Wavewalker: Breaking Free

by Suzanne Heywood

# Chapter 1:

Comprehension questions:

* What do her parents do for a living?
* Why does her father want to set sail?
* What happens to Theseus in the story Sue is told at school?
* Describe how you see the relationship between Sue’s parents.
* What does it mean that they are “going the wrong way around the world”? Why are they doing that?
* Why isn’t the school supportive?

Analytical questions:

* Sue describes her life as having a familiar rhythm. What do you think her parents think about having a familiar rhythm such as the one Sue describes?
* Why do you think Sue’s parents decide to go?
* On page 7, Sue turns to ask her father if she can help sail the boat, “I mean, *really* help”. Her father answers. How true do you suspect his answer is? How does Suzanne Heywood organize her text to create tension?
* What is the effect on the readers of including the story of Theseus at this point?
* Whose dream are they following?
* What is the symbolic relevance of the stag on their mainsail?
* What is the effect of the chapter ending with Sarah’s words?

In general:

* How does Suzanne Heywood feel about her life in England before setting sail, as far as you can tell from the text? What in the text gives you clues? Be as specific as possible.
* Suzanne Heywood has written this book as an adult. To what extent do you think that has affected the way she feels about her life in this chapter? What she notices about her parents?
* What conflicts are introduced or hinted at in this chapter? How significant do you suspect they will be, and how do you think they will shape her story going forward?

# Chapter 2

Comprehension questions:

* What are the doldrums that Wavewalker encounters?
* What do they do when they cross the Equator?
* Why does the bathing sequence end badly?
* How does Sue’s mother teach the kids?

Analytical questions:

* The chapter is subtitled “Becoming Sailors”. Throughout the chapter, Sue and Wavewalker have several experiences that could be said to make them “sailors”. What indicates that they are now to be considered sailors?
* At the end of the chapter, Sue observes something about her relationship with Wavewalker. How does this observation fit with the title of the chapter?
* Several scenes in this chapter introduce a lot of tension. Which ones, and what how is tension created?
* Which conflicts from the first chapter are expanded upon?

In general:

* Are there things in this chapter that surprised you?
* How do you feel about taking kids along on this voyage?
* Is Sue the odd one out?

Task:

- Stage a short play about a crew crossing the Equator.

- Write a diary entry as if you had been in the doldrums, in scorching sun, eating weevil-infested cookies. You may choose the tone of the writer.

- Research what other rituals at sea you can find, and consider why these have developed.

# Chapter 3

Comprehension questions:

* Rio was not on Captain Cook’s itinerary for his third voyage. Why do they stop in Rio?
* What happens when they try to cross the road in Rio?
* Why does Sue’s father sell sailing equipment to locals in Rio?
* What is the gift that Sue’s father gives her after they sail out?
* Who is King Peter?
* Why does the Port Master in Angra dos Reis threaten to shoot them?

Analytical questions:

* Why does Sue want a new dress?
* How can the dress Sue’s mother promises to make for her be seen as a symbolic artefact of their relationship?
* How can the gift her father promises to her be seen as symbolic of their relationship?
* Imagine that Sue’s father is a character in a novel. Characterize him.

In general:

* How do you feel about Sue’s father so far?
* To what extent is the Port Master right in saying that Sue’s father is a smuggler?

Tasks:

* Stage a debate on whether or not the Port Master is being unreasonable.

# Chapter 4

Comprehension questions:

* Why can’t Sue stay on deck with her father and Owen?
* Their compass breaks. Why is that such a problem?
* Why is the new compass they find not as good?
* Why is being a police officer on Tristan da Cunha an easy job?

Analytical questions:

* Sue asks her mother about the flamenco dress her mother has promised to make. How you think Sue feels at that point? How do you think her mother feels?
How do you see this? And how does it make you feel?
* Sue uses the simile “like the Cheshire Cat’s smile” to describe the top of Queen Mary’s Peak on Tristan da Cunha when they spot it. What is the effect of using that simile?
* We are starting to see Sue’s protected world coming under siege from the dangers outside it, as well as from her own parents. Where and how do you see trouble brewing?

In general:

* The girl Sue meets outside the school calls them “pirate children” who have “the biggest adventure of them all.” To what extent do you agree with that assessment?

# Chapter 5

Comprehension questions:

* What happens to *Ripplerunner*?
* Why does her mother need to cut Sue’s hair?
* Why are they being interviewed in Cape Town?
* Why did Sue’s father risk being arrested for driving Junior and Thato to the station?
* Why is Owen leaving?

Analytical questions:

* How would you describe the relationship between Sue and each of her parents in this chapter? Give specific examples to support your view.
* Read the part about Sue’s trip to the bathroom in Cape Town (page 72). Based on this, how would you characterize Sue? What reasons could Suzanne Heywood have for including this scene?
* In what ways do we see Sue’s father’s stubbornness?

In general:

* What is your reaction to the scene with the policeman in the harbour?
* You have seen some of Sue’s life on board Wavewalker. What do you think about the decision at bring her and Jon on the trip?
* Captain Cook used the name “Desolation Island” for the Kerguelen Islands. Based on the name, and its location between Africa, Australia and Antarctica, describe what you imagine the landscape to be like.
When you are done, try your hand at renaming islands. What would be names that evoked pleasant connotations?
Kerguelen is the name of the French navigator who discovered the islands, but consider what power lies in names. The most famous example is likely Amerigo Vespucci, whose name is why we have the name “America” (both north and south). Who gets to name places, and why might that not always be a good idea?

**Chapter 6:**

Comprehension questions:

* Why is Herbie a liability?
* Sue’s father explains why it is becoming harder to sail in the blizzard. What is the reason?
* Why is it even more of a problem when waves come from the south and the west at the same time?
* What happens that injures Sue?

Analytical questions:

* “Dad was right – the Indian Ocean was different. After this, nothing would be the same.” The dramatic end to the first section of the chapter. What is the effect of writing it like this?
* Compare the structure of this chapter to fiction writing, like Freytag’s Pyramid.
* Sue thinks of howling sounds like “the cries of sailors’ ghosts”, and these ghosts and spectres are referred to throughout the chapter. Analyse the metaphor’s tenor and vehicle. What is the effect of this comparison?
* How can you see Sue’s Protected World being threatened by the outside world? Who or what is trying to keep her sheltered?
Can you see evidence of it not working on Sue?
Can you see evidence of its guardians faltering in their faith in their mission?
* Characterise Sue in this chapter. Compare her to the prior chapters. Has Sue matured?
* Characterise Sue’s father in this chapter. What emotions has he gone through? What has he been thinking?

In general:

* Have you ever felt forces of Nature that made you feel fragile and insignificant?
* Search up videos of waves at sea, monster waves vs ships, or similar. Write a diary page as if you were on board that ship, describing the event.
* Do you think Jon is really brave in this chapter?
* Sue and everyone on board puts their trust in her father to see them through the storm. To what extent do you think he deserves that trust in this chapter? Has he made mistakes, or is he up against a spell of bad luck?

# Chapter 7

Comprehension questions:

* The Île Amsterdam base does not respond to maydays. Why not?
* Why do they need to operate on Sue?
* When the Wave hit, Sue hits her head. What happened to her father?
* What happens when Sue’s mother is with her during one of the operations?
* Why does Sue’s father sail out when the storm hits?
* What is the reason for her father leaving Île Amsterdam without Mary, Sue and Jon?
* Why does her father want to break his own nose?

Analytical questions:

* Sue repeatedly says to her father that he must not sail away without her. Has her father indicated that he would? Why does she repeat the command?
* On page 102, Sue asks her mother if her father will get better (after she has learned that he was washed overboard by the Wave and was physically hurt). What do you think prompts this question? What do you think is going through Sue’s mind at this point?
* On page 107:

At night, before I went to sleep, I wrapped my arms around Teddy and told him to keep me safe. But when I closed my eyes, I often found myself back in the four-berth cabin on *Wavewalker*, huddled cold and wet in my bunk. As we went down each wave, the water swirled towards me full of lost things – our toys and games from Father Christmas, waterlogged books and soggy pieces of fabric my mother would never make into a flamenco dress. These dreams came most nights, so I dreaded going to sleep and woke most mornings in a damp sweat from my night terrors.

What is your interpretation of this recurring nightmare of hers? What is the symbolic relevance of Teddy here?

* The chapter ends with Sue’s words when she sees her father (p. 115). What is the effect on the reader of ending the chapter like this?

In general:

* What do you think of Sue’s mother’s way of acting when Sue is in for her operations?
* Write a diary entry as if you are one of the people on Île Amsterdam, having just seen Mary, Sue and Jon set out. Convey your thoughts after having spent about five weeks with them.

# Chapter 8

Comprehension questions:

* What has happened to the rings Sue’s father brought?
* Why do Sue and Jon get new toys?
* Why do they vote?
* What happened to Mr Ray during the storm?

Analytical questions:

* What is symbolic about Sue’s ring in this chapter?
* Of all the things this chapter could have been called, it is called “Little Mouse”. Why are those two words so significant to Sue that they end up as the chapter title?
* How does Sue talk about her time on *Wavewalker* when Mr Ray is there? See for example page 127. What does that tell you about her relationships with Mr Ray and with her family?

In general:

* On page 119, Sue describes motorboats as “pale imitations of real boats”. What does she mean by this? What do we think of as a “real boat” – and why do you think this is?
* In Rio, Sue’s father promised her a ring, and her mother bought fabric for a flamenco dress she promised to make. What has happened to these promises? What do the ring and the dress represent?

# Chapter 9

Comprehension questions:

* Who or what is Kelly?
* What happens to Wavewalker and the fleet in the race?
* Why does Mr Ray have to get into the water? What happens to him?
* Why does Sue spend a night in an orphanage?

Analytical questions:

* On page 138, Sue says to Mr Ray, talking about the shark, that “She got here too late to eat you.” What is the effect of ending the scene with those words?
Does the fact that Sue calls the shark ‘she’ reveal anything about her? Is calling the shark ‘she’ different from calling the shark ‘it’?
* Why do you think Sue’s parents leave her at the orphanage? Consider her father’s body language.
* If we think of Sue wanting to play as her showing signs of wanting to decide for herself and live a different life, how can we interpret her parents’ decision to leave her?
* Why does Mr Ray think Sue is no longer a “little mouse”?
* On page 142, Sue says goodbye to Mr Ray, watching him “[disappear] in the haze of my tears”. What is the effect of the juxtaposition of her reaction to Mr Ray leaving and her father’s reaction to her question that follow? What does it tell you about Sue’s relationships to Mr Ray and her father?

In general:

* Sue’s father often seems to play fast and loose with the law and generally with regulations. Which examples can you remember? Why do you think this is?
* In the Maiden’s Arc archetype development, the Authority is trying to hold the character in the Protected World. How can the scene at the orphanage be interpreted in that light?

# Chapter 10

Comprehension questions:

* Why does Sue’s father want her and Jon to know how to handle a revolver?
* Why, according to Sue’s mother, doesn’t she like Alan?
* Why do Jon and Sue try to catch their parents smoking?
* What is the cause of Sue’s father’s arrest?
* What happens to the case against Sue’s father?

Analytical questions:

* Look through this chapter in detail. How does Suzanne Heywood structure and show her mother’s conflict with the crew? What does that do to our perception of Sue’s mother?
* On page 148, Sue watches – mesmerised – a girl having her hair brushed. What do you think Sue feels at that moment?
* Sue talks of tension on board, but the chapter is also built around it. Examine how Suzanne Heywood creates and develops tension throughout this chapter.
* On page 153, Sue asks her father if he is worried about the crew going hungry. Do you believe him? Why/why not?
* At the end of the chapter, on page 154, Sue’s father says he is annoyed by the case against him being thrown out, as he was sure he would have won. Are there actions of his that support this, or that speak against it?

In general:

* Some of the crew complain about the food. Look through the chapter and see what Sue mentions them as food they are eating: make a list. How would you feel about the food?
* Identify a key moment of tension in the text. Consider the use of conflict, suspense, foreshadowing, style What elements contribute to the tension in that key moment? Imagine you are making this book into a movie. How would you design the scene? Draw a storyboard image of the scene and consider things like acting, sounds, camera-work…

# Chapter 11

Comprehension questions:

* Why is Sue’s father called upon to help mend a boy’s wounds?
* Sue sees people on the streets in Tonga that she did not see in Fiji. What kind of people is that?
* How is Sue’s father injured?
* What happens when Jon finds his father’s revolver?

Analytical questions:

* On p. 156, Sue’s dad says they need to continue their journey, or they will “never get back to England”. What is the effect of those words on Sue, and on the reader?
* On p. 159, Sue has the wheel, steering Wavewalker on her own. Read the paragraphs where she recounts the experience. How does the writing style help convey her feelings?
* What is the significance of her steering the ship on her own, in relation to her Maiden’s Arc development?
* “We have an obligation to help those kids”, Sue’s father says on page 163. Why could we question his motives?
* Compare Jon’s experience of being left on Fanning Island to Sue’s experience of being left at the orphanage in chapter nine.

In general:

* On p. 147, Sue’s mother wonders where the injured boy’s mother is. Sue herself compares the situation to her time on Île Amsterdam. Can we interpret what the mother is saying in a way that casts her in a negative light? Can we interpret what the mother is saying in a way that casts her in a positive light? Which do you ultimate think is more fitting, and why?

# Chapter 12

Comprehension questions:

* How are they doing so far with regards to following in Captain Cook’s footsteps?
* Why do they pull the masts out of Wavewalker?
* How do they try to raise money for the next leg of their journey?
* What happens when a group of men try to come aboard Wavewalker to, in their words, “inspect” it?
* Why does Sue go to Sunday school?

Analytical questions:

* On page 168, Sue asks her father if they will continue to follow Captain Cook’s journey. Read through the dialogue leading to this question. What do you think Sue is thinking about? Is her father’s answer sufficient?
* How does the style of writing affect the scene where men try to board Wavewalker?
* In the Maiden’s Arc archetype development, the protagonist’s Protected World is threatened, and she increasingly moves towards independence (though one that comes with a cost). If we read Suzanne Heywood’s autobiography as following the same archetypical arc, where in that development are we at? What conflicts is she facing?
* In terms of Sue’s development, how significant is the scene, pp. 176-177, where Sue goes to Sunday school and confides in Albert the dog?

In general:

* On p. 172, Sue recalls her father’s description of life on board. Research the second wave of feminism, and make a speech on how her father’s description could be criticized from that perspective.
* How important do you think it is for Sue’s father to follow in Captain Cook’s footsteps? Why?

# Chapter 13

Comprehension questions:

* Sue’s mother calls her “mardy”. What does that mean?
* How does Sue and Jon occupy themselves?
* Why doesn’t Sue’s mother want them to go to school in Hawaii?
* Why can’t Sue come to Tahiti?

Analytical questions:

* What changes in Sue that makes her seek knowledge for knowledge’s sake?
* On page 182, Sue and Jon talk about going home to England. What is happening in this conversation? Who is in charge? Consider the way the scene ends, with birds singing. What does that represent?
* In what ways do we see this chapter add to the development of Sue towards a rejection of the Authority of her Protected World?
* Sue’s relationship to her mother is developing as Sue grows older. How does Sue present that relationship?

In general:

* Have a formal class debate following official debate rules on the topic: Should parents be allowed to home-school their children? Have one side argue for, another against.
* Sue’s father claims that Wavewalker is a “benevolent dictatorship”. Do you agree with his assessment?

# Chapter 14

Comprehension questions:

* What has happened to Jon’s legs during the trip from Hawaii to Tahiti?
* Why is Sue so focused on a life-jacket?
* What does Sue’s mother do to the Bob Dylan tape?

Analytical questions:

* Consider Suzanne Heywood’s book from a feminist perspective. So far, how can you see traditional gender roles affect Sue? In what ways is she clashing against them?
* Page 197 ends with a log entry Sue’s father makes. What is the effect of Suzanne Heywood including this? Why do you think she has this scene at this point in the book?
* How does Sue learn to navigate? What does that tell you about her relationship with her father?
* This chapter is titled “Rebellion”. How is this chapter significant to Sue’s development towards “breaking free”?

In general:

* Sue spends time looking at the night sky, finding constellations. Find images of the night sky, e.g. by searching for something like “astronomy photography”. Write a description of the image in a set number of words; agree beforehand on extra tasks, such as the number of adjectives you must include, bonus points for similes and metaphors, etc.
In addition or instead, write a description of how you react to the image; thoughts, feelings, etc.

# Chapter 15

Comprehension questions:

* What is Sue’s experience of attending school like?
* What is wrong with Jon?
* Why is Sue’s class to see Mr Hirst?
* After Sue’s father refuses to apologise to Joanne’s father, what does Sue do?
* What happens when the square-faced boy, Simon, bullies Jon?
* What did Sue’s entrance tests show?

Analytical questions:

* Consider the scene where they buy school uniforms (page 204). What does that scene show about the wants of Sue, her father, and Jon, as well as their relationships?
* On pages 208-209, Sue’s class have to face Mr Hirst. Analyze how Mr Hirst is made to be scary.
* Sue finds a friend in Joanne, but their friendship is cut short. From the point of view of the Maiden’s Arc, interpret what her father is doing.
* Sue’s father borrows money from her. What is the promise inherent in the word “borrow”? To what extent has Sue’s father kept his promises to her? Do you think she will get her money back? Why/why not?
* Sue’s parents have decided not to put her two years ahead, as her tests indicated she should be. What does that reveal about them?

In general:

* Many kids “run away from home”, only to come back moments later. Have you ever done so? What was it like? Is what Sue is doing different?

# Chapter 16

Comprehension questions:

* Why does Sue’s father not allow her to go to boarding school?
* What kind of education does Sue get access to?
* What happens to Sue when she is out swimming near a coral reef?
* Why doesn’t Sue want to go ashore in Honiara after meeting Philip?
* What happens to the stallion Sue sees in the water?

Analytical questions:

* In what ways can you see a divide between Jon and Sue?
* Sue’s mother complains about Sue’s “mardiness” (page 221). When you read through the exchanges between Sue and her mother, what impression do you get of Sue and her mother? How has Suzanne Heywood achieved this?
* In the matter of Sue’s education, to what extent can her parents be considered a hindrance?
* The Maiden’s Arc is about growing up and becoming your own person. It often has an awakening of sexuality or desire, but this can sometimes be the Predator (either a different character, and/or an aspect of the character’s own psyche), threatening to replace the Protected World of the Authority with a new Protected World, rather than the growth the character truly needs. So far in Sue’s story, are there signs of her maturing to this romantic aspect of life, or is she rejecting it? Does the world force it on her, or keep her from it?
* How do you think Sue feels after watching the stallion in the water? How can this episode impact her relationship to her father?

In general:

* Sue’s father expects Jon to one day support a family – not Sue. While there is no question that an education can help land a well-paying job, discuss on class what else education does for a person.
* Both Jon and Sue quit French after their teacher accuses them of copying from each other. Discuss what the role of trust is in education, and the responsibility of both teachers and students in building trust.

# Chapter 17

Comprehension questions:

* Why is Sue put in charge of desserts for lunch and dinner?
* How does Cyclone Lance impact their sailing?
* Who is John Frum?
* How does Sue end up with a chicken?
* Why does the whole family hide alcohol of different sorts in a water tank, in oil cans, etc.?

Analytical questions:

* On pages 235-236, Sue’s father listens to the radio’s weather report tracking Cyclone Lance. Sue asks if he remembers the last one. What is the subtext for the conversation? How does the writing show the gravity of their words?
* On page 237, the cyclone is described in a metaphor: “After Lance had claimed its prey in Brisbane …”. Analyze the metaphor’s tenor and vehicle, and explain what that does to the tension of the chapter and to our reaction as readers.
* Sue tells Mick that she wonders if there are planets somewhere with oceans where girls float on boats, looking into the darkness (page 238). Interpret what that thought says about Sue at this point.
* What is that Tanya sees (page 239) about the family?
* “I’d forgotten you were our token Christian.” (page 240). Explain what Sue’s father is doing with this comment in the discussion.

In general:

* Sue’s history books ignore Captain Cook, as Sue puts it. Consider what makes something or someone historically significant. What ought to be the goal for history as a subject in school? Set up a list of criteria that topics ought to follow, see to what extent your current syllabus agrees, and discuss if there are topics you feel should be left out or included.
* On page 243, Sue’s mother buys her a colourful skirt to thank her for her work. In your view, does that fulfill the promise Sue’s mother made to make her a flamenco dress all those years earlier?
* Would you consider Sue’s father to be a law-abiding person? Discuss how the relatively hard-to-enforce areas on the borders of central states can allow alternatives to normal interpretations of law.

# Chapter 18

Comprehension questions:

* Why is Sue worried about her schoolwork not being in Auki?
* When Wavewalker is becalmed, why can’t they use their engine to get to port on time, so Sue and Jon can take their exams?

Analytical questions:

* Sue is determined to break free. How can you see the Authority trying to keep her in her Protected World?
* What does it suggest to you that Sue sees Teddy in her dream?
* On page 253, Sue overhears her parents talking. Do you think her mother means for her to hear?
* How are Sue and Jon apparently different? How are they apparently similar?
* How does Suzanne Heywood create tension in this chapter?
* In what ways do we see the growing divide between mother and daughter?
* What effect does it have on you as readers when you read Sue’s father’s letter to the customs department?

In general:

* On page 253, Sue says that, while she tries to ignore it, she is “living in an extraordinary world”. Find images online of some of the places she visits. Discuss the genre criteria for a travelogue and a tourist brochure. Write either a travelogue or tourist brochure for one of the places Sue visits. Have your teacher set rules for required content, words or word-types to include, length, etc.

# Chapter 19

Comprehension questions:

* How did Sue do in her exams?
* What is happening during the night Sue is awakened by her mother?
* Why are they making wine?

Analytical questions:

* When her mother wants Sue to leave with her, Sue doesn’t want to. Consider Sue’s relationships to each of her parents. Why doesn’t she want to leave Wavewalker now?
* How, if at all, does Sue’s parents fight affect her Protected World?
* On page 265, Heath and Sue reveal that they like each other. The very next line is her father’s announcement that they are leaving. What is the effect of this juxtaposition?
* In the final scene of the chapter, on page 270, what is the symbolic significance of Sue sorting her books? Consider where the scene begins and where it ends.
* How is that final scene structured like a mini-short story?

In general:

* Sue accepts that they do not go to her school, which is “only an hour away”, for her to pick up a prize and meet her teachers. She does this not because of her father’s arguments, but because she knows she will not get what she asks for and doesn’t want the day to be spoiled. How important is it to you to be praised and recognized for what you do well? How do you feel when reading about her choice?
* Discuss what you think the argument between her parents was about.
* How important is it for young people to be able to explore romantic feelings?

# Chapter 20

Comprehension questions:

* What is it that Sue and her mother argue over?
* What happens when Jon pours out the water from the kettle?
* Why is New Caledonia not a safe place to sail to?
* How come Sue thaws a frog in the fridge?

Analytical questions:

* Consider the (prolonged) argument between Sue and her mother. What tactics do they each employ against the other?
* Consider the Maiden’s Arc archetypical narrative arc. Where on this arc can Sue be considered to be? What do you expect will happen later, based on this arc?
* Characterize Sue at this point in her life.
* What is the conflict between Jon and their father about? Could it in any way be related to Sue’s conflicts?
* Characterize Sue’s mother as seen through Sue’s account.
* How does the final scene – a snippet of Sue’s mother’s story – affect the reader?

In general:

* Research the United Nations’s 1959 “Declaration of the Rights of the Child”, and the Sustainable Development Goals, and what they say about children as targets of violence. Look into NGOs and your local government’s work on ending violence against children. Discuss in groups how you think these efforts are faring? Come up with innovative solutions and measures to help secure children against violence.

# Chapter 21

Comprehension questions:

* What happens to Wavewalker as they approach Beqa Island?
* How do they try to stop Wavewalker from ripping itself apart?
* How does Sue’s relationship to Michael develop?
* What has happened to the Rainbow Warrior?

Analytical questions:

* There is some romantic tension between Sue and Michael in this chapter. Analyze the way this is created on a textual level.
* How does Sue portray Adrienne? How much can you say about Adrienne if you disregard Sue’s feelings for her?
* Analyze the ways in which tension is built in this chapter.

In general:

* What do you think about the way Michael behaves towards Sue and Adrienne?

# Chapter 22

Comprehension questions:

* What is it that makes Sue’s father consider selling Wavewalker?
* Why does Michael feel he needs to tell Sue that he is staying at a hotel with Adrienne?
* What exactly is the dilemma Sue’s father alludes to regarding Wavewalker becoming the flagship of Greenpeace?
* What is Sue’s father’s plans now that they have come to New Zealand?

Analytical questions:

* On pages 298-299, Sue and Adrienne talk about Michael. Why do you think Adrienne starts this particular conversation? If you imagine their conversation as a game or a battle, who do you think “wins”? Why?
* Analyze the stylistic elements of Sue’s father’s telegram, page 303. What stylistic aspects of a telegram do you see here? What about the telegram on page 307? How does the style affect the tone of the missives?
* On page 305, Michael reveals that he is going to leave Wavewalker, even though he had said he would come with them to Mururoa Atoll. Why is this so painful to Sue?
* Look at the scriptwriter’s version of their lives. Which parts are true? Which are not? What is it about his character based on Sue that vexes her so much?
* On page 308, Sue dreams of meeting Michael. Is her dream realistic? How would you compare her romantic interests to Michael’s?
* Examine the confrontation between Sue and her father at the post-office (page 309-310). How does this scene fit into the Maiden’s Arc?
* Why do you think the chapter is called “Trials”?

In general:

* Sue comments, on page 298, that “’ever-fixed’ love was pointless if it wasn’t reciprocated.” Discuss in class whether or not love ought to have a “point”.
* Take your inspiration from the conversation between Sue and Adrienne about Michael. Write a piece of dialogue between two people that does three things: shows their relationship, contains a goal for each character that conflicts with that of the other character, and that uses subtext – so have them seemingly talk about one thing, while they are really talking about something else.
Read your dialogues aloud to others, and see if they can figure out the real conversation.

# Chapter 23

Comprehension questions:

* How do the plans for Wavewalker evolve throughout the chapter?
* Sue seems afraid of driving fast (and therefore, of driving with Bruce). Why is that?
* How does Sue’s mother react when Sue comes to visit on Wavewalker?
* What is the matter of the microscope about?

Analytical questions:

* From the opening scene of this chapter (page 317), what impression do you get of Sue’s life with Mick and Dulcie?
* From Sue’s conversation with her mother (page 318), what impression do you have of Sue’s mother? What impression do you have of Sue?
* When Sue afterwards visits (pages 320-321), how would you characterize Sue, her father and her mother in that scene?
* On page 323, Sue lets her thoughts “unravel”. Divide the parts she lists into positives and negatives. What is striking about that?
* Sue sends her letters to a selection of universities. What is your initial reaction to the wording of her letter and how she sends them? What is the effect of this scene being included in the book?

In general:

* At the end of the chapter (page 328-329), Sue’s father leaves her while giving her more responsibilities. What do you expect will happen next? What makes you think so?
* Sue has to put in advertisements for crew for Wavewalker – whale- and dolphin-sighting cruises. Design an ad for trips with Wavewalker. Choose a medium for that ad (newspaper, online platform, video, radio ad) and make the ad fit the format. Present your ads and an explanation of your choices on class.

# Chapter 24

Comprehension questions:

* Sue calls Childline. What is Childline? Why does she call them?
* How does Sue try to survive and prepare for winter?
* Why does Bruce break up with Sue?
* What are the problems with Sue’s visa?
* How do the universities Sue has approached answer?
* Why does Sue have a hard time spelling?

Analytical questions:

* A counsellor, such as the one Sue speaks to from Childline, has to be very aware of the language they use. Analyse how the counsellor speaks, and make a list of observations on how she uses language to achieve her goal of helping Sue.
* How would you characterize Jon in this chapter?
* Sue tries to get her parents to help her, at least economically, but falls short the first few times. How are her conversation with her father and with her mother different?
* In the Maiden’s Arc archetypical journey, what role does Simone play?
* From page 336:
[Simone:] ‘But you need to stop expecting your parents to help.’
[…] ‘You’re right,’ I said. ‘It doesn’t matter *why* they left, does it? What matters is they’re not coming back anytime soon, so I need to sort myself out.’
Explain the significance of those words, and what happens within Sue.
* On page 337, two wildly different scenes with Bruce are juxtaposed. What is the effect of arranging them like this?
* If this had been a novel, we would be fast approaching the climax of the story, with the stakes raised and the tension at an all-time high. How does this chapter reflect that?
* Wavewalker returns to Auckland on page 347. How do the descriptions of Wavewalker and Sue’s parents reflect the changes in Sue?
* In what ways do you see Sue breaking free?

In general:

* In the car back from a night celebrating, Sue and Simone listen to “The Power of Love”. Write a poem about what you think of as “the power of love”. With your class, present your poems and discuss the different views on the power of love, and what love can do to us humans.
* On page 337, Simone says: “I told you before to stop assuming people will be kind. Only the ones who care will be kind, and there are few of those around. You have to look after yourself.”
Discuss the validity of her statement. Can you think of examples of people who are kind to Sue? Are there people who truly care for her?
* On page 349, Sue lists things she does know. Brainstorm in groups on what you would want education to ideally give to students. Then discuss on class what, if any, is missing from Sue’s education, and from the education you are currently doing.

# Chapter 25

Comprehension questions:

* Why does Sue cry when she gets out of the plane at Heathrow?

Analytical questions:

* How does Sue experience England at first? Find places in the text that reveals how she feels.
* Sue meets another Suzanne in Oxford. They are both similar and different. What can this Suzanne represent?

In general:

* Find a video of Richard Dawkins explaining the evolution of the eye. Use Toulmin’s model of argumentation to analyse his argumentation.
* “But Oxford was a place for girls like that other Suzanne, not for girls like me.” (page 357). Clearly Sue was wrong about this, but her idea was not completely out there. Discuss what having students from all walks of life and with various experiences can do for universities and schools, and whether or not universities should reserve spots for students with alternative backgrounds.

# Chapter 26

Comprehension questions:

* Why doesn’t Sue feel that Nuneaton is a home?
* Why is it important to Sue that Oxford does not count her as an overseas student?
* How does Sue ensure that she has stable work?

Analytical questions:

* Characterise Sue at this point in her life.
* How does Sue maintain tension in this chapter?
* What is the symbolic importance of the vote on page 364?
* Why does Sue end the chapter (page 365) by saying she had never thought of Roger’s obstacles? What is the effect of this?

In general:

* Pair up and interview each other about obstacles you have faced in your lives, and how those obstacles have shaped you and/or your lives.
* Make a list of the obstacles Sue is faced with even after breaking free of Wavewalker and her parents.

# Chapter 27

Comprehension questions:

* What has happened in Fiji that makes travelling there dangerous?
* Where does Sue get the money to pay for her university, at least in part?
* What is the problem with Wavewalker?

Analytical questions:

* Characterize the relationship between Sue and Michael.
* Why does Sue’s encounter with her parents, and especially with her mother, go wrong?
* “A lot of the fun has gone out of this life.” (page 370) What do you think has changed since Sue’s father feels this way?
* What is the symbolic importance of the scene where Sue meets Max? (page 370-371)
* Characterize the relationship between Sue’s parents in this chapter.
* To what extent do Sue and her mother patch up their broken relationship?
* What is the symbolic significance of the scene on page 374, where Wavewalker hits the pylon?
* Sue ends this fourth part, “Breaking Free”, by saying she went to the “*Wavewalker* School of the Sea”. Why did she choose to end this part of the book with those words?
* How far along in the Maiden’s Arc is Sue at this point?
* Are there loose ends that still need to be tied up?

In general:

* Sue says that coups are “part of life in the Pacific”. (page 367) While the 1987 military coup in Fiji might have been the nation’s first, it wasn’t their last. Research the history of coups d’etat in Fiji, and have a round-table discussion on why a seemingly paradise island nation has faced so many challenges to its rule.
* Imagine you are making a movie based on Sue’s story. Create a storyboard for either:
	+ The scene where Sue tries to stop Wavewalker from hitting the pylon, emphasizing the symbolism
	+ The scene where Sue and her mother try to reconcile, emphasizing the relationship between them

Present your storyboard and how you would create the scene (use appropriate terminology for filming if you can), and explain your choices.

# Chapter 28

Comprehension questions:

* What happened to Wavewalker to make her parents stop sailing?
* How does Suzanne conduct her search?
* What has happened to Wavewalker after her parents last saw it?
* Why is it so difficult for Suzanne to get Fijians to talk to her?

Analytical questions:

* Chapter 28 begins with a massive jump in time, and starts with Suzanne’s question about Wavewalker, skipping over everything in between. What is the effect of this on the story given to the reader?
* What do you think about the way Sue’s mother dismisses the question on page 379?
* On page 380, Suzanne uses the simile about the seaweed hanging from the anchor chain. Analyze the construction and effect of that simile.
* Suzanne goes to Fiji to find Wavewalker. How important is it for her to find closure if we consider her as fulfilling the Maiden’s Arc?
* Chapter 28 is different from earlier chapters. How does Suzanne keep the tension in this chapter, which takes place years she has broken free?
* Towards the end of her search for Wavewalker, Suzanne receives Wavewalker’s compass from Richard. Of all the things she could have been given, how can a compass be interpreted symbolically – and this compass in particular?

In general:

* On page 380, Suzanne and Jeremy discuss her going to Fiji to find Wavewalker, and Jeremy supports her. Are there parts of your life that lack closure? Discuss why we sometimes go to great lengths to achieve closure.
* Years before Wavewalker was damaged by Cyclone Sina, Sue’s parents had thoughts of stopping their life at sea. Why do you think it took a cyclone to end it, rather than them quitting that life of their own accord?

# Epilogue

Questions:

* “But you’re so normal”. What are the implied assumptions behind this statement that people tell Suzanne?
* What is Suzanne’s experience of college like?
* What is Suzanne’s explanation as to why her father allowed her mother to treat her poorly?
* “Either she goes or I do”. Those were her mother's words. How do you react to reading those words?

# Further questions

What do you think is the message of Suzanne Heywood’s book?

Reading Suzanne Heywood’s story, it feels as if someone should have stepped in – although identifying who that someone is might not be easy. If you had been in social services and were assigned to Sue’s case (if such a case had been brought before social services), what would you have done?

If you were to place the blame on one person for why Suzanne had to suffer through her ordeals, who would be to blame?

Suzanne’s story ultimately shows the value of education for children and adolescents. What should be the role of education in young people’s lives? Is it?

# Essay

Write an analytical essay (900-1200 words) in which you analyse Suzanne Heywood’s book “Wavewalker: Breaking Free” and discuss to what extent Sue’s breaking free is her own achievement or relies on the help of others.

Part of your essay must focus on how Heywood engages her reader in the climactic chapters 23 and 24. In addition your essay must include an analysis of the Childline counsellor’s style of language pp. 331-333.