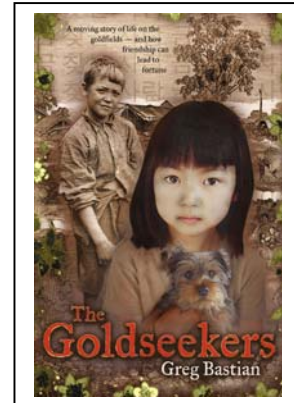


# The Goldseekers

by Greg Bastian

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Teaching Notes prepared by Christine Sarandis

## BOOK DESCRIPTION

In the mid-1850s, Australia is in the grip of gold fever. Kidnapped from their homeland, Miju and her older brother, Chung-Kai, work on the goldfields of New South Wales to save for their passage home. Their friend Sam, and his father, Bill, are also trying their luck at the diggings and hope to take a fortune home to their family. Life is hard at Burrangong, but both parties manage to eke out a living, until disaster strikes ...

In the dead of night, a group of men raid the Celestial camp where Miju and Chung-Kai live with the other Chinese and Korean miners. Left with only a few possessions and their puppy, Ah-poo, Miju and Chung-Kai's hopes of returning home are ruined. Sam is appalled by what he has witnessed and vows to help his friends get back their savings.

Just as they are all ready to give up hope and abandon the fields, Ah-poo comes to the rescue. But is it too late to help Miju and Chung-Kai?

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Greg Bastian grew up in Griffith, New South Wales. After graduating from the University of Sydney, he travelled and worked in Asia, Europe, the Middle East and, more recently, China and Korea. He has published travel writing, essays and short stories. *The Goldseekers* is his fourth novel for young adults. Greg lives with his family in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney.

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

Please refer to the author's note at the back of the book and note his decision to make his Celestial characters Korean rather than Chinese.

## INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS - LAMBING FLAT RIOTS

*"The Lambing Flat riots were a series of violent anti-Chinese demonstrations that took place in the Burrangong region, on the goldfields at Spring Creek, Stoney Creek, Back Creek, Wombat, Blackguard Gully, Tipperary Gully, and especially Lambing Flat (now Young), N.S.W., in 1860-1861. When gold was discovered in the area in mid-1860 large numbers of diggers flocked to the field. The Chinese were also attracted to the area."*

<http://members.ozemail.com.au/~natinfo@ozemail.com.au/1lambing.htm>

### Conflict - The Chinese and Lambing Flat

*"Many nationalities were represented on the diggings, but the Chinese were often treated with fear and hostility. They were accused by the diggers of acting provocatively by wasting water needed for mining, living in isolated communities and sending most of their gold back to China. In Victoria, the Chinese were forced to pay a 'landing tax' of £10 and a fee of £1 per annum under the Chinese Protectorate system which forced them to live in separate villages in an effort to stem potential violence.*

*In New South Wales, antagonism erupted into open conflict. At Lambing Flat, now Young, in 1860 and 1861, there were riots in which the Chinese became the target for the diggers' hostility. On both occasions, the Chinese were humiliated and forced from the goldfields. Those who were affected by the riots petitioned the Government for damages, but were unsuccessful.*

*The Miners' Protective League was formed in 1861 and their objectives included expulsion of the Chinese, the release of public lands and the spread of Christianity throughout the Colony. Also, as a result of the Lambing Flat Riots, the Chinese Immigration Act of 1861 was passed. This Act, later repealed, served to restrict the numbers of Chinese entering the Colony."*

<http://www.anmm.gov.au/gold150/conflict.htm#Dispute>

Information on the history of Lambing Flat, now know as Young, can also be found at:

<http://www.young.nsw.gov.au/culturalmap/history/history.htm>

## CHARACTERS

In *The Goldseekers*, the author constructs a picture of each main character gradually; in this way we come to a fuller understanding of their emotions, their personality and their sense of morality.

### List of Characters in *The Goldseekers*

Miju, Chung-Kai, a Patron's son and a Yangban, Bill Carlyle, Sam Carlyle, the other members of the Carlyle family including Sam's mother and Gracie, Ah-poo, Suk-Jae, Hwang-ju, the Gung-pae, Miss Turner, Mister Foon, the Tipperary Mob, Hans, Joe Stribley (Tipperary Joe), the Gold Commissioner, troopers, Gunter, the convict O'Grady, Toby Fallon, Mr Quigley, Will Sefton, Tom Rayner, Jack Blanchard, Corporal Logar, Herbert Feeney (The Rat), Vic Scampi, Alec Jorgensen, Joe Trumper, Oleg Rooskov, the Barrie brothers, Mr Ellis Davidson, Ruby, Frederick Hamilton, Miss Charlotte Henderson, Sergeant Tremlett, Wang Tou.

## THEMES

Racial conflict, displacement, kidnapping, friendship, life on the goldfields, prejudice, hostility, corruption, greed, family life, fear, cultural differences, triumph over adversity, hope, compassion.

## SETTING

Mid-1850s Australia, the goldfields of New South Wales.

## PLACE NAMES

The following place names are referred to in *The Goldseekers*

Burrangong fields, Lambing Flat, Bonnidoon, Manchu Flats, Inca City, Sattler's Hotel, Burrangong Station, London Bridge, Melbourne Town, Bathurst, Tuffy and Sons, Sandy Creek, the Prussian Fields, Mr Foon's supply store, The Orient, The Star Laundry, Razorback, Kemps Creek, Horseshoe Creek, Sandy Creek, Dragon Hill, the Sunshine homestead, Murphy's supply store, The Ever Prosperous Restaurant, Freshman's Gully, Terrace Falls, Dante's Glen, Post and Telegraph office, Cobb & Co office, The White Horse Hotel, Miju and Kai's village (Mokpo)

## NAMES AND UNUSUAL WORDS

Korean names have very descriptive meanings. Discuss the following:

- Miju means small bird. Is she like her namesake and how does she change and grow throughout the story? pp. 2, 58
- Miss Turner, the children call her Miss Pakpung - what does it mean? p.14
- Yangban, young man of high breeding p. 41
- Find the meaning of these words either within the text or on the internet
  - noraebang p.4 (This is actually a modern Korean word for a karaoke bar! I just liked it so much! - Greg)
  - Toduk p.54
  - hayeo p.60
  - Dokebis p.63, 151
  - Chuseock festival p. 154

## GENERAL QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

### Major characters

Describe ways in which the beliefs of Bill and Sam Carlyle, Miju and Chung-Kai change throughout the novel.

### Daily life on the goldfields

Using a diary format, describe a day in the life of ... Miju, Kai, Sam, a digger

### Family life

How might things have been different for Sam if his mother had gone to the goldfields?

### Sibling relationships

What are the similarities and differences between Kai and Miju's relationship and your relationship with your siblings?

### Work in the 1850s

Research alternative forms of work for men and boys in the 1850s? Sam and Bill Carlyle went to the goldfields to raise the money to pay for their home, Gracie's schooling and the costs associated with his mother's illness. What would their alternative have been?

### Story mapping

Using the chapter questions as a guide, make a story map of the main incidents in the story. This could be an illustrated mural or a brainstorming map with arrows linking the events of the story. Alternatively, children could draw a map of the areas included in the story such as the Gold Commissioner's house, the Celestials camp the individual digger's camps, Mr Foon's store etc.

### Brainstorming

Choose a chapter and write down the events in point form. Then take a topic such as *the goldfields* or *friendship* and in five minutes, write down everything the class knows or would like to know about that topic. Have them research the answers to any questions raised and then share their findings.

### **Riots**

Discuss the incidence of a mob riot near the beginning and end of the story.

### **Guess the character**

List five characteristics of one of the following people - Sam, Bill, Kai, and Miju. Reading out the characteristics to their peers, see if children can guess the person described.

### **Series books**

Do you think this book would make a good series? Discuss what might happen in Book 2 or Book 3.

### **Historical fiction**

Although based on a real period in history, this book is a fictionalised account of the events of the time. (Please see the author's note at the back of the book).

What is the value in presenting a fictionalised account of historical events?

How does this differ from the specific facts of history?

How true to the historical period must a work of historical fiction be? Discuss.

### **Writing historical fiction**

Choose a period of history which interests you. Invent a character your own age that has an important role to play in the drama of the story. Describe how that character would have experienced this event, giving details of their home, family and friends? Consider how the events might have changed the course of their life.

### **Weapons**

Discuss why people had guns in the gold rush. Do you think it was necessary?

### **Advertisements**

Why did people come to Australia during the 1850s? Create a poster advertising the rewards of life on the goldfields.

### **Everyday dangers**

Compare the dangers faced by the children and diggers during the gold rush such as natural disasters, mine accidents, pollution, water contamination, diseases, with the dangers faced by the students today in their everyday lives: traffic and industrial pollution, car accidents etc.

### **Children**

Children were forced to grow up quickly during the gold rush. How different was the life of a child then to your life today? Name five differences.

### **Camping**

Modern camping is very different from the camping experience on the diggings. What did the diggers have to do without that we take for granted on our camping holidays today?

### **Health and sanitation**

People faced appalling sanitary conditions on the goldfields. Discuss how this may have affected their everyday life and their very existence. Explore the hardships faced by people living on the goldfields.

What sorts of medical treatments were used in the 1850s and which preventable diseases killed people?

## **CHAPTER QUESTION GUIDE**

If the book is read aloud to the students, questions and activities might follow each chapter to enhance the student's understanding of the story. Alternatively, the class could read the entire book before choosing specific questions and activities for whole-class, small group or individual exploration.

### **Chapter 1**

- Why was Kai described as Miju's Patron and guide and what must she do to guarantee his protection of her?
- Miju and Kai differ in their interpretation of time - why does Kai refuse to dwell on the past and only look ahead?

- How long had Miju and Kai been away from home and how do we know this? Pp. 2-3, 5-6
- What hint did we have that Miju and Kai have come to Australia against their will?
- What was the cause of the celebration in Chapter 1 and why does Miju feel the need to trick her brother into believing it is a celebration for their little brother's birthday?
- Whose arrival at the dinner caused some discomfort and why?
- Why did Kai refuse the gift of Ah-poo that Mr Foon had bought?
- Describe the difference between Miju and Kai's reaction to the puppy.
- Name some of the differences between Bill Carlyle's customs and those of Kai and Miju.
- What did Bill think would bring an end to the conflict between the Celestials and the Europeans?
- Make a list of the things Bill believes the Celestials should do in order to prevent the unrest?
- Why was Bill wary of his son's friendship with the children?
- How did Kai make a living on the gold-fields? What alternatives might have been available to him?
- What made Bill feel "humiliated and angry"?
- In the scene where Mr Foon and Bill greet each other, which words described the difference between the two men? See p. 11. How did this description provide an insight into these differences?

### **Arts**

- Make a diorama to represent the scene inside the tent once all the dinner guests had arrived. Use found objects, sticks, clay, cloth etc
- Dramatise the scene in which the dinner guests interact with one another.

### **Chapter 2**

- What destruction was caused at the Celestial's camp by the angry mob?
- How was Bill injured?
- Miss Turner was described as having a "fretful and worrying disposition". How did she react to the violence of the riot and what caused her reaction?
- During the riot, what ultimatum was delivered to the camp by Hans the German digger?
- What reason did Kai give Miju for having to return to the camp, even though it was risky?
- What two choices had Kai faced when the camp came under siege?
- Make a list of the things Miju took with her when she fled the camp.
- How did Miju react to her brothers' decision to get rid of the puppy?
- Why did Kai eventually decide to let Miju keep Ah-poo?
- Kai had a momentary thought about what to do with the puppy. What was it?
- Of what was Kai reminded when he returns to the destruction of the camp?
- Where in the camp had Kai hidden his savings?
- Even though he was disgusted by the greed and moral corruption of the Europeans, what risk did Kai take in order to retrieve his own gold?
- Describe Kai's feelings when he was caught trying to retrieve his gold. Give reasons.

### **Illustrate**

- Illustrate the scene in which the puppy emerges from within the flour bag while Kai and Miju are in hiding.

### **Write**

- Write a story describing what you would have done if faced with the same dilemma as Kai at the end of this chapter.

### **Chapter 3**

- This chapter gives us the first inkling that Sam has more family. Where were they? Why might Sam have accompanied his father to the goldfields rather than staying at home?
- Why did Sam feel responsible for his father's injuries? Did his father blame him?
- How did Sam's impression of his father change after Bill was beaten?
- Why was Miss Turner unable to embrace and comfort Sam physically?

- What was Sam's main worry while he and Miss Turner awaited the doctor?
- Compare Miss Turner's and Bill's understanding of the Celestials? Pp, 7-9, 31-32
- Why was Sam confused by Miss Turner's impression of the Celestials?
- What risks were taken by anyone who associates with the Celestials?
- Give the reasons Bill did not want Sam to search for Kai and Miju.
- What were the causes of conflict amongst the Celestials?
- Describe Bill Carlyle's feelings about his son in the scene where Sam vows to go and find his friends? Should Bill have stopped Sam from going to find his friends? Give reasons.
- Sam was aware that the Celestials were being persecuted. Do you think he would understand why?
- In small groups, children write down some ideas on what they might do if they were in Sam's position - share and discuss.

### **Describe**

- Describe the characteristics that represent the relationship between Sam and his father.
- Describe Sam's journey to find his friends Kai and Miju the day after the riot.

### **Draw**

- Draw a picture of Tipperary Joe as you imagine him. How does your impression differ from that of your friends? Now read the description on p. 71-73 and see how this compares with the children's illustrations.

## **Chapter 4**

- In the beginning of this chapter, Kai had been badly injured by his attackers. His main concern however was not his physical injuries. Describe the meaning of: "... *an injury to the spirit can last a lifetime*"?
- Why must Kai maintain his dignity?
- Why did Kai choose to tell Miju about the theft of their gold?
- Why did Miju hesitate before taking Sam to see Kai?
- What was Kai's initial reaction when he saw Sam? Discuss.
- In this chapter, Miju's thoughts reveal a prejudice towards people of her own race and towards the Europeans. Why do you think she is unaware of her own prejudices and yet can clearly see that the behaviour of the Europeans towards the Celestials is wrong?
- Keeping in mind that these are children experiencing difficult circumstances, how do you think you would behave in a similar situation? Discuss.
- If you were on the goldfields, would you have chosen to live alone in the bush like Gunter the digger, or together with others in a camp?

### **Research and Write**

- Research and then write and illustrate a report on Korea or China in the 1850s.

### **Create**

- Using clay or any other modelling material, make a model of Gunter seated by his fire cooking the rabbit.

## **Chapter 5**

- Sam considered the behaviour of the attacking men. What did he see as a possible reason?
- How did Miju's medical treatment for her brother's wounds differ from that administered to Bill?
- Why did Kai disguise himself in front of Sam after his beating?
- Kai was adamant that he and his sister could do without Sam's help. How did Sam respond?

## **Collage**

- Using various materials, create a collage to illustrate the cave that Miju and Kai used as their temporary refuge. Also include the little hole that Miju dug out for Ah-poo.

## **Research and Illustrate**

- Find out what a Nori mask is and illustrate one. See web link below.

## **Chapter 6**

- In this chapter, Miju and her brother's role seem temporarily reversed. How might this affect their relationship and their plans to return home?
- Why did Miju decide that she and Kai must put their faith in Sam and accept his help?
- What action did Kai plan for his and Miju's future?
- List the reasons he gave Miju for returning to Melbourne Town and O'Grady.
- How did Kai deal with his dilemma regarding the future?
- Each time Sam saw Miju, he was deeply affected by her. Discuss.
- What did Sam promise to bring for Kai and Miju?

## **Research and Present**

- Research some Korean religious customs such as those used by Miju as she prepared a meal for her brother.

## **Chapter 7**

- Who were the Tipperary Mob and how did they enforce their control on the goldfields?
- Why did Bill decide to face up to Tipperary Joe and demand the return of Kai and Miju's savings?
- When Bill left the camp to claim the stolen money, what reason did Sam put forward for accompanying him?
- Describe what you would have done if you were Bill Carlyle.

## **Paint**

- Using water colour or poster paint, paint your impression of the Tipperary Mob.

## **Chapter 8**

- What did Kai's dream represent at the beginning of this chapter?
- How did Kai interpret the European's love of dogs?
- From Miju's perspective, make a list of the pros and cons of her brother's improving health.
- What was the last request Kai asked of Sam in this chapter?
- Discuss Kai's distrust of any sentimental behaviour.
- On p. 81-82, we learn about Miju's and Sam's first meeting. Despite their cultural differences and the prejudice of the adults around them, why did their friendship grow and prosper?
- Why was Sam called back to Mr Foon's store after he had returned the puppy?

## **Write**

- Describe the parting of Sam and his former friends Miju and Kai. Rewrite this section as though they were still friends who trusted one another.
- Rewrite an alternative scenario considering the following:
  - a) Mr Foon kept the gold in Ah-poo's fur a secret
  - b) Sam discovered the gold in Ah-poo's fur before returning the puppy to Mr Foon

## Chapter 9

- When Sam learnt about the gold from Mr Foon, what argument did he give for finding Miju and Kai?
- How was Sam surprised by his father's reaction when he first told him about the gold?
- Outline Bill's serious moral dilemma in this chapter. Compare it with something that you may have experienced.
- Which sentence described Sam's complete inability to understand his father's initial desire to stake the claim alone, denying Miju, Kai and Mr Foon their share in the gold?
- List the reasons Bill gave Sam for them keeping the gold for themselves.
- Why did Sam defy his father? What would you have done?
- How was Sam saved from losing all his gold at the Cobb & Co office?

## Chapter 10

- Compare Kai's and Miju's impressions of Lambing Flat.
- Discuss the clash of customs Kai and Miju experienced at Miss Charlotte's.
- What does Miss Charlotte's character represent in this part of the story?
- What memories were invoked for Miju when she heard music outside the post office?

### Oral Presentation

- Research some Korean customs and make a small presentation to the class using illustrations or made examples where possible.

## Chapter 11

- When Sam arrived in Lambing Flat, why did he lie in order to find Kai and Miju?
- Why did Sergeant Tremlett allow the children to leave the police station even though their story kept changing?

## Chapter 12

- What point was Sam trying to make when he insisted on Miju and Kai sharing the inside of the coach with him?

### Debate

- Have a class debate on the topic - *all people are equal*. Two opposing teams must put together arguments supporting and negating this statement.

## Chapter 13

- Why was there so much controversy surrounding the claim that Bill, Toby, Mr Foon and the children planned to make?
- Each of the prospectors in the group described how they would spend their share of the gold. Imagine you are alive during this time - how would you have spent the money? Explain.
- What circumstances might have prevented Kai and Miju returning to their homeland, despite their riches?
- Why did the author wait until nearly the end of the novel to describe the details of Miju and Kai's kidnapping from their home?
- Miju told Sam that by finding Kai and herself, he had committed an act of selflessness. If the circumstances had been reversed, do you think that Kai or Miju would have shared the gold with Sam?

### ***Investigate and Share***

- Find out how to stake a claim and what it really means. Do you still need a license today to pan for gold? Share this information with the class.

### ***Illustrate***

- Illustrate the scene in which ... children choose

### ***Dramatise***

- Dramatise the scene in which the miners follow Bill, Toby Mr Foon and the children to the Claims office.

### **Chapter 14**

- What destroyed the Tipperary Mob's plan to sneak up on Bill's camp?
- Why did the gang agree to end the search for the Celestials?
- How was the tension created in this chapter?
- Find the passage in this chapter that gives some hope for the future relationship between the Europeans and Celestials.
- How did you feel after reading this chapter?

### ***Discuss***

- Talk about some different scenarios for the last chapter of the novel.

### **Chapter 15**

- What did Miju and Kai do before they paid for their passage home? Why was an important thing for them to do?
- How did Kai demonstrate his new-found trust in Sam as they waited for the ship to depart?
- Which special gift did Miju give to Sam before her departure? Explain why this scarf was so important to her.
- How did Miju say that Ah-poo might be commemorated in her village?
- In the future, do you think Sam would really go and visit his friends in their homeland one day?

### ***Research***

- Make a poster illustrating the things Miju and Kai packed into the wooden travelling trunk to take home.
- Find out about the following: the Korean Chuseock festival, a Hanbok dress, transport ships of the day.

#### **Chuseock Festival**

<http://freetopia.blogspot.com/2005/09/celebrating-harvest-moon-festival.html>

#### **Hanbok**

<http://www.asianinfo.org/asianinfo/korea/cel/hanbok.htm>

#### **Ships**

<http://www.anmm.gov.au/>

## Arts

- Make a collage Hanbok dress and then frame it.
- Make a detailed illustration of a cross-section of a ship like the one Miju and Kai would have traveled on to Shanghai.
- Paint a picture of the photograph Mr Foon gave Miju and Kai as a parting gift. Remember that it was the custom of the day not to smile in photos!

## FURTHER READING AND WEB REFERENCES

Using the Internet and libraries, students could try to find photos of the NSW goldfields and the European and Asian diggers of the mid-1850s.

### WEBSITES/INTERNET

**Sovereign Hill** - the living history museum of the gold fields at Ballarat [www.sovereignhill.com.au](http://www.sovereignhill.com.au)

**Immigration Museum** [http://www.museum.vic.gov.au/customshouse/customs\\_history/gold\\_rush.asp](http://www.museum.vic.gov.au/customshouse/customs_history/gold_rush.asp)

**The Australian Government Culture** <http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/goldrush/>

### General Primary School Reference

<http://www.primaryschool.com.au/humansocietyresults.php?kla=Human%20Society%20and%20Its%20Environment&unit=Gold>

### The Chinese in Regional NSW 1850-1950

<http://amol.org.au/goldenthreads/>

### Chinese history

[http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/prehistory/china/late\\_imperial\\_china/ming.html](http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/prehistory/china/late_imperial_china/ming.html)

### Old Mogo Town Gold rush theme Park NSW

<http://www.oldmogotown.com.au/education.html>

### History Hill Theme Park NSW

<http://www.historyhill.com.au/index.html>

### Chinese Museum - history of Chinese in Australia

<http://www.chinesemuseum.com.au/history.html>

### Images and history of Nori masks in Korean culture

[http://www.korean-arts.com/about/tal-nori\\_the\\_korean\\_mask\\_performance.htm](http://www.korean-arts.com/about/tal-nori_the_korean_mask_performance.htm)

## FICTION

Annear, Robyn *Fly a Rebel Flag, the Battle at Eureka*

Barron, Antonia, *Jeremy Jeremiah*

Farrer, Vashti, *Eureka Gold*

French, Jackie, *Valley of Gold*

Murray, Kirsty, *Bridie's Fire*

Park, Ruth, *Playing Beatie Bow*

Tonkin, Rachel, *To the Goldfields*

Wheatley, Nadia, *A Banner Bold: the Diary of Rosa Aarons, Ballarat Goldfield, 1854*