

Rosh *By Fleur Beale*

Introduction

Luca and his friend Rosh are attacked, and only Luca gets away unscathed. He then has to come to terms with his guilt at not staying to help his friend – even though he does return to the scene to save Rosh and is considered a hero by others. Karate provides Luca with a way to work through the trauma of his experience.

Reason for reading

You could use this book with your students:

- to explore ideas about conflict, trauma, and guilt
- as part of a wider unit on safety, self-defence, or sports
- to explore how the author builds character and creates atmosphere and tension.

Setting the scene

Draw on your students' prior knowledge. If necessary, introduce concepts or vocabulary to help them access the story. Also communicate the reason for reading.

- Brainstorm ideas about martial arts. "What are martial arts and why do people learn them? Do you learn a martial art? If so, why do you learn it and what is your experience of it?" Alternatively, you could elicit prior knowledge through a postbox or "think, pair, share" activity. Write key vocabulary on the board.
- Print Template A, the KWLH chart, from the back of this document. Alternatively, create a KWLH chart on the board. Have the students fill in the first two columns with what they know and want to know about martial arts. After reading, they can fill in the final two columns (what they learned and how they learned it).
- Introduce any vocabulary that your students may need to access the text. Refer to Worksheet 3 for a list of potentially unfamiliar words. You could carry out this activity before or after reading. (See "Taking a closer look – Exploring language".)
- Explain that the narrator of this story experiences an attack. He takes up a martial art to deal with the impact of the experience on his life.

Getting stuck in

Choose the prompts that you feel your students need. Remind them to note any unfamiliar words and check for clues to the meanings in the text or images. The meanings of words in bold text are in the glossary at the back of the book.

- End page 5 – "What has happened here? What would you do in this situation? What do you think has happened to Rosh? What characters have been mentioned so far?"
- End page 7 – "What do you think of the narrator's actions? Do you think Rosh will be OK?"
- End page 9 – "Were you right? How do you think the family felt at the hospital? How did Luca feel?"
- End page 11 – "How does Luca feel now? Is he happy with the way he behaved in the attack? What makes you say that?"

- End page 15 – “How do Rosh and Sonny feel about the way Luca behaved in the attack? Does this change the way Luca feels? Why or why not? What do you think his idea might be?”
- End page 16 – “Do you think the guys will get jobs and stick at karate? Why do you say that?”
- End page 19 – “Were you right? How do you think Luca expected karate to be? Why does he want to keep doing it even though it’s different from what he expected? How does it make him feel?”
- End page 22 – “What do you think has happened to Luca? Why does he run?”
- End page 25 – “Do you think what the karate teacher says will affect Luca? Why or why not?”
- End page 28 – “What does Luca mean by ‘It might have been right, but it was the wrong reason’ (top of page 26)? Do you agree with what he says? Do you think he’ll quit karate for good? What makes you say that?”
- End page 31 – “How have things changed for Luca?”

Taking a closer look

Choose suggestions that suit your students and reason for reading.

Exploring ideas and opinions

- “Did you enjoy this story? What did you like or dislike about it and why?”
- Have the students complete Worksheet 1 (the three-level thinking guide) and discuss their responses in pairs, in small groups, or as a class.
- Discuss some of the themes in the text, for example, conflict, violence, trauma, and guilt. “Why did this experience affect Luca so deeply? What would you have done if you were Luca and why?” Encourage the students to make links with their own experiences to understand Luca’s guilt and sense of trauma, but be sensitive to the fact that this may raise uncomfortable feelings for some of them. Discuss in more detail what Luca says on page 26: “It might have been right, but it was the wrong reason.” Also discuss his questioning on page 28: “The right thing, but the wrong reason. The wrong thing, but the right reason. Which is best?” What do the students think about this? Do they have an opinion about which is best?
- Have the students complete the KWLH chart with things they’ve learned about martial arts.

Exploring character

- Discuss the characters in the story. “How would you describe Luca and his friends?” Write the students’ suggestions on the board. Explore in particular the character of Luca and how his character develops in the story. Ask for ideas on where in the story the turning point is for Luca. “Is there more than one turning point?”
- “How close do you think the friends are? What in the text makes you say that? How important were Luca’s friends in helping him through the trauma?” Note in particular the way they encourage him to keep up karate at the end.
- “What are some ways the author builds these characters?” Draw the students’ attention to her use of colloquial language, repetition of key phrases (for example, “right thing, wrong reason”), and humour. Also discuss her use of a first-person narrator and how this lets us in to Luca’s inner world. You could also explore how the illustrations build character and show feelings.

Exploring structure

- Give the students the statements from Worksheet 2 and have them sequence them in the correct order.
- In pairs or groups, have the students revisit the text and create a plot summary, writing one to three sentences that identify the main thing(s) that happen(s) in each chapter. (You may need to model this for them.) The students could share their ideas as a class, choosing the best sentences to link together as a class summary of the story. To add some fun, the summaries could be in the form of text messages.
- As an extension to this, the students could plot how the tension levels change in the story. They could do this along an axis from high to low. (The line will come out looking similar to that on a heart monitor.)

Exploring language

- Cut out the words and definitions from Worksheet 3 and muddle them up. Hand them out to individual students and have them find their correct “partner”.
- As an alternative to the above, divide the class into two groups and have them complete Worksheet 4a and Worksheet 4b respectively. This activity involves the students in creating the definitions, which they then use to test the other group.
- Explore aspects of the text that help to build tension and atmosphere, for example, the use of the present tense, short sentences at points of climax, rhetorical questions, and dynamic words. (The illustrations also contribute significantly.)
- Have your students complete Worksheet 5 – the cloze activity.

Moving beyond the text

Choose activities that suit your students and reason for reading.

Reading

- Read the GO for IT magazine designed to complement this book – Stealth.

Writing

- Pretend you are a news reporter and prepare a radio or television interview for Rosh or Luca to carry out directly after the attack or a year later. Remember to use open-ended questions (why, what, when, where, who, how). Practise your interviews in pairs, swapping roles after a time. You could tape the interview for presentation to the class.
- Write about a time you felt afraid or guilty about something and how you coped with the experience.

Research

- “What other forms of martial art or self-defence are there?” Decide what form you would choose to learn and research that form, explaining why you chose it. You could include places where people can learn the martial art. Present your findings to the class.
- Investigate true stories about people who had to decide whether to help a friend or save themselves in a crisis.

WORKSHEET 1

Rosh – Three-level thinking guide

- Level 1 – Reading on the lines (interpreting what the text says on a literal level)
- Level 2 – Reading between the lines (inferring, or interpreting what the text might mean)
- Level 3 – Reading beyond the lines (evaluating ideas by relating them to other knowledge)

Students write “agree” or “disagree” beside each statement and then discuss their responses in pairs, in groups, or as a class. The value of this activity lies in the discussion it generates as students justify their views. The activity is not intended as a test for comprehension.

LEVEL 1	Agree/disagree
Rosh and Luca (the narrator) are not expecting trouble.	
Five guys jump them.	
Luca waits for Rosh to run with him.	
Luca drags Rosh into the main street.	
Luca calls an ambulance.	
Sonny and Luca take turns to stay at the hospital with Rosh.	
Three days pass before they know Rosh will get better.	
Rosh’s parents are thrilled that Sonny and Luca saved Rosh’s life.	
Luca and Rosh identify the three guys who attacked them.	
The newspapers call Luca a hero.	
The kung fu movie gives Luca an idea.	
The boys learn karate in the dojo.	
The boys learn that the most dangerous foe is themselves.	
The boys practise karate once a week.	
A year passes before Luca can shout, “Run!” and mean it.	

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LEVEL 2	Agree/disagree
The three boys are determined to run the marathon.	
Sonny and Rosh aren't keen to learn karate to begin with.	
When Luca starts karate classes, he feels much better.	
Sonny and Rosh think Luca is being stupid when he runs out of class screaming.	
Luca believes the teacher when he says you should run when you see a knife.	
Luca decides to quit karate.	
Sonny and Rosh decide to quit karate.	
Finally Luca gets over the experience of the attack.	
LEVEL 3	Agree/disagree
Luca believes he has let Rosh down.	
Luca did the right thing for the wrong reason.	
People who learn karate can always defend themselves.	
All people should learn a martial art.	

Sheet 2 of 2

Worksheet designed by Barbara Freeman, Wellington, New Zealand, 2007

WORKSHEET 2

Rosh – Restore the order

Photocopy this worksheet. Cut out the statements and mix them up, keeping an intact master copy for yourself. Give each student a statement. Ask them to arrange themselves so that their statements are in the order of the story. To check that the order is correct, they can read their statements aloud in turn.

Rosh and Luca are walking home one Sunday night, not expecting any trouble.

Three men suddenly attack Rosh and Luca.

Luca runs from the attackers, thinking Rosh will follow him.

Luca returns to find Rosh.

Rosh is badly injured, and Luca carries him to safety.

Luca talks to the police and goes to the hospital with Rosh.

Three days pass before the doctors say Rosh will get better.

Rosh and his mum and dad are very grateful to Luca for saving Rosh's life.

Luca, Rosh, and Sonny start training for the marathon.

The police want Luca and Rosh to identify their attackers.

Luca doesn't feel that he's a hero and puts the newspaper clippings in the rubbish.

Sonny and Rosh decide to learn karate with Luca for one year.

Rosh and Luca are walking home one Sunday night, not expecting any trouble.

The boys learn that their most dangerous foe is themselves.

Even after starting karate, Luca doesn't believe that he did the right thing in the attack.

Luca decides to quit karate.

Rosh and Sonny help change Luca's mind about quitting karate.

Sheet 2 of 2

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WORKSHEET 3

Rosh – Match the meaning

Cut out the words and definitions, muddle them up, and have your students match them.

<i>Word</i>	<i>Definition</i>
exit	a way out
peer	to look carefully
hassles	teases
marathon	a 42-kilometre running race
identify	to recognise and point out
evidence	the objects or information used to prove that someone committed a crime
Get a life!	Get over it! Stop worrying!
ace	to beat, to win
clippings	pieces cut from a newspaper
karate	a martial art that uses controlled kicks and punches
broke	without money
dojo	the place where you can learn karate and other martial arts

Word	Definition
quit	to give up, to stop
swerve	to change direction quickly
foe	an enemy

Sheet 2 of 2

Note that some words above may have other meanings in other contexts.

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WORKSHEET 4a – GROUP A

Rosh – Vocab swap

- Divide the class into two groups and give half Worksheet 4a and half Worksheet 4b.
- In the second column, each group writes definitions for the words in the first column. Where a word has more than one meaning, they may need to check the page listed.
- They then fold the first column out of sight and swap sheets with the other group.
- That group guesses the original word and writes it in the third column. They can go to the page listed if they need help. For an extra challenge, they can guess without referring to the page.
- You could make this a fun competition and give points for every correct word.

Word	Definition (Group A)	Word (Group B)
exit (p. 5)	(p. 5)	
hassles (p. 9)	(p. 9)	
identify (p. 12)	(p. 12)	
Get a life! (p. 13)	(p. 13)	
clippings (p. 14)	(p. 14)	
broke (p. 16)	(p. 16)	
quit (p. 18)	(p. 18)	
foe (p. 20)	(p. 20)	

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WORKSHEET 4b – GROUP B

Rosh – Vocab swap

- Divide the class into two groups and give half Worksheet 4a and half Worksheet 4b.
- In the second column, each group writes definitions for the words in the first column. Where a word has more than one meaning, they may need to check the page listed.
- They then fold the first column out of sight and swap sheets with the other group.
- That group guesses the original word and writes it in the third column. They can go to the page listed if they need help. For an extra challenge, they can guess without referring to the page.
- You could make this a fun competition and give points for every correct word.

Word	Definition (Group B)	Word (Group B)
peer (p. 5)	(p. 5)	
marathon (p. 10)	(p. 10)	
evidence (p. 12)	(p. 12)	
ace (p. 13)	(p. 13)	
karate (p. 16)	(p. 16)	
dojo (p. 18)	(p. 18)	
swerve (p. 20)	(p. 20)	

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WORKSHEET 5

Rosh – Fill in the gaps

Add your own words in the spaces to make this passage come alive!

I tell him, "It might have right, but it was the reason."

My teacher says, "Luca, would rather be right and dead?"

Sonny and Rosh laugh, but I shake my I can't think. Has all this training been a of time? I don't need training to run

We home. I tell the I'm quitting.

Sonny my arm. "Get over yourself. I'm quitting. It's better a marathon."

Rosh my other arm. All says is, "Don't quit. I'm not."

We don't say anything the of the way home.

I think it all night. The right thing, the wrong reason. The thing, but the right reason. Which is? Which is right?

Right now I real bad. I don't to karate.

Try writing your own ending to the story as if you were Luca.

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