

# Penguin Random House

## TEACHERS' RESOURCE KIT

### Ash Arising Mandy Hager

The gripping sequel to the prize-winning thriller  
*The Nature of Ash*.

Ash McCarthy thought he had done enough by broadcasting his story to the world, exposing the corruption and lies of Prime Minister Chandler and his cronies. With his small band of friends and family on a remote campsite in the backcountry, he awaits the international community to answer his call for action. But the public response is not what he had hoped for and the fallout from his revelations will lead him and his companions into even more danger.

Can Ash withstand the new challenges that confront him? And what of Mikey – can he survive in this increasingly merciless world?

**Ash Arising** is a cross-over title that adults should also enjoy and can be read as a standalone novel, but readers will love it so much they'll want to go back and read the prequel.



**Mandy Hager** is a multi-award winning writer of fiction for young adults. She has won the LIANZA Book Awards for Young Adult fiction 3 times, *The Nature of Ash* – 2013, the NZ Post Children's Book Awards for YA fiction (*The Crossing* -2010), an Honour Award in the 1996 AIM Children's Book Awards (*Tom's Story*), Golden Wings Excellence Award (*Juno Lucina* - 2002), Golden Wings Award (*Run For The Trees* - 2003) and

Notable Book Awards. She has also been awarded the 2012 Beatson Fellowship, the 2014 Katherine Mansfield Menton Fellowship and the 2015 Waikato University Writer in Residence. In 2015 her novel *Singing Home the Whale* was awarded the Margaret Mahy Book of the Year award, and the Best Young Adult fiction Award from the NZ Book Awards for Children and Young Adults.



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#### RESOURCE KIT CONTAINS:

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## ***Ash Arising* by Mandy Hager Resource Kit**

### **Before Reading:**

1. Before reading the book, look at the cover image and title. Discuss what you think this book might be about and who you think its readership might be?
2. Discuss how important you think a back cover blurb is when it comes to how readers choose a book to read. Read the blurb to formulate an opinion about whether you would want to read this book. What is your reasoning behind your decision?
3. In the front of the book the author includes a glossary. What is the function of a glossary? Choose three more words, phrases, ideas or acronyms that you find in the book to add to the glossary.
4. Read the quote on page 2. Who said it? Why do you think the author chose it? What is its significance? (Answer this question again once you have read the book.)

### **Themes:**

Discuss the following themes and find examples from the book which illustrate each:

- the chaos of war
- grief and loss
- the treatment of vulnerable citizens, such as the elderly or disabled
- bigotry and racism
- the abuse of human rights
- the definition and importance of family relationships
- love and friendships
- betrayal and the corruption of power
- government control
- responsibility, such as individualism versus social duties

### **Setting:**

The book is set in New Zealand in the future, corporations have carved up resources for themselves, leaving the local population disconnected from the land and living with water and food shortages, depleted oil and gas supplies, climate change effects, and a divided and impoverished society, where only those at the top have any wealth or power.

### **Comprehension Questions:**

1. Why does Ash compare himself to the fly in the web (p. 18)? What does it tell us about his current circumstances?
2. What has Chandler done to the citizens of New Zealand's human rights despite claiming New Zealand is still a democracy (p. 27)?
3. How does Ash say New Zealand is being recolonised (p. 27)? What does this tell us about the state that New Zealand and its citizens are in?
4. 'Big Bastard channels his inner Nazi' (p. 30). What does this statement tell you about this character?

5. Why does Ash mention the UPR anti-girl, one child policy and how does he link it to Mikey's situation (p. 47)?
6. Why does Ash greet Major Morton by saying 'Kia ora' (p. 48)? What are the repercussions of his decision to say this?
7. What is Mickey and Ash's 'safe word' (p. 59)? Where does it originate and what does it tell you about the setting and time of this novel?
8. What 'inborn gift' does Ash think he lacks which Mikey has (p. 68)? Do you agree with Ash's opinion of himself? Find examples from the book to support your point of view.
9. What is Ash's view of the news headlines he reads (pp. 78-79)? What does it indicate about the society they are living in?
10. Why does Ash refer to himself and Mikey as 'Team Dodo' to Lucinda (p. 94)? Do you think this is a fair critique? Why/why not?
11. Why does Tony let Ash and Mikey escape (p. 102)?
12. Why does Ash like Simon and what are the qualities he admires (pp. 104-105)?
13. Why does Hayden want to bring Thalia and Jeremy in to help with the movement and what does he say are each of their individual motivations to join (p. 124)? Do you think they all have legitimate reasons, and if not, does it matter?
14. Why does Jeannie encourage Ash to let Mikey appear on television despite Ash's protests (p. 146)? Do you agree with her stance?
15. What name does Ash want to give the student resistance and where did he get the name from (p. 149)?
16. Why does Lucinda react in the way she does when she meets Gerald Northcote (p. 155)?
17. What effect did, and will, using 'dirty bombs' have on Niúnāi Farm and its surrounds (p. 163)? What does this tell you about the state of government control at this point in the book?
18. What is Ash's 'tribute to his Dad' (p. 169)?
19. How does Mikey's 'strange word' help Ash after the suicide bombing of the police station (p. 185)?
20. What is the name of Mikey's frog (p. 186)? Why do you think the author chose this name? What links does this reference have to the themes of the book?
21. What does Hayden mean when he tells Ash that 'This thing's a runaway train.' (p.197)?
22. Ash is impressed by watching Gerald as he 'oozes authority' when they meet Mrs Royal (p. 200). How does Gerald deal with the meeting and what information does it give them?

23. Why does Ash have to give blood at the hospital (p. 212)? What does it say about recent events in the city?
24. What does Jiao say to Ash about Soul Force when he's in the hospital (p. 218)? Do you think this was fair to Ash? Why/why not? How does he react?
25. How does Ash know that the text message he receives at the hospital really is from Trav (p. 227)?
26. How does Ash react to Charlotte's tears after filming Mikey (p. 240)? What do you think this says about how his character has changed or developed?
27. Do you think Ash's reactions to the journalists and Hayden after the revolution has ended is justified (pp. 248-251)?
28. What does Ash's visit to his Grandma and the poster he sees in the hospital reveal to him about what his mother may have been going through (p. 254)?
29. What motivates Ash to leave the bus and walk back to Erich's (p. 255)? How does this help him?
30. Why does Ash face down the tank (pp. 264-265)?
31. What has happened that has helped Ash 'finally let hope overwrite' his fears (p. 268)?

**Language:**

1. What do you think the genre of this book is? List the aspects that are indicative of this genre.
2. The story is told in the first person. Why do you think the author chose to do this? Is it effective? Why or why not? Choose a passage from the novel which resonated with you and rewrite it in third person narrative. How does this change in point of view alter the passage and its role within the novel and the effect it had on you as a reader?
3. Figurative language is used to convey ideas that might otherwise be difficult to express. Two examples of figurative language are similes and metaphors. Examples of these are, 'There's a cheer so loud the pigeons take to the air like tiny angels' (p. 266) and 'my pulse is a runaway train' (p. 20). Find more examples of these two types of figurative language from the book.
4. The author uses symbolism in the book. What are the phrases below typically symbolic of? What is the origin of these phrases?
  - whistle-blower (p. 9)
  - the evil eye (p. 9)
  - runs out of juice (p. 15)
  - did a bunk (p. 16)
  - pawn of the UPR (p. 19)
  - been dealt the crappiest of hands (p. 22)
  - chip off the old block (p. 43)
  - rattle ya dags (p. 52)
  - dead meat (p. 55)
  - more than one way to skin a cat (p. 58)

- off her rocker (p. 58)
5. The author uses personification. For example, ‘I swear my heart is trying for a gold medal in the sprints.’ (p. 28). Write a poem or descriptive paragraph using personification.
  6. UN and UPR (p. 19) are examples of what figure of speech? Find more examples from the book.
  7. Lucinda asks to be excused for her pun (pp. 117). Make up three other examples of puns.
  8. The author uses animal imagery in some similes and metaphors. For example, ‘She cowered behind shaking hands and let rip with this terrible mew like a cat barrelled up by a rabid dog.’ (p. 10), ‘He’s puffing like a heat-struck dog.’ (p. 53), ‘A swarm of moths is trapped inside my gut and turning feral.’ (p. 100) and ‘Gasps fly from journals like startled birds.’ (p. 244). Find other examples from the book. Then think of ten other animals and create a simile for each.
  9. What figure of speech are the following words examples of: ‘whomp’ (p. 14) and ‘fizzing’ (p. 256). Find five more examples from the book. Write a poem or descriptive paragraph which includes the words.
  10. Thinking of the initial letters in the following, which figure of speech is the following: ‘gallows grin’ (p. 45)? Make up examples of this figure of speech for ten other letters of the alphabet.
  11. 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?
  12. Find definitions for the following words from the novel and write one sentence for each:
    - gullible (p. 19)
    - amicably (p. 49)
    - spasmodic (p. 60)
    - cogitating (p. 66)
    - truculent (p. 98)
    - feral (p. 100)
    - belligerent (p. 102)
    - ballistic (p. 166)
    - imperative (p. 223)
    - discretion (p. 223)
    - puerile (p. 249)
    - impetuous (p. 260)
    - eloquently (p. 260)
    - volatile (p. 265)
    - fraught (p. 269)

### **Characters:**

1. Do you like Ash as a character? Do you think he is a realistic character? Why or why not? Study his personality, opinions and actions, and analyse how they influence, and are influenced by, other characters found throughout the book, such as Trav, Jiao,

Lucinda and Gerald. Use quotes from the novel to support your opinions.

2. Do you think Ash and Mikey have a realistic sibling relationship? Do you believe that their relationship, as well as their relationships with their friends and family, develops and changes through the book? If so, list what these changes are, and the main events which contribute to them.
3. Ash describes Mikey as a 'hormonal, moody Peter Pan' (p. 23). Think of three adjectives to describe the following characters: Ash, Lucinda, Trav, Simon, Hayden, Gerald, Ana and Tony. In pairs, read your adjectives to your partner and see if they can guess the character you are describing.
4. 'What you have, Ashley, is a beautiful heart.' (p. 75). List the qualities of Ash's personality and find examples of when he displays each of these qualities.
5. Choose an important event from the novel and describe Ash's reaction to it? What are the different pressures on Ash throughout the novel? What factors lead to the decisions he makes and how does he cope with the various situations he finds himself in?
6. Jeannie tells Ash that 'even in the short time I've known you, you've changed from a ratty teenager into an adult.' (p. 145). What do you think Ash learns in this book? How do you think he has changed by the end? How do you think his view of himself has changed?
7. What does the novel say about friendships and/or family and their importance during difficult times? List examples of episodes when friends and/or family are either a help or a hindrance to Ash.
8. Draw a picture of one of the characters based on their physical descriptions. For example, Pete Jeffries (p. 56) and Bill Chandler (p. 78).
9. Write a character summary of one of the following characters: Ash, Mikey, Lucinda, Jiao, Travis or Jeannie.
10. Which character did you particularly like or dislike? Why?
11. Which character do you most identify with? Why?
12. Which character do you most empathise with? Why?

### **Creative Responses:**

1. Ash escapes to hide out in the Whanganui National Park (p. 15), Mikey and Grandma are held in a psych unit out at Porirua (p. 41) and Ash sees 'three fires blazing up near Newton, one over Khandallah way, and two others across the harbour in the hills above Petone.' (p. 55). Find other descriptions of places that are mentioned in the book. Locate these places on a map of the relevant city and/or New Zealand. Choose one of the places mentioned. Create and design an entry for a travel book for your chosen place as it is today. Include information such as population size, geography, history, things of interest, weather, etc. Compare these details with how the place has been described in the book.
2. Ash recites 'every lyric from my favourite band' while waiting for Ana to return (p. 20). Based on Ash's character in the book, create a playlist of music to reflect what

happens to him throughout the book. Organize the playlist however you like, whether chronologically, thematically, or another way. For each song on the playlist, include the song title, artist, year, and a few sentences of explanation for your song choice. Finish by creating an album cover for your playlist, either digitally or on paper.

3. Ash reads the news article on the computer about the escape from the WA prison (p. 77). Choose one event mentioned to expand and write as a news item either as a newspaper article or a news broadcast.
4. There is 'freakily spectacular' video footage taken from a drone of Ash's escape from prison (p. 78). Choose this escape or another series of images from an action sequence in the book and present them in a storyboard for a movie.
5. Ash and Jiao discuss how they feel like '... we're stuck in the kind of thriller I'm usually too scared to read ... for me it's action movies' (p. 215). Rewrite one of the climactic scenes as a television or film script. Include a storyboard and think about which actors you would like to play the parts and what the soundtrack to your scene might be. Then create a marketing campaign to advertise your programme/movie. Think about possible advertising avenues, such as movie posters, radio and television commercials, and a preview to screen in cinemas.
6. Ash compares the gardens at Erich's house with their community garden (p. 150). In groups, design a community garden. Also research where the food you eat comes from. Is it local, imported, organic, ethical, etc?
7. The author writes a descriptive passage about the state the city is in (p. 93). Draw the scene. Then choose another 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 (and clearly state the source: title, author, publisher, date, chapter, page number).
8. The author includes a description of the interior of the house the resistance is camped out in (pp. 79-80 & p. 95). Find other examples of descriptions of exterior and interior spaces. Draw one of these based on the descriptions, then describe and draw an exterior and interior space of your choice.
9. Gerald was New Zealand's first United Nations' special human rights envoy (p. 155). What is the United Nations? Where is it based? What does it do? What is its mission? Create a Powerpoint demonstration of your findings.
10. The book is full of dramatic, suspense-filled action sequences, such as breaking Ash out of the cells (pp. 51-53), rescuing Trav (pp. 230-234) and Ash facing down the tanks outside Parliament (pp. 263-265). Look at the language the author uses in these sequences. Write a dramatic action scene about something that has happened to you.
11. Lucinda and Ash discuss his father's views on 'manufactured complacency, he called it. Kind of brainwashing people into thinking they have no power so they never try to exercise it.' (pp. 118-119). Research the psychology behind, and list the main components of, successful brainwashing. Give an example from history when this has been used to create prejudices against others, as in the novel.
12. Ash refers to many episodes in which he finds himself in the novel as surreal, such as when he is called on to speak at the waterfront (p. 179). What is the literary

definition of 'surrealism'? Choose a sequence from the novel and rewrite it as a surreal episode.

13. Ash is tortured with waterboarding (p. 37). Find out about others who have suffered as victims of torture and abuse of their human rights. How are they being helped? What agencies have been set up? How can you help? Set up and design a charity campaign to help. Think, for example, about marketing techniques, etc.
14. At Erich's house, Ash and the others discuss creating a Soul Force Manifesto (p. 259). Write out this manifesto. Then in pairs, one person write questions as a journalist might about the manifesto and the other person answer them, in character, as Ash or Lucinda.
15. The author includes references to other texts, films, television programmes, and historic and contemporary figures, such as those listed below. Write a paragraph for each to explain to someone who or what they are and what you think their significance to what is taking place in the book might be:
  - Hades (p. 32)
  - Achilles (p. 36)
  - Scooby-doo (p. 59)
  - Billy T. (p. 90)
  - *Wayne's World* (p. 59)
  - My dear Watson (p. 98)
  - Pavlov's dog (p. 129)
  - Murphy's law (p. 139)
  - Death-star (p. 142)
  - Neptune (p. 142)
  - Nero (p. 158)
  - Henry VI (p. 158)
  - The Pied Piper (p. 177)
  - Tohu and Te Whiti (p. 179)
  - Mandela (p. 179)
  - Winston Churchill (p. 186)
  - Claudius (p. 188)
  - Hamlet (p. 188)
  - Shakespeare (p. 188)
  - The Cheshire Cat (p. 203)
16. Ash remembers and uses quotes from Martin Luther King, Jr. as he had done a school assignment on him (p. 90). He also refers to Gandhi (p. 179) and Gerald quotes Petrarch (p. 260). Choose one of these figures to research and present your findings about. Include why you think the author chose to quote these figures and how the quotes Ash and Gerald use are significant, reflect and/or drive the action within the novel.
17. Hayden has created an online campaign called *We Love Mikey*, and another calling for people to join the Soul Force (p. 238). Design one of these online campaigns using current social media platforms such as a website, blog, Facebook, Instagram, etc.
18. In pairs, using drama conventions, both choose one character each to embody, for example Ash and Lucinda. Use role-play, 'hot-seating' and improvisation to get into the minds of characters from the book. Consider what interactions and dialogue took place between your characters? What thoughts and feelings were expressed or repressed? Get the class to ask questions about what it is like to be

these characters, your relationship and how you feel about each other and the events which have taken place within the book.

19. Imagine you are one of the other characters from the book. Choose an event or moment from the book and write a personal diary entry or monologue about it from your point of view, for example Jeannie rescuing Trav (pp. 230-234). Think about how you would describe the physical scene, any other characters who were involved, and your feelings about the incident.
20. Create a timeline of the main events of the novel. Write a short summary of these main events. Then choose one significant event at, or near the end of the book, 'and describe how it helped you understand one of the themes of the novel.
21. Use these quotes from the book as either a topic for a class debate or as an essay starter:
  - 'Somehow that's even more obscene, killing by remote.' (p. 99).
  - 'It's nice to think that peace can counter violence, but I'm afraid the reality's quite different.' (pp. 119-120).
  - 'Bravery isn't the absence of fear, it's triumph over it.' (p. 145).
  - 'Many a government's collapsed after what started as a whispering campaign.' (pp. 157-158).
22. After a close reading of the book, choose your favourite chapter to write your own comprehension questions about. Create a quiz based on your questions. Ask a classmate your quiz questions.
23. Design your own cover for the novel, including the blurb.
24. Find and read *The Nature of Ash* or other books which have young adult characters dealing with war. Write a comparative review – where you compare and contrast *Ash Arising* with at least one other novel dealing with this theme.
25. On the cover it states that this book is 'The sequel to the award-winning *The Nature of Ash*.' Read this book and write a comparative study on the two books, comparing and contrasting key elements, such as the themes, characters and plot.
26. Write a review of the book, aiming it at the readership of your favourite magazine, newspaper, website or blog. Give it a rating, such as stars or a number out of ten. Consider the following questions:
  - Which characters appealed to you the most? The least?
  - How did the story make you feel as it unfolded?
  - What ideas and themes in the book awakened your interest?
  - What did you dislike, or find boring?
  - Why do you think this is a significant and important book for today's readers?