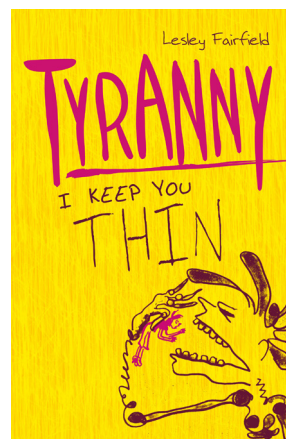
For enquiries please contact education:  
educationwba@walkerbooks.com.au

Notes © 2011 Walker Books Australia Pty. Ltd.  
All Rights Reserved

## Tyranny

### Tyranny

By: Lesley Fairfield  
ISBN: 9781406331134  
ARRP: \$16.95  
NZRRP: \$18.99  
No. of Pages: 128  
April 2011



## Outline:

In this stark portrayal of a young woman's struggle with anorexia, Lesley Fairfield draws on her own experiences of an eating disorder to give a powerful and candid story of hope and survival.

"Do I know you?" "You've always known me, silly... I'm Tyranny, your other self. I keep you thin." One day, horrified by her reflection in the mirror, Anna makes a life-changing decision – that food is the enemy. Her obsession with being thin and beautiful will now dominate her every waking and sleeping hour. Should she falter or show any signs of weakness, Tyranny, her inner voice of "reason" will be only too willing to push her back into line. Years later, when Anna finally finds the strength to defeat her personal demon, it will be a matter of life and death.

## Author Information:

Lesley Fairfield is a graduate of the Ontario College of Art and Design and has illustrated many children's books. Her work concerning body image has appeared in *Dance in Canada* magazine and in York University's *International Women's Studies Journal*. Lesley's thirty-year battle with anorexia and bulimia has informed her work and given *Tyranny*, her first graphic novel, a sharp edge and deep insight.

## How to Use These Notes:

These notes are to be used in conjunction with the text *Tyranny* by Lesley Fairfield. Multiple copies of the text are recommended for shared reading. This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

## Classroom Ideas for *Tyranny*:

### *Before reading Tyranny:*

- View the cover and title. Identify the following:
  - The title of the book
  - The author
  - The illustrator
  - The publisher
- Discuss the following: What is the role of the author/illustrator? What is the role of the publisher? Who else is involved in the making of a book? What age do you think the intended audience for this book is?
- From the front and back cover what information can you learn about the book? What do you think this book is about? How do you think the book will begin/end?
- What does Tyranny mean? Why do you think Lesley Fairfield chose to name her personification of anorexia Tyranny? What does this imply about the feeling of a sufferer of anorexia towards their disease?
- Research eating disorders online and in the library.
  - What different types of eating disorders are there?
  - What are the different signs/symptoms of an eating disorder?
  - What treatments are available?

### *Activities and Discussion Questions:*

- Why do you think Lesley Fairfield has chosen to use the technique of personification to represent anorexia? How does the personification of anorexia show how Anna feels about the eating disorder?
- Do you ever feel there are parts of you motivating/pushing you towards something?
- What does the note taped to Anna's mirror on page 14 say? How does this contradict what Anna sees in the mirror? What does this show about body image perception versus actual body?
- The first step Anna takes when she feels insecure about her body is to diet (p.18). Discuss if diets are okay? When is dieting going too far? Brainstorm what it means to have a healthy lifestyle. What is eating healthy? How much exercise should a person do?
- Research statistics and find out what percentage of Australian girls aged 12-17 have been on a diet? What percentage of boys for the same age group have also been on a diet? Discuss why you think these numbers are so high and what this might mean for our culture?
- What is self-esteem? How is this important to feelings of confidence and self-worth?
- Find an image of a model in a magazine and test it with Leonardo da Vinci's circle as shown on page 24. Does it match up proportionally? How does an image of yourself match up? Discuss what impact these distortions have had on perceptions of an ideal body in our culture.
- What role did puberty play in Anna's battle with anorexia? Why does body image become such a major concern around this age? Brainstorm ways that could have helped Anna deal with these changes.
- How is the character of Tyranny used to show Anna's internal conflicts with herself? How does this conflict work to further undermine Anna's feelings of self-worth? How is this visually represented?
- Cynthia received direct pressure from the fashion industry to be thinner. What moral issues does this raise about the fashion industry pushing its models towards unhealthy and unnatural bodies?
- Cynthia's friends proudly claim that Cynthia's modelling makes her "our celebrity", page 76. Do you think this avocation of her fame and modelling encourages her to continue to strive towards unhealthy and unattainable goals of appearance? Discuss.

- Using cut-up images from magazines create an abstract portrait of yourself.
- Discuss the role the fashion industry has on perceptions of physical perfection and the pressure this places on women and men to look and act in certain ways.
- What two metaphors are used to describe Anna's feeling of losing herself to anorexia? How do these metaphors work to show Anna's feelings of anorexia taking over her life?
- The depiction of therapy on page 70 shows Anna using building blocks to put together her identity. How does this visual representation demonstrate Anna's internal thoughts? Do you think this is a suitable metaphor to describe what Anna is trying to do?
- Visually represent a challenge that you have faced in your life where you felt overwhelmed and out of control in comic-strip form.
- What are the different complaints that Anna's friends list about their bodies on pages 81-83? Do you think this placed peer pressure on Anna to conform to a culture of negative body image? Discuss how these scenes portray the social norm in our culture to be physically self-conscious.
- Brainstorm ways that you can make yourself feel happier about your body. For example, find something positive that you like about your body, wear a piece of clothing or an accessory that makes you feel pretty or special, etc.
- Brainstorm ways to help others feel more happy about themselves. For example, compliment others, do not bully or put others down, etc.
- Break into pairs and trace each other's outlines as Anna did on page 106. How does your outline compare with what you think of your body? What do others think of your outline? Is this different to how you feel about it? How do you feel about showing your outline to people?
- Anna quotes Shakespeare's play *Hamlet* on page 70, "To thine own self be true." Look up the quote in its original context. What do you think Shakespeare meant by this statement? How does this fit in with how Anna interprets the quote? What does Shakespeare's advice mean to you?
- What are the physical side effects of anorexia named in *Tyranny*? Research online and in the library to find more ways that anorexia affects a person's psychological and physical health.
- How is the character of Tyranny represented in the book? How does this image reflect his role as a character in this book?
- What motivates Anna to work towards rejecting Tyranny and being healthy? Is there a definite answer to anorexia for Anna? Why do you think Lesley Fairfield has left it open ended?
- How does *Tyranny*'s unravelling at the end of the book parallel both Anna's feeling of being lost and Cynthia's death? Why do you think the author chose to depict the end of *Tyranny* as an unravelling? What do you think the squiggles at the end signify?
- How do the graphic images help to contribute to the story? How much of the story is told through words and how much is told through images? Do you think that a graphic novel was the perfect form to tell Anna's story? Why?

### After reading *Tyranny*:

- Write a review of *Tyranny*. Did this match your original expectations of the book?
- Did you find the story of *Tyranny* confronting? Were you able to relate to Anna at all? Has reading this story changed how you feel about your own body? Do you think this was a powerful story?
- If you were to create a movie of *Tyranny* what music would you choose to accompany it?
- Visit [www.butterflyfoundation.org.au](http://www.butterflyfoundation.org.au) for more information on anorexia and other eating disorders