

Title: Wild Song

Author: Candy Gourlay

#### LIKES

- Luki is a great female protagonist, determined, funny and resilient character
- Talking to her dead mother – effective narrative device.
- The relationships between Sadie and Luki, both had a desire to seek non-traditional roles that where expect of them as woman
- Connections to real history we didn't know much about
- Exploring Filipino culture and belief – e.g. connection to nature, rituals and the spirt world
- Rich imagery and description e.g. the different areas of the Philippines.
- World Trade Fair – gripping idea for a story and powerful symbol of the impact of colonialism.
- An alternative coming-of-age story
- Naivety of Luki's descriptions which leave the reader working out what she's saying e.g. she says the sea is looking back at her and the reader knows it's a whale.
- Complex aspects of identity e.g the Igarots
- The mean girls who make friends plot
- Unflinching – death, the brains...
- Samkad as the moral conscience. The way he dealt with his rejection.
- The growing and shrinking of Luki's world as she experiences more of it.

#### DISLIKES

- The narrator talking to her mother – felt a bit voyeuristic
- Naivety of the narrator grated a bit esp at the start. Interferred with the reader's relationship with her.
- Naïve tone sometimes jarred with brutal themes of exploitation, death, loss. (But maybe that highlights the naivety of them thinking they were escaping)
- The best bits were those based on real history – some of the other bits not so believable. Research a bit shoe-horned in at times.
- Didn't think the incident with the president added much – all a bit rushed.
- High drama after high drama. So many BIG issues. Could have done with a bit more variation in the tone and a bit more focus. All the relationships end in tragedy!

- The journey from the high lands to the lowlands seemed to be longer than it needed to be.
- Who to recommend it to? Both high drama and slow paced.
- Frustrated by how little we learn about the Igarot village – wouldn't they have allied themselves in the context of the World Fair?
- The ending – Luki's agency taken away. Maybe her tragedies have shrunk her so that returning to the village is the only thing that feels safe?

### PUZZLES

- What happens next? How can Luki saty/fit in after all she's been through?
- A bit of confusion about where the hospital is – near or far away? Seems that Luki could have gone to find Tilan? For such a resourceful person she seems to give that up too quickly?
- Have to look in the appendix to find out what happened to Tilan.
- Some of the characters a bit 2D e.g. would have liked to know more about Johnny's backstory.

### PATTERNS (Within this book and links to other books and real-life experiences)

#### Within this novel

- Escape and return. You come back, but it's not the same.
- Otherness never resolves
- Growing up – learning the hard way that freedom comes at a price

#### Real experiences

- Colonialism and Racism
- Based on historical event – there was a real-World Fair

- Bereavement – loss of parents and friends
- Other world fairs – the great exhibition, the funding of the V&A, the Festival of Britain
- The culture conflicts and not understanding each other
- Having Moral fortitude – making the best of a bad situation

Booktitles and other

- Bone Talk by Candy Gourlay – prequel story that follows Samkad and his brother
- The Hunger Games – esp the first chapter. Survival, hunting in the forest, living under rule of another society
- The English – BBC series. The Wild West and indigenous people. A big show at the end.
- Paris Savages by Katherine Johnson. Native Australians being ‘shown’ in a circus in Paris.
- Door of No Return by Kwame Alexander
- Meet Me in St Louis – 1944 film about the World Fair.

**HOOKS**

- Start by introducing the history of the fair – Imagine and discuss who would have been there? What would it have been like? If you were to write a story, whose experience would you base it on and why?
- The cover what can expect for the image?
- Watch film and research of the World Fair – including real footage. Candy Gourlay <https://asianamericanedu.org/1904-worlds-fair-exhibition-of-the-igorot-filipino-people.html>
- Companion text to Things Fall Apart

**READING ALOUD, HAVING IGNITED THEIR CURIOSITY**

- 15-minute extract – perhaps the characters first experience arriving in American and at the St Louis where the fair ground is being held.

#### OUTPUTS FOLLOWING READING (ORAL AND WRITTEN)

- Discuss and describe what would a world fair look like today? E.g. The Commonwealth Games, Olympics (opening and closing ceremonies), What cultures would be presented? Who decides?
- The Americans built a jail when they took over the Philippines, discuss or debate what would justice look like if there were no jails?
- Geography and mapping the journey they took
- The Americans built an English school in the village - what subject to you think the local 'had to' study, what subjects do you think they Philippines would have chosen to study?

#### RESOURCES

- St Louis Art Museum – record <https://www.slam.org/teachers-students/educator-resources/art-along-the-rivers/art-on-display/1904-st-louis-worlds-fair/>
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- <https://www.aapihistoryhub.org/resource/1904-worlds-fair-exhibition-of-the-igorot-filipino-people>

#### OTHER

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