

VOICES IN THE WILDERNESS

exploring the story

Exploring the Three Acts of The Story

To help focus and strategic planning, each act and chapter of the adventure can be approached separately and thematically.

Act 1. Signs and portents.

The People of The Wilderness and their community. One day they see strange things to the north in Stone City and notice changes in the Wilderness.

Living in the Wilderness – Music of the land and sea, fishing songs, farming songs, a song of struggle and achievement in a sometimes harsh environment: we rise early, we plough the land, we farm in all weathers, we scavenge for food along the shore, we sail out to fish in the stormy sea, we build and repair our houses, we cook and eat together, we share our troubles and look after each other. This is home and what home means to us.

The Sacred Mountain – Music of ceremony, special songs that venerate places and ancestors and myths and memories, the song of the high places, the song of the spirit of the mountain, the song that celebrates climbing high and looking down across the world of the island, we sit together high up under the stars and feel a part of everything. Making ceremony, making icons of the mountain, modelling the mountain. The idea of sacred and special.

Stone City – Music of Stone City, on the other side of the Sacred Mountain, the world of stone and brick and machines, order and business and speed and organisation, the song of purpose and power, the song of drive and determination, the song of striving and growth and ambition, the song of conformity and obedience. Drawing and painting and planning the city. Movement: the dance of the city streets.

The Weird Buildings – Music of the weird, the technological and magical, the unknown, the experimental, the otherworldly. The shapes, the sounds, the vibrations, the unsettling feelings that come from this ominous and strange building, growing and changing and dominating the skyline. Drawing and painting. Accounts of what is seen and heard from a distance. Making the sounds. Making a drama of witnessing, reporting and discussing.

The Mine – The machine boring into the Sacred Mountain: what does it look like? What does it sound like? The sounds and rhythm of the mine. What are they mining for? How do they get it out of the mine? What is it for? What is it like down there? What does the mine have to do with the Strange Building? A map of the inside of the mine.

The Environment – The water in the river that flows from the mountain tastes funny now. The air smells odd. The fruit that grows by the stream is sour. The fish where the stream flows into the sea are diseased. Use drama to create the discussion the People of The Wilderness have about this. What has it to do with the mine in the Sacred Mountain and the Weird Buildings on the edge of Stone City?

Act 2. The Search for Answers

The People of the Wilderness try to find out what the Big City Bosses are up to. What is their Big Plan and what they are doing in the mine in the Sacred Mountain? What are the Weird Buildings that are damaging the environment. They get no answers so they set up a secret expedition to discover the truth.

Making a complaint – The People of the Wilderness prepare to visit Stone City and ask the Big City Bosses some tough questions about what is going on. Become the People of the Wilderness and make a list of the things that are upsetting you and the questions that need answers.

Composing a Rap – a chant that the wilderness people can all do together that highlights their complaints and demands answers. Make it personal. Make it passionate. How do you feel about the mining of the Sacred Mountain? How is the pollution of the water affecting the air, the water, the fruit, the fish? How is this affecting families and children? Can you put all this in a rap that will make it clear to the Big City Bosses and the Citizens of Stone City how you feel? Can you make a banner with images and slogans that you can carry?

Meeting the Big City Bosses – Is it a public or a private meeting? Bring the scene to life. Let's hear the rap! Let's hear what the People of the Wilderness have to say. The Big City Bosses don't want to give straight answers. They want to make excuses and promises and say that it's none of their business. They say that they will set up An Enquiry. Can you become the Big City Bosses and come out with some good excuses and maybe even lies and ways of putting off the People of the Wilderness and sending them home without answers?

The Secret Expedition – After returning home from the meeting with the Big City Bosses, the wilderness people are unhappy. The air and water aren't right. The fruit and vegetables are spoiled. The fish in the sea are dying. They are sure that it's caused by whatever the Big City Bosses are doing in the mine in the Scared Mountain. A few of the bravest of the people plan a secret expedition to the mine to discover what is going on. Who are they? What happens on the way?

Meeting with the Stone City Rebels – On the way the People of the Wilderness meet with a few rebel citizens of Stone City. They too are worried about the goings on in the Weird Building and at the mine. At first the rebels are suspicious of the wilderness people and the wilderness people are suspicious of them.

Both groups have prejudices about the other. The citizens of Stone City have been told that the People of the Wilderness are thieves, wild and violent and untrustworthy. The wilderness people believe that the citizens of Stone City are greedy and cruel and act like robots that only do what their bosses tell them. Can you bring that first meeting to life? How will they overcome their prejudices and begin to act together to discover the secret of the mine and the Weird Buildings and the Plan of the Big City Bosses?

On the Trail of the Truth – How do they get into the mine and then get into Stone City? Can they get into the Weird Buildings without being detected? The Stone City Rebels and the bravest of the wilderness people decide to get together, and they call themselves the Truth Seekers.

The Truth Seekers must discover what the Big City Bosses plan is. What they are digging for in the mine and what they are doing in the Weird Buildings?

At this stage we have no idea what it all is. We are waiting for you and your students to tell us. All we do know is that it is very dangerous and is already doing harm to the environment and has something to do with “Beyond”, whatever that means. We also know that the plans are near completion and it is urgent to act now.

Act 3. Going Beyond and Saving Dream Island.

The Truth Seekers [the combined group of the bravest of the wilderness people and the rebels from Stone City] discover how to go to Beyond. Once there they must battle with Dark Forces to frustrate the Big City Bosses’ plan and save Dream Island.

The People of the Way – The only way to get to Beyond is to pass through a portal that can only be operated by a special sound, a special vibration.

Perhaps the Big City Bosses are trying to manufacture that sound but what the Truth Seekers discover is that there are a group who know how to make those vibrations and open the portal.

Who are those people – we don’t know – but they have special skills and special instruments and have to be approached and asked in a special way. Let’s call them The Players for now. Who are they and how can the Truth Seekers do a deal with them?

The Portal to Beyond – Once a deal is struck and the Players make the necessary sound modulations and vibrations that open the portal. [We are hoping that a group of students with special equipment that we have on loan can create that sound.]

And now we are in Beyond. We have no idea what that looks like, what it means, and what it is. All we know is that it is the key to the Big City Bosses' search for power. It would be great if your students can tell us who the Players are in the story, and what the portal is, and what Beyond is. These questions can be explored in any way you like. The portal can perhaps be visually represented or even made as a 3D model. Beyond can also be visualised using drawing and painting as well as discussion and drama.

The Battle of Beyond – Is it an actual battle? We honestly have no idea what Beyond is. Let alone what goes on in Beyond and what our Truth Seekers will need to do and discover and overcome to keep Dream Island and everyone who lives there safe.

Over to you. It shouldn't be too easy for our characters. There will be obstacles in the way and things that go wrong, emergencies, sacrifices to be made. We should avoid the kind of instant "easy magic" that spoils a good story. Surprises, acts of heroism or leadership or intelligence from unexpected sources are always good.

We Overcome the Forces of Darkness. The threat to Dream Island is removed. The detail of how this is done will depend on what is decided about the nature of the threat. How do the Truth Seekers get back from Beyond? There is victory over obstacles but has there been a cost? Is the victory celebration tinged with any sadness?

Dealing with Difference – the immediate problem has been dealt with but there remains the question of if and how the differences between the citizens of Stone City and the wilderness people can be resolved. What will the future of the Sacred Mountain be? What happens to the Weird Buildings?

How will we deal with the Big City Bosses? This will involve debate, compromise and different skills working in harmony. We look forward to a future together.

Voices in The Wilderness – the theme song, the theme music. Life is never going to be perfect. We dream of paradise, but can two different peoples with different cultures build a future together? How will the story of Voices in The Wilderness conclude and might The Players have an important part in this?

THE UNEXPECTED

This is probably the most important section of all. We have provided this detailed structure and framework because it would be impossible for everyone to work together without some idea of where we are all going, and whereas some of us are happy swimming in open waters, others need to know where the banks are.

However – we know that the unexpected will arrive, from young peoples' imaginations and inspirations, and we want to celebrate and be responsive to these surprises. So, when we come to create the performance from the creative work in response to this stimulus, it may not be exactly as we have imagined. That's what makes it so exciting. Looking forward to seeing what you do.

Martin Riley