

# A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO

## BULLIES AT SCHOOL by Theresa Breslin



www.florisbooks.co.uk

### Themes/issues addressed in this book

Bullying; school; self-esteem; friendship; ancient Celts

### Book Summary

Siobhan is being bullied at school by classmates, including one girl who used to be her best friend. She only has two choices – say nothing, or fight back, and she doesn't have the strength to fight back. She can't tell her mum, who has money worries, nor Mrs Allan, the friendly librarian. She feels big and clumsy, and suffers in silence.

Then she starts a school project on the ancient Celts, and discovers a mysterious brooch once owned by a Celtic princess, also called Siobhan. The brooch gives her the strength to fight back. But she is in danger of becoming a bully herself. Eventually, she discovers that there is, in fact, a third way – telling someone what is going on.

Theresa Breslin, a Carnegie medal-winning author, is in tune with how children feel and how they relate to each other. The dialogue is realistic, and the language is suitable for 7 to 11 year olds.

## BEFORE READING

### Group Activities

- Discussion: what is it like to be bullied? How does it make you feel? Compile a list of words which describe how it feels.
- Discussion: have you ever seen anyone being bullied? What did you do about it?

## AFTER READING

### Individual Work

- Siobhan finds a Celtic legend where the hero is also called Siobhan. Whereas modern-day Siobhan was surrounded by bullies, Celtic Siobhan had to fight off warring enemies. Write your own Celtic legend, in two pages, using your name for the hero. Give your hero a problem to deal with which is similar to one you face.
- In the Educational Resource Centre, Siobhan and Mrs Allan look at some illuminated manuscripts. Look at examples of first-letter illuminations in books in your library, or on the internet. Using the first letter of your own name, design your own illumination.
- In the back of the book, there is a poem about being bullied. Pick out five important words from the poem, and use them to write a paragraph on what it's like to be bullied.

### Group Activities

- The Plaid Pin that Siobhan finds has some intricate Celtic knotwork. Look at other examples of knotwork in books in your library, or on the internet. In groups, create your own knotwork design.
- Discussion: what can you do if you're being bullied? Create an imaginary classmate who is being picked on and advise them of what to do. Use the information in the back of the book to help.

### Vocabulary

- Check you know what the following words mean:

annoyance	catastrophe	intricate
clumsy	circumstances	unravelling
ashamed	interrupt	elation
pronounced	expense	vanquish
meekly	accompany	courage
dabbed	journals	
conduct	illuminated manuscript	
brambles	artefact	

### KELPIES

#### Series Summary

*The award-winning Kelpies series is Scotland's favourite collection of children's fiction. Floris Books took over publication of these books in 2001. The series includes such classic novels as Kathleen Fidler's The Desperate Journey, Mollie Hunter's The Thirteenth Member, and Theresa Breslin's Simon's Challenge. Genres included in the series range from historical and folklore to detective and adventure stories.*

### CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS COVERED

#### 5-14 Curriculum (Scotland)

Years: P4-P7

#### Reading:

Reading for Information  
Reading to Reflect  
Awareness of Genre

#### Talking:

Talking in groups  
Talking about texts  
Talking about experiences, feeling and opinions

#### Writing:

Functional  
Imaginative

#### National Curriculum (England, Wales, Northern Ireland)

Key Stage 2

#### English: Reading

Reading Strategies  
Response to Texts, inc analysing and evaluating  
Reading for Information  
National Literacy Strategy:  
Text-Level Reading  
Text-Level Writing  
Vocabulary