

# RESOURCE KIT FOR TEACHERS

## *Longacre Press Young Adult Fiction*

ANYWHERE  
BUT  
HERE

– sequel to *Thieves*

Ella West

*'We may have escaped the Project  
but there is more ....'* Nicky

Like wanted criminals, Nicky and the other travellers are on the run. But what's their crime?

They all have an extraordinary gift: the ability to transport themselves anywhere, through the powers of thought alone. Pursuing the travellers is the Project, an organisation that abducted them from their parents, virtually enslaving them, and pushed them to carry out secret missions. Until they escaped.

Now the five teenagers are in Los Angeles, trying to keep one step ahead of their pursuers. They might make it if they work as a team — but loyalties are shifting.

In one head-long dash, the travellers must find out what they want and who they want to be, but the Project is shadowing their every move.

The sequel to *Thieves*, and the second novel in a planned trilogy, *Anywhere But Here* is a taut, tersely written race against time.

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RESOURCE KIT CONTAINS:  
Language and Character Questions,  
Creative Responses and Research Topics.

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### SPECIFICATIONS:

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*'... exhilarating.'* Anna Jackson  
[on *Thieves*] NZ Books

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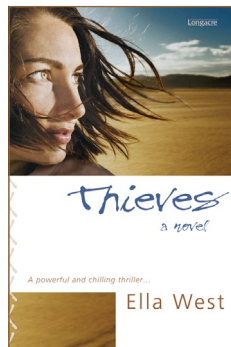
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Bill Nichol

ELLA WEST was awarded the 2006 Louis Johnson/Creative New Zealand Bursary for New Writers. Her first novel, *Thieves*, was short-listed for the 2007 NZ Post Children’s Book Award. She works as a journalist and is writing the third novel in the “Thieves’ trilogy.

Ella West is also involved in film and script writing.



## Author statement:

I wanted to make this book one headlong dash, a frantic race in which Nicky and the other travellers are running, not just from the Project, but also from reality. In the end, desperate, sobbing, they find they cannot run any more. It is over.

Sure, they know the Project is after them, but it is more than that. They are in a race against time to find out who they really want to be – are they travellers, or can they hide and become ‘normal people’ again? If anything, it is their own sense of responsibility that trips them up.

So, if you were fourteen years old, and on the run, what would be the most amazing place to find yourself in? Los Angeles of course. I did think, when writing, Nicky should try to visit Disneyland or maybe Universal Studios but, well, they are being chased. Even writers can’t do everything they want to. However, I hope I have shown the experience of what it could be like to be in a big city, away from adults for the first time, and far from home.

About Paul never having seen the sea – that experience really happened to someone I knew. We were hosting an exchange student from Iowa for a week and there was a seal colony near where we were living. I took him there one afternoon and he stared and stared – not at the seals – but at the sea. There was a huge storm about to come in and he just kept on looking. In the end I headed back to the car without him and he arrived about fifteen minutes later soaking wet from the rain. For most of us living in New Zealand, the sea is not far away, but imagine what it would be like if you had never seen it.

Writers tend to store up ideas and experiences that have happened to them like that. We pull them out when we need to fill our pages. Some of the other ‘real’ stuff from *Anywhere But Here* is the swimming in the sea (I’m a keen beach person), sitting on a pier and once I did get really, really drunk on tequila and grapefruit juice – don’t ever try it!

*Ella West*

## Language:

1. Figurative language is used to convey ideas that otherwise might be difficult to express. An example of figurative language is the simile, which uses 'as' and 'like'. For example, 'My chest feels like it has a helicopter inside it' (p.20). Find some more examples of similes from the book.
2. The author uses symbolism in the book. What are the following phrases typically symbolic of? A 'curve ball' (p.160) and a 'tug of war' (p.23). What is the origin of these phrases?
3. What is the genre of this book? List the aspects that are indicative of the genre.
4. What is the literary definition of 'pathetic fallacy'? Find a scene in the novel where it is evident.
5. Describe in a paragraph how the tension builds and falls away during the book.  
Find a passage in the novel that is high intensity, and another which is low intensity. Copy both out and compare the language used (choice of words, length of sentences, the pace at which details are revealed). How is language used to create intensity?
6. Nicky describes her surreal dream (p.195). What is the literary definition of 'surrealism'? Choose a sequence from the novel and rewrite it as a surrealist episode.

## Characters:

1. In this novel the author tells us how old the five 'thieves' are. List their names, ages and characteristics.
2. Mark on a world map the countries the 'thieves' come from.
3. What are the different pressures on Paul throughout the novel? What factors lead to the decisions he makes?
4. Shelley states in the motel that she never wants to travel again (p.19). Why is this?
5. How does Nicky and Jake's relationship change throughout the novel? What effects do the changes have on themselves and others around them? What is their new closeness based on? Do you see a future for their attraction? How does it differ from the relationship between Nicky and Paul?
6. Which character do you most identify with and why?

## Creative Responses/ Research:

1. Why wouldn't the Project let the 'thieves' watch TV or read newspapers (p.16)? List and describe all the ways the travellers' freedom has been curtailed or restricted by the Project.
2. Nicky reads *The Los Angeles Daily News* (p.18). Is this a real newspaper? What are the main newspapers in New Zealand?
3. Nicky feels once they are in the motel that they have 'traded one prison for another' (p.25). Even though they are free, why won't some of the 'thieves' leave the motel?

4. What supplies do Paul and Nicky buy at the mini supermarket (p.26)? Write a shopping list of what you would have bought.
5. How and why does Nicky react to the car back-firing (p.28)?
6. What does Jake mean when he says he will 'develop a temperament to match his red hair' (p.30)? What other stereotypes are linked to outward appearances?
7. Imagine you had to change your appearance to escape detection. What would you do?
8. Nicky's birthday is on Waitangi Day. How would you explain the significance of Waitangi Day to a visitor from outside New Zealand (p.30)?
9. Nicky watches a TV adaptation of Dickens' story *A Christmas Carol* on Christmas Day (p.37). Read and summarise this story and describe the character of Scrooge.
10. Nicky swims at the 1984 Olympic Swim Stadium (p.42). Where will the next Olympic games be held?
11. At Nicky's school her class was given a project to research different Olympic Games throughout history. Divide into groups and undertake this same project (p.43).
12. The 'thieves' use the search engine *Google* to discover information about the company, computer files and air crashes (p.50). How safe and private is internet communication? Some say it is as 'safe' as sending a postcard. Do you agree or disagree?
13. Shelley lists the following things that the Project is not: The United Nations, The White House, Greenpeace, Sunday school, Disneyland. Write a sentence for each to describe what they are (p.85). What sort of group do you think the Project is? E.g. what are its intentions, what does it want to achieve, where might it get its funding from?
14. Locate Venice Beach (p.10), Santa Monica (p.107) and Westwood Village suburb on a map of Los Angeles (p.91).
15. Tina teaches Nicky how to steal money from a café (p.106). Divide into positive and negative teams to debate the following: crime changes a person.
16. The 'thieves' lack of identification means that they cannot stay in a hotel (p.108). What kind of identification do people carry in America? Compare this to New Zealand.
17. Nicky thinks of all the things she misses about New Zealand (p.108). Imagine you are leaving New Zealand. Write a poem about what you think you will miss.
18. '... at least we've had today. We'll always remember it' (p.111). If you had one last day of freedom, what would you do?
19. Research Air Force One (p.119).
20. Research a major air disaster in international aviation history.
21. When Paul and Nicky go swimming she notices that there are no rips at the beach (p.123). Design a beach safety pamphlet to inform people what a rip is, how to spot one and what to do if you get caught in one.
22. The 'thieves' discuss different types of terrorism (p.157). Research and list the acts that are considered acts of terrorism as defined by the United States government.
23. 'How much does a situation, an environment change us?' (p.174). Think of a situation that has changed you. Explain how and why?
24. When Paul is driving the car Nicky asks about his driver's licence (p.192). Write down the process of obtaining a driver's licence in New Zealand.

25. When Paul and Nicky are driving in the desert Nicky notes that the desert air fills her with fear (p.194). Write down some smells and the emotions that you associate with them.
26. Nicky has a list of what she wants to do when she escapes the Project. If you were in her position what would you have included in your list (p.197)?
27. In America Nicky has to learn to drive on the right side of the road (p.199). List other countries that drive on the right side of the road.
28. When Paul is driving he measures his speed using miles per hour (p.200). How many miles are there to a kilometre?
29. Locate the Chihuahuan Desert on a map (p.201).
30. Nicky observes the Guardian at the Project throwing pebbles in the lake just like Paul, his son, used to do (p.205). Do you share any characteristics or habits with any of your family members? What are they?
31. How much control do you think people should have over their own destinies? How much should the government have? (Or school/society/family/social groups?). Discuss as a class.
32. The events of the novel take place over a short period of time. Write out a timeline and summary of the events that take place in the novel.
33. Imagine you are Jake or Shelley. Write a letter to the Guardian to try and convince him that you should be entitled to be released from the Project.
34. Write a diary entry about one of the main events in the book by one of the following characters:
- the Guardian
  - Matt
  - Tina
  - Jake
36. Imagine you are Holly, Nicky's former social worker. Write a psychological profile of Nicky.
37. Choose one of the descriptive passages in the novel which you find particularly effective and use it to set the scene or the mood for your own piece of descriptive writing. Quote the passage as the epigraph for your work (i.e. clearly state the source: title, author, publisher, date, chapter, page number).
38. Rewrite one of the climactic scenes as a video script. (If your school has filming equipment produce your scene.)
39. Design your own cover for the novel.
40. Do you think the novel would make a dramatic film or TV programme? Write a letter in support of the film for possible investors and design a poster advertising the movie/TV version of the novel.
41. Write a dramatic monologue from Paul's point of view, retelling the experiences he's had while on the run, including his discovery that the Guardian is his father and his decision to travel to the missing girl. Perform it for the class.
42. Write a review of the book, aiming it at the readership of your favourite magazine or newspaper.
43. Write your own version of the back cover blurb.
44. There is a sequel – the final book in the trilogy – planned to follow *Anywhere But Here*. What do you think could or should happen in it? Write a one page outline of the plot for the sequel you would write. Choose a title.
45. Find other books which have characters with a similar ability to travel through will or mind power alone. Write a comparative review – where you compare and contrast *Anywhere But Here* with at least one other novel dealing with this theme.