

Teachers' Notes: Antarctica's Frozen Chosen

by Hazel Edwards
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ISBN 0 7344 0519 7
YA (Young Adult) novel
Lothian www.lothian.com.au

Independent Booksellers Top Ten Books Sydney Morning Herald Feb 2006
Nominated for Davitt crime writers award 2004
Selected for various Premier's Reading Challenges 2004, 2005, 2006
State Library of Victoria Top 150 titles
Serialised on Radio RPH Children's Hour 2004-5 & Ballarat FM 2006
Audio version available from Louis Braille
www.louisbrailleaudio.com
email: lba.sales@nils.org.au

These notes contain ideas for classroom activities which involve students in reviewing and moving into performance and multi-media but are based on the author's process of researching and adapting the novel.

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Curriculum Links

Many schools are studying Antarctica as a unit because of the polar setting (2007 is International Polar Year: Arctic and Antarctic). This novel stresses e-mail, technology such as Antarctic navigation, mapping and GPS, eco-challenges, transport and relationships, so it can be used across curricula. It is specifically relevant to:

Maths: navigation, time zones and transport times, mapping, meteorology, calculating research results e.g. counting penguin/wildlife colonies, recording temperatures, recording 'birdo' sighting, estimating & projections of food requirements for wildlife and humans on bases.

Environment: Icebergs, oceans, global warming, transport and Antarctic workstyles on bases and expeditions. Effect of cold and remoteness on humans physically and psychologically.

Technology: e-mail, satellite links, GPS, scientific jobs in Antarctica and remote communications.

Science: biology, astro-physics, meteorology, polar medicine, food preparation in polar conditions, pilots, 'boffins' occupations e.g. studying ele-seals, comm.-god in charge of communications and 'tradies' jobs e.g. dieso, barge master, chippie, plumber, sparkie (electrician)

English: communicating with family via email and digital photos, public relations issues and media manipulation. Linguistics and where words originate. Antarctic Dictionary which has origins of words such as 'snotsicle' or even 'Frozen Chosen', those chosen to work in Antarctica.

S.O.S.E. Peer group pressures, living in confined spaces, mutiny, work roles and restrictive impact of weather via 24 hour light or darkness. Celebrations and survival skills like a sense of humour.

Within a unit on Antarctica, it's helpful to include varied media, so that the format or technology becomes relevant as well as the Antarctic content. For example, using a playscript requires rehearsal, perhaps research into the character, performance and the audience also gain. Fact, fiction, Auslan signed DVD or video, script, picture book, electronic book, Brailled text and audio are all varied formats which students can explore.

Since being 'beset' in Antarctica in 2001, Hazel Edwards has written books and plays based on her research including:

'**Antarctic Writer on Ice**' ISBN 1 86335090X (Common Ground Publishers www.booksonwriting.com.) which is an e-book with colour photos as well as a conventionally printed book, on audio (www.louisbrailleaudio.com) and in Braille.

The classroom play 'Antarctica; Cool or What?' is in '**Right or Wrong**' ISBN 1-876580-33-x (Phoenix Education) co-scripted with Goldie Alexander. www.phoenixed.com. This has a separate Teachers' Notes book of classroom activities

'**Antarctica's Frozen Chosen**' (Lothian), ISBN 0 7344 0519 7 YA (Young Adult)

'**Antarctic Dad**' (Lothian/Hachette) ISBN 0-780734408501 illus Kevin Burgemeestre with free downloadable polar model plans from www.hazeledwards.com

Auslan DVD 'Grandma Leaps Antarctica' www.bilby.net including 'My Gran's Gone to Antarctica' and 'The Lachieberg' (Auslan signed videos for College for the Deaf which WON the 2005 Educational Excellence in Innovation Award) Contact [kaystevens@optusnet.com.au].

'**Any Ants in Antarctica?**' (Comet magazine)

'**Healthy Women**' ISBN 094727779x (Choice Books) contains an interview with Antarctic Station leader Marilyn Boydell.

Numerous articles as well as web-chats for literary conferences such as Territory Tales & Ipswitch and **RMIT Lab 3000 Virtual Antarctic Conference** multi-media resources. Access via www.hazeledwards.com

Exhibition of 'Antarctic Dad' artwork at Books Illustrated Gallery Feb 2006 and Mundaring WA HeARTbeats Festival June 2007. Also on their website www.booksillustrated.com.au

Work in Progress:

'Hot Ice Squad' pre-school TV animation series for possible cartoons, books and toys.
Shooting Antarctica co-authored with Goldie Alexander, 5000 words adult literacy mystery with Antarctic photos. Trialled and available.

Author Bio

In 2001, Hazel Edwards was ice-bound with Voyage 5 expeditioners on the 'Polar Bird' re-supply ship near Casey Station, the Australian scientific base in Antarctica. Stuck in pack-ice, Hazel began writing the first draft while waiting for the 'beset' ship to break out and complete the changeover of wintering scientists. She's grateful to the Australian Antarctic Division for the opportunity to be writer-on-ice and one of the 'frozen chosen'.

Hazel, who lives in Melbourne, has written more than 160 books. Her previous Lothian titles include the YA thriller *Stalker*, and *Fake ID* which is being televised. 'Outback Ferals starring Kyle in the Northern Territory dealing with the threat of a pandemic' is the sequel to Antarctica's *Frozen Chosen*. *Muscles* illustrated by Ann James is in the Start Up series for beginning readers.

This viewpoint accompanied Hazel's books as part of an 'Impressions of Antarctica' exhibition at Parliament House Canberra of the creative work of Antarctic Division Humanities Berth recipients.

How being 'Antarctic Writer on ice' has influenced my subsequent work...

Since my Antarctic voyage, when speaking to groups, I use the iceberg as a symbol for writing a book. 9/10 of the work is unseen. A respect for the work of 'boffins' and 'tradies' as excellent problem-solvers and tall story tellers has crept into my Antarctic non-fiction and novel characterisation. On-going contact with diversely skilled expeditioners has enriched my life. We still e-mail.

They've helped me with plot details, scientific data and photos.

As Tournament of Minds problem-writer, I created an Antarctic science scenario and solutions were performed by 60,000 plus students Australia-wide. More watched.

At conferences, I present the viewpoint of a female, non-scientist, 50 plus author who concludes the Antarctic medical should also test for a sense of humour.

Pre-voyage, I thought physical strength would be vital, but words matter as a way of coming to terms with the scale of Antarctica and many readers have gained vicarious experience because books can travel further than one writer.

I was seduced by the surreal beauty of the icebergs and the serendipitous literary opportunities. Maybe allocating an Humanities berth will give birth to new Antarctic literature?

Outline of novel 'Antarctic Frozen Chosen'

On board The Polar Scientist Antarctic, 'boffins' are being held for their scientific knowledge of a genetic mutation causing infertility, which crosses from 'beasties' to humans.

Kyle and Jade, a Spanish exchange student, get involved when Kyle gets a last-minute job for the Antarctic summer as a marine biologist, helping to count ele-seals. Activist Jade e-mails daily and is involved with the Red Herrings, an Internet cyber-protest group. She doesn't realise she is being used.

Like the ele-seal, Kyle is big, and not what you'd call handsome and he's not aware of the Rogues Gallery of dodgy ship owners, until e-mailed by Jade who wants him to protest against threats to pristine Antarctica. Jade is his first girlfriend and he doesn't want to lose her... and, in icy isolation, e-mails matter.

Jade starts e-mailing about illegal fishing vessels, Patagonian tooth-fish poachers and the Red Herrings web chat-line. After a crazy haircut, which is an Antarctic ritual – like ice-dipping nude – Kyle faces questions of mateship and the issues of who owns what and how far you will go to protect a friend, even one who calls you 'Big K'. And, on board, the 'boffins' face the dilemma of whether their scientific knowledge should be shared if others will misuse it.

Questions about motives and methods of eco-terrorism and media manipulation are raised with an atypical terrorist -boffin Nic who wishes to save pristine Antarctica.

The A Factor: Discussion Starters:

In Antarctica, the 'A' Factor is the term used when things go wrong. Since distances are so great and weather so extreme, when things do go wrong, it happens in a BIG way.

1. Antarctic Language. Because humans have been recent in Antarctica, there is a specialised language which is based on brand names like Hagg, food like pemmican technical abbreviations, jobs or colloquialisms. Check with 'The Antarctic Dictionary' (C.S.I.R.O publishing) for fascinating derivations of phrases like 'Frozen Chosen' which means those chosen to work in Antarctica.
2. 'Antarctica's Frozen Chosen' is relevant to themes such as oceans, environment, science and technology: Set on the Great Southern Ocean en route for Antarctica
 - Expeditioners are great 'tall story' tellers and a sense of humour is a survival skill in extreme conditions.
 - Controversial issues of longline fishing of Patagonian Tooth fish
 - Marine bios and eco-balance.
 - Ele-seal, krill and whale research
 - Geographic and psychological isolation of Antarctica.
 - Eco-terrorism and effects in Antarctica.
 - Challenges of polar expeditions today
 - Hi-tech communications such as GPS (global positioning systems) and satellite links.
 - Navigation.
3. How far do you go for a mate? Is there any circumstance in which you would say 'No'? Why might 'winterers' have a special feeling of mateship?
4. Challenging stereotypes of terrorism: Are stereotypes dangerous? If so, in what way? What is the stereotype of a terrorist? To what extent does Nic in 'Antarctica's Frozen Chosen' differ from the stereotype of a terrorist? Does the label of terrorist apply to anyone else in this novel?
5. In what ways does this topical plot link the spread of bio- warfare and spread of ideas?
6. Realistic details of Antarctic workstyles are portrayed. 'Boffins' are the scientists. 'Tradies' are the support staff. All work together and many have additional roles such as nurse, hair-cutter, home-brewer, fire chief or search and rescue. Which role would appeal to you? Station Leader, Chef? Chippie? Dieso? Comm God, Boffin? Glaciologist? Doc? Plumber? Sparkie (electrician). Why?
7. Expeditioners depend heavily upon e-mail and digital photos, so Kyle, who e-mails his activist girlfriend Jade, typifies idea- sharing via satellite. To what extent do people reveal more/less of themselves by e-mail rather than face to face?
8. Controversial issues: Patagonian Toothfishing, Mutiny, Bio terrorism, stereotypes of terrorists. Issues of courage/ speaking out. Peer pressure. Pristine Antarctica and eco issues. To what extent are these the background of the story and to what extent do they dominate this novel?
9. Adventure V Boredom What actions would you consider adventurous? To what extent does it take more skills to cope with routine and isolation than short bursts of peak activity? What is the most challenging thing you have done in your life?
10. Fact and Fiction may use the same raw research but compose it differently. Compare 'Antarctic Writer on Ice' (www.booksonwriting.com) published by Common Ground Publishers and 'Antarctica's Frozen Chosen' published by Lothian.

Non-Fiction Book Review: Antarctic Writer on Ice, by Hazel Edwards by Sally Murphy

A unique diary account of one writer's Antarctic adventure.

Only boffins and brains get to go to Antarctica. Don't they? You could certainly be forgiven for thinking this if you haven't read *Antarctic Writer on Ice*, an innovative account of Australian author Hazel Edwards's 2001 trip to Antarctica.

Chosen, following a rigorous selection process, for the sole annual humanities berth sponsored by the Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition (ANARE), Edwards travelled on the scientific resupply ship *Polar Bird*. The voyage, which should have taken about 3 weeks, was to be both longer and more trying than Edwards expected.

Using an interesting assortment of mediums, Edwards shares her experiences and insights. The diary includes recounts, emails, scientific reports, photographs and more, which give more than a simple chronological report of the trip. *Antarctic Writer on Ice* is a unique insight into the Antarctic experience. As well as sharing her own emotions – from the self doubt of wondering whether she can cope, to the wonder of seeing it all for the first time – Edwards is also able to share some of the highs and lows of fellow travellers.

This is an excellent read for anyone with an interest in writing, travel, or simply life experience, and essential reading for anyone fortunate enough to be preparing for a stint in Antarctica. It would also make an excellent classroom resource, showing the different styles and formats of writing for different media and audiences.

Antarctic Writer on Ice is available in paperback and e-book formats from [Common Ground Publishing](#).

Antarctic Writer on Ice: Diary of an Enduring Adventure, by Hazel Edwards
Common Ground Publishers, 2002
Paperback ISBN: 1 86335 090 X \$20
eBook ISBN: 1 86335 091 8 \$15

Frozen Ideas

on researching/writing the novel 'Antarctica's Frozen Chosen': Gifted Magazine 2007

'Antarctica's Frozen Chosen' has taken me over eighteen months since my actual research during an Antarctic expedition to Australia's Casey Station. Few get to Antarctica and fewer write realistically, so, doing justice to the 'Big' subject was an underlying concern. That's why I kept putting off the re-writes. 30,000 words is required for the final version but it's getting harder for me to finish a manuscript. My normal output is 1,000 words per day, but this adolescent novel has had many drafts. I don't believe in writer's block, but...

Plot

First was the challenge of getting a scientifically feasible twist to the plot. I needed sufficient reason for the base to be quarantined which would provoke a mutiny. 'Bio' Garry Mayo, one of the 'boffins' gave me that twist and it related to changes in immunity which is relevant in isolated Antarctica. Expeditioners' resistance to 'bugs' lowers when they're isolated for months in pristine Antarctica. So they would be vulnerable to a cross-over from animals to humans.

Age

My protagonist had an age problem. He needed to be young enough to appeal to a 14 plus year old readership, but realistically, expeditioners require broad trade or scientific qualifications which mean most are late thirties and the youngest would be late twenties by the time they're sufficiently skilled to be chosen. So I made Kyle 21 and a last minute substitute.

Writing 'male' is also a challenge in terms of attitude and language choice. While physical action such as icy rescues are easy and thrilling to write, revealing inner concerns is not realistic while swearing or repetitive monosyllabic exchanges are boring for the reader. (Not that all males speak in that way!) I gave Kyle a much younger eco-activist girlfriend to e-mail as a device for providing introspection and other viewpoints.

Girlfriend Jade needed to be younger. By making her a Spanish exchange secondary student who'd lived with the Hobart family of Kyle's cousin Mollie, this gave her a reason to be returning to Europe and yet still e-mailing him.

Dossiers were constructed for each of the major characters. This is like creating a C.V. but with personal and physical details. Made an executive decision to use occupations such as Dieso as names, or nicknames which are an Antarctic tradition because I had a big cast, and giving more than one name to a character is confusing for the reader who has to distinguish personalities quickly.

Antarctic Setting

Setting was also a challenge. To be stuck in the ice or 'beset' would add to the isolation and dramatic possibilities. Having been beset on a polar resupply ship near the Shackleton Ice Shelf, I knew more about polar shipboard life firsthand than I did about station life on the Base. So I'd prefer to maximise that setting.

Timeframe

Timeframe also mattered. They needed to have 'wintered' together to allow time for grievances to grow, so they needed to be stuck on their way home rather than on their way TO the base. Little details make a story realistic and although I'd heard lots of 'tall stories' about life Down South, in the bar late at night, I'd rather set it mainly on the polar ship for authenticity.

Real web sites like www.isofish.org do have a Rogue Gallery of eco-offender ship owners but the Red Herring web chat group is fictitious, a device to provide Jade with information to feed Kyle and a way of her having another identity.

Eco-thriller

An eco thriller must have conflict which is based on dramatic contrasts. Inevitably I'd need to exaggerate, and the 'real' expeditioners would be checking facts but also if they were being 'fictionalised'. Since I'd meet only about three of each occupation, they'd be looking for similarities in the character with their job-role.

Composites

All fictional characters are composites from observation and probability plus imagination. Few 'real life' characters are sufficiently interesting for a novelist. While women working in Antarctica are a minority, for my plot it was essential to have a female expeditioner, (or someone capable of becoming pregnant) and preferably a station leader. Limited options. Only seven Australian women have been station leaders and I'd interviewed one extensively for another factual book. Inevitably some 'real' expeditioners might suspect that I'd based aspects on them especially when I was using their Antarctic occupations. But I didn't. All are composites.

Anthrax

Timing matters with a novel. By choosing anthrax as the cross-over mutation in January 2001, I thought I'd come up with a fairly unusual twist. Abandoning my anthrax plot was a loss, but after September 11th, no-one would want to read about a hypothetical anthrax cross-over from animals to humans. The polar Doc had helped me with the anthrax research while we were beset, but now I'd have to change the plot.

Spanish

I'm not anti-Spanish, but some illegal ships are Spanish or registered there, so making my exchange student Spanish was a dramatic juxtaposing for literary, not political reasons.

Terrorist?

Why did I make blond, net-boffin Nic a terrorist? Partly because I wanted to challenge the stereotypical view of a dark, Middle-eastern looking terrorist and explore the tunnel vision of an obsessive personality and to investigate scientific versus political ethics. To make him believable I created parents in Foreign Affairs who had sent him to international schools. Parallels between the spread of terrorist ideas via the Internet and infection spreading via Antarctic weather were relevant themes. The ethics of responsibility in what science you choose to research were also relevant. But I didn't want to be didactic.

Didacticism is a problem because I'd learnt so much about Antarctica during the expedition interviews, it was risky to assume the general reader would have the knowledge of ele-seals, poaching, climate or glaciology, so the facts had to be fed in, often via the dialogue which was another reason for the slightly naïve Big K, who was my Kyle character.

Tense

First person, present tense was a dramatic decision for immediacy. Including e-mails for a girlfriend was to provide the equivalent of VR (virtual reality) and to stress the psychological importance of e-mailing close friends and family from Antarctica.

The Frozen Chosen is a term used for those selected to work in Antarctica. I'm grateful to have been one of them#

****This may give students ideas for linking literary 'events' and food.***

A 'Cool' Antarctic Book Launch in Tropical Queensland's Gladstone.

'This is Cool!'

Launching an Antarctic eco-thriller in tropical Gladstone's Botanic Gardens was a 'cool' way to introduce Melbourne author Hazel Edwards' 150th book 'Antarctica's Frozen Chosen' (Lothian)

An ice berg cake with an ice-cream sculpted penguin and a quandong jelly-blue sea, plus icy blocks for the first fifty students to enter the Tondoon Botanic Gardens, a 12 year old avid reader Erica as launcher, plus Gladstone City's Deputy Mayor who is also a teacher-librarian made this book launch special and reader-centred.

As the Nestles Write Around Australia author, Hazel was in the Gladstone-Rockhampton area, and decided to have her national launch with the enthusiastic support of Dymocks Bookstore who provided commemorative certificates for the autographed books and an imaginative 'berg window with paper folded penguins (Black and white paper from Xerox discards).

Clinton and Gladstone South primary students created a giant map of Antarctica as a backdrop, and constructed stories based on Edwards' book titles. Erin was the student who designed a special bookmark which Hazel signed for all local students.

All of the launch participants were issued with stickers, to indicate how quickly pollution or ideas could spread in Antarctica or elsewhere.

An iceberg symbolising the 9/10 beneath the surface in researching and crafting of any book was displayed.

Many families of students, who had attended Hazel's author talks at the Central Queensland University, came to the launch. One Dad bought a copy of 'Antarctica's Frozen Chosen' for his daughter.

'Thanks. She's never wanted to read a book before.'

Hazel suggested that Dad read the book too because 'It's fairly blokey'

She researched this eco-thriller while she was beset in the polar ice during the Australian Antarctic Division expedition to Casey Station in 2001.

'Antarctic expeditioners are great tall story tellers and I did have to cross the Great Southern Ocean to get there,' says Hazel Edwards.

The Birth/Berth of Antarctica's Frozen Chosen

1,200 words on researching and writing
the novel 'Antarctica's Frozen Chosen' (Lothian)
A version of this was published in Good Reading 2003.

For each novel, I make plotting notes as a way of clarifying my thoughts on a work in progress (W.I.P.) Like childbirth, I'll forget the birth pangs of my book baby afterwards unless I note it immediately.

As recipient of the 2001 ANARE (Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition) Humanities berth, I went on Voyage 5 to Casey Station because I believe in participant-observer research so that novel details will be realistic.

Each year, one berth is awarded for a non-scientist to write about Antarctica for an international audience. Few 55 year old, unsuper-fit, female children's authors get the chance, so I went (after passing the stringent medical). I'd planned to write plays, non fiction and an eco-thriller novel, but the plot content depended upon my serendipitous research on ice.

En route, I interviewed 'boffins' and 'tradies', took part in search and rescue training, became beset for weeks near Shackleton's iceshelf and survived a helicopter crash on board. My lap top blew up, so I was restricted to the raw 300 word e-mails via satellite while 'beset' as my way of note-keeping. Just normal writing conditions!

I discarded my former anthrax plot (researched with the polar Doc and drafted in January 2001) as inappropriate after September 11, but now the bio-political issues of today's news are getting very close to my novel which deals with a rogue scientist and a quarantined, remote Antarctic base.

Parallels between the spread of terrorist ideas via the Internet and infection spreading via Antarctic weather are relevant themes.

My naïve 'Antarctic wildlife' web chat activists are 'got at' by a terrorist group. On board 'The Polar Scientist', a beset, resupply ship, 'boffins' are held for their scientific knowledge of a genetic mutation causing infertility which crosses from 'beasties' to humans. My 'hero' is Kyle the young last minute substitute expeditioner whose activist girlfriend e-mails constantly.

Age

My protagonist Kyle needed to be young enough to appeal to 14 year olds upwards, but realistically, the youngest expeditioners would be thirty by the time they're sufficiently skilled to be chosen. So I made Kyle 21 and a last minute substitute.

Dossiers were constructed for each character. This is like creating a C.V. but with personal and physical details. Made an executive decision to use occupations such as Dieso or Comm God as names because I had a big cast.

I was interested in the dilemma of a strong-minded scientist-expeditioner who was disillusioned with media-manipulation and politicians, and who had the intellect to manipulate others. I wanted him to be physically brave at an individual level and yet globally manipulative for his own cause. Questions of whether the end justifies the means concerned me. So I created Nic, a blond Scandinavian atypical bio-terrorist, who actually wanted to conserve pristine Antarctica, but who was using electronic media for his own ends. He believed he was right. Others didn't understand his motivation.

The fiction writer's role is to entertain, but also to provide a different perspective. 'Antarctica's Frozen Chosen' has taken me over eighteen months to write in about twelve drafts.

Few get to Antarctica and fewer write realistically, so, doing justice to the 'Big' subject was an underlying concern. That's why I kept putting off the re-writes. My normal output is 1,000 words per day, but this adolescent novel has had many drafts. I don't believe in writer's block, but...

Making the plot scientifically feasible took time. I needed sufficient reason for the base to be quarantined which would provoke a mutiny. Resistance to 'bugs' lowers when expeditioners are isolated for months in pristine Antarctica and immunity changes.

Writing 'male' in a 'blokey' setting such as Antarctica, is a challenge. Certain words like 'kodak poisoning' or 'The Big A' are local, but so are names for occupations, vehicles and customs. The perspective has to be 'blokey' too. While physical action such as icy rescues is easy and thrilling, to write, revealing inner concerns is more difficult. I gave Kyle a much younger eco-activist girlfriend Jade to e-mail as a device for providing introspection and other viewpoints.

Timeframe

Expeditioners needed to have 'wintered' together March-November to allow time for grievances to grow, so they had to be stuck on their way home rather than on their way TO the base. Camaraderie amongst winterers is real and they will band against outsiders.

Real web sites like www.isofish.org do have a Rogue Gallery of eco-offender ship owners but the Red Herring web chat group is fictitious, a device to provide Jade with information to feed Kyle and a way of her having another identity. Creativity is putting two things together which haven't been in that combination before. And a novel should be novel, so I've utilised the e-mail format as part of the novel, as expeditioners tend to do in their Antarctic workstyle.

All fictional characters are composites from observation and probability plus imagination. While women working in Antarctica are a minority, for my plot it was essential to have someone capable of becoming pregnant and preferably a station leader. Limited options. Only seven Australian women have been station leaders and I'd interviewed one extensively for another factual book 'Healthy Women' (Choice). Inevitably some 'real' expeditioners might suspect that I'd based aspects on them especially when I was using their Antarctic occupations. But I didn't.

I'd learnt so much about Antarctica, it was risky to assume the general reader would know about ele-seals, poaching, climate or glaciology, so the facts had to be fed in, often via the dialogue which was another reason for the slightly naïve, clumsy Big K, who was my Kyle character.

Tense

First person, present tense was a dramatic decision for immediacy. So was the flashback. Including e-mails for a girlfriend was to provide the equivalent of VR (virtual reality) and to stress the psychological importance of e-mailing close friends and family from Antarctica.

Acting Out

While not provoking a mutiny, I did 'act out' my plot on the voyage home and the Bosun showed me hiding places for a stowaway and the procedure for 'man overboard'.

Fiction prediction?

In today's news, I find biological terrorism items which relate to the plot I researched and wrote eighteen months ago. Perhaps it's the fiction writer's tendency to research, look at the possible conflicts and then say What if? It's a reasoned guess based on possibilities or probabilities.

The Frozen Chosen is a term used for those selected to work in Antarctica. I'm grateful to have been one of them especially as my Antarctic 'berth' has resulted in the 'birth' of an Antarctic novel.

Fiction Prediction

A version of this was printed in The Age Book Week supplement 2003

by Hazel Edwards

I'm disturbed by the speed with which real events are overtaking my 'Antarctic Frozen Chosen' eco-thriller. Anthrax scares. Terrorism. Bio mutations.

Why is my fiction prediction becoming nightly news? Perhaps it's the fiction writer's tendency to research, look at the possible conflicts and then say What if? It's a reasoned guess based on possibilities.

When I read or watch the news today, I find biological terrorism items which relate to the plot I researched and wrote eighteen months ago. And it's being presented simplistically in good/bad labels which limits discussion rather than exploring the complex motivations. I'm concerned that others use labels like 'terrorist' or 'bio-warfare', solely for dramatic impact and news appeal in a ratings war.

Fanciful terrorist scenarios are becoming sensationalised news grabs by acting politicians, and audiences have trouble separating fiction from fact.

I discarded my former anthrax plot as inappropriate after Sept 11, but now the bio-political issues of immunisation, quarantine and possible infertility are getting very close to the mutated bio contraception from animal to human in my novel which deals with a rogue scientist and a quarantined remote Antarctic base.

I did my homework. As recipient of the Antarctic Division Humanities berth, I went on an expedition to Casey Station because I believe in participant-observer research so that details will be realistic. I consulted 'boffins' and 'tradies' on board and the medical 'Doc' filled me in on all the possible complications while the scientists told me about genetic crossovers.

In my novel, naïve 'Antarctic wildlife' web chat activists are 'got at' by a terrorist group. On board 'The Polar Scientist', a beset, polar resupply ship, Antarctic 'boffins' are held for their scientific knowledge of a genetic mutation causing infertility which crosses from 'beasties' to humans. My 'hero' is Kyle the young last minute substitute expeditioner whose activist girlfriend e-mails constantly.

Then there's the terrorist angle.

I was interested in the dilemma of a strong-minded scientist-expeditioner who was disillusioned with media-manipulation and politicians, and who had the intellect to manipulate others. I wanted him to be physically brave at an individual level and yet globally manipulative for his own cause. Questions of whether the end justifies the means concerned me. So I created Nic, a blond Scandinavian atypical bio-terrorist, who actually wanted to conserve pristine Antarctica, but who was using electronic media for his own ends. He believed he was right. Others didn't understand his motivation.

My characters are individuals, not stereotypes. I tried to tackle the stereotypical Middle-Eastern terrorist indirectly to make readers think. There's a difference between presenting propaganda, and making people think afresh about a familiar or stereotyped subject. Creativity is putting two things together which haven't been in that combination before. And a novel should be novel, so I've utilised the e-mail format as part of the novel, as expeditioners tend to do in their Antarctic workstyle.

The fiction writer's role is to entertain, but also to provide a different perspective. Few have the opportunity to visit Antarctica and be seduced by icebergs 35 kilometres long and to experience the VASTNESS of the interconnected wildlife. A novel re-creating the mystique of Antarctica

provides vicarious experience by identifying with the ethical and physical challenges faced by the fictional characters.

I've had literary coincidences occur before, where life has mirrored my fiction, but none as extreme as recent terrorist news.

Maybe in their plots, authors gamble with probabilities rather than possibilities?

'Antarctica's Frozen Chosen' won't be out for a year. Novel publication isn't as fast as a T.V. news flash, but maybe readers will think about the characters' motivations longer.

Character Dossiers:

As an author, I construct a dossier for each character before starting the manuscript. These were composed with a scrap-book style in mind.

If you were the screen writer or the director considering the cast for a potential film or televising of 'Antarctica's Frozen Chosen', this cast list is a starting point.

Who might you cast in these roles?

Where would you shoot the script?

Expeditioners' CAST OF Antarctica's Frozen Chosen

ART BRIEF

(Could be designed like a real expeditioners' Year Book which is a bit like a school students' scrapbook magazine with standard questions, nicknames and a photo)

Expeditioners' Year Book

Kyle the ele-seal bio

Known as: Big K

Memorable Quote: Sorry, didn't mean to knock that over.

Hobbies: Watching the 'beasties' on the ice.

Summer Job: tagging eles as one of the Frozen Chosen.

Girlfriend: Jade the 'Greenie' who is Queen of the E-mails.

Thoughts about Antarctica: It's SO big, you feel tiny.

Most Embarrassing Moment: 'Kodak moment' overboard when photographed with penguins.

Jade a.k.a. (also known as) Esmeralda a.k.a. Antarctica who is p--- off with not being in the Year Book, so this is her e-entry that she sent in to the editor.

Memorable Quote: 'Being a Spanish exchange student doesn't mean I'm responsible for every Spanish Rogue ship-owner on the Internet.'

Hobbies: Wildlife saver. Queen of the e-mails. Passionately interested in 'causes' like

Patagonian Toothfish (because of the ace name)

Summer Job: Cyber-Activist. Media student. Getting 'insider' information on 'toothfish poachers'

Boyfriend: Kyle a.k.a. Big K or K2.

Most Embarrassing Moment: Being 'conned' in cyber Red Herrings' scam by the terrorist group.

Family: Parents produce T.V. docos and travel a lot.

God

Thoughts: 'If they don't want me to read it, they shouldn't put it in an e-mail marked Confidential'

Memorable Quotes: This is God speaking, your e-mails have arrived.' Hobbies: A 'nose' for news AND hot gossip.

Job: 'God' the Communications 'techie'. Fixes anything electrical. Looks after any satellite transmissions or hook-ups.

Best Antarctic Memory Going for a 'jolly' and having penguins dive onto the Zodiac, thinking it's an iceberg.

Dieso

Memorable Quote: 'I have caterpillar blood in my veins.'

Hobbies: 'hooning' around on Hags or Quads.

Job: Expedition mechanic. Calls job Diesology and love the Powerhouse which he calls the House of Noise. Can fix any engine, generator or vehicle.
Best Antarctic Memory: Sighting the first iceberg.
Most Embarrassing Moment: Rowing so hard in the gym-hold while ship is 'beset', that rowing machine breaks.
Sport: 'I don't do walking' because Diesos always drive the best wheels.
Thoughts about Antarctica: So far away from my family for a year.

GUS the VR (virtual reality) photographer.
Memorable Quote: 'I can shoot poachers even if I can't catch them.'
Job: Official VR (virtual reality) photographer
Best Antarctic Memory Capturing the light on an iceberg. Photographing the Aurora lights.
Most Embarrassing Moment: Falling off 'berg while photographing.

Ed the Petrel Head
Love about Antarctica: The birds (with wings). (Ed's named after the Antarctic petrel)
Memorable Quote: 'Technically, that's a mutiny,'
Hobbies: Artist on request. Does water colours of icebergs and birds.
Job: 'Birdo' boffin.
Most Embarrassing Moment: Reporting to O.H. & S officer about getting soaked with formalin in 'sensitive' parts.

Doc

Memorable Quote: 'Greatest medical challenge in Antarctica? Anything.'
Hobbies: Using expeditioners as pin-cushions for weekly blood tests.
Job: Medico who can do emergency operations, pull teeth and be chief water-tester.
Best Memory As kitchen 'slushy' choosing the 'Cool' music to play on the Base radio for the day.
Embarrassing Moment: Moving stores in Green Shed, my forklift knocks over pallets, activates the fire alarm and the whole station turns out. Cost me a slab of beer and months to live it down.

Bosun

Memorable Quote: 'Antarctica's warmer than Scandinavia at this time of year.'
Hobbies: 'Getting knotted.' Tying the crew in knots and then selling them the ropework as souvenirs.
Job: Bosun of Norwegian crew.
Best Antarctic Memory 'Breaking through the ice edge into Antarctica proper. Loves being 'beset' in the ice because it's peaceful.
Sport: Chasing illegal poachers of ele-seals.

Nic; (refuses to be written up in year book)

Memorable Quote: 'I Nic-named the Red Herrings' eco-chat group.'
Job: Boffin who is passionate about retaining pristine Antarctica and despises politicians.

Chippie.

Feelings about Antarctica: Hates being a pin cushion for the Doc. Loves the killer whales.
Quote: 'You can put your stuff anywhere without it being stolen. Don't need a VISA card here.'
Hobbies: Tall story teller. Thinks he's an amateur Antarctic lawyer.
Job: Expedition Carpenter plus S.A.R. (search and rescue) chief
Family: Brother in Australian navy. They talk on ship-to-ship radio.
Best Antarctic Memory: Having breakfast overlooking 'bergs.

Most Embarrassing Moment: Nude dip in ice initiation & being caught by SETI hoax

Known as: The Psych

Hates about Antarctica: 'Hates having glasses fog up while trying to ride a Hagg in a Blizz. Loves studying unusual personalities.

Memorable Quote: 'Never thought I'd be greeting a Russian helicopter without a gun in my hands.'

Hobbies: Listening.

Job: Army captain and psychologist who tests winterers to see if they're sane.

Most Embarrassing Moment: Treading on the 'poo bag' in the Hagg.

Known as: Mal the Met guy or one of the Met Fairies. (because they 'cross-dress up' for mid winter parties

Hates about Antarctica: Digging out the Met shed to release balloons.

Memorable Quote: 'Just because my name is Mal doesn't mean the weather has to be BAD!'

Job: Meteorologist

Worst Antarctic Memory: Teeth problems and the Doc who is the two week trained dentist, trying to fix his fillings.

Most Embarrassing Moment: Getting caught in a blizz he didn't know was coming.

Sport: Digging out the met shed.

CHRIS the S.L.

Known as: S.L. (Station leader)

Memorable Quote: 'When you say you're going to the end of the earth and they say 'Good', I'm not sure what to say.

Job: Station leader.

Best Antarctic Memory: Climbing an iceberg.

Most Embarrassing Moment: 'Being mistaken for a man because of the name Chris and the thick Antarctic gear.' That's why I wear red-framed glasses.

Hobbies: Reading 'Antarctic Vogue: How to spot an Antarctic Princess & Ten Best Moss and lichen recipes.

MARC

Known as: The Mad F.T.O. (Field Training Officer).

Loves about Antarctica: any extreme adventure sports like ice-berg climbing, or ice-surfing. (which is illegal) Hates rules and being shut in.

Memorable Quote: 'If it's there, I'll climb it.'

Job: Training others in search and rescue.

Best Antarctic Memory: hitching rides out with chopper pilot mate.

Embarrassing Moment: 'dear John' e-mail from girlfriend.

Mate: Dieso who 'owes him' for a SAR effort.

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Known as: Studley the Chef:

Fond of his comforts 'He's the comfy-chair test -pilot' in front of the video.

Memorable Quote: 'Two billion women in the world and I'm stuck here in the kitchen.'

Hobbies: hair-cut hacker.

Job: Superb cook but thinks he's God's gift to women.'

Embarrassing Moment: Setting kitchen on fire while cooking pancakes for the Midwinter dinner.

Creating a Scene for Classroom Performance

Imagine you are a director. You've just seen the way in which a cast could be described for a film based on the novel and was requested of the author by a director.

Choose a scene (of about a page) from the novel which you can perform for the classroom. The benefit is an opportunity to read for a purpose and perform in public. You may decide to include a Narrator to introduce and put the scene in context

e.g. This scene is taken from the novel 'Antarctica's Frozen Chosen' and is important within the story because.....

Choose:

A complete scene with a definite finish

Dialogue

Conflict or drama

2-3 characters

You may choose to video the performance later.

Some likely scenes from 'Antarctica's Frozen Chosen' could be:

P. 33-39-Patagonian Toothfish Poachers

P72-78 Over the side

P95-98 Antarctic Ice edge

P. 110-113 Chopper Crash and rescuing pilot

P127 -136 quarantined and mutiny

The Australian Writer November 2003

Antarctic Q and A

Children's author Hazel Edwards went on an Antarctic Division polar resupply voyage to Casey Station. Keen on participant-observer research where you 'do', 'interview' and 'observe' before writing, Hazel has been interviewed by many new writers since her return from the 2001 expedition. Some have been school web-chats by students studying Antarctica or literature. Young reviewers have read her factual 'Antarctic Writer on ice' and her eco-thriller 'Antarctica's Frozen Chosen'

Q and A

Web Chat question: How has being 'Antarctic Writer on ice' influenced your subsequent work? (Hazel's answer) Now I use the iceberg as a symbol for writing a book. 9/10 of the work is unseen. I was seduced by the surreal beauty of the icebergs and the serendipitous literary opportunities.

A respect for the work of 'boffins' and 'tradies' as excellent problem-solvers and tall story tellers has crept into my Antarctic non-fiction and novel characterisation. On-going contact with diversely skilled expeditioners has enriched my life. We still e-mail. They've helped me with plot details, scientific data and photos. But I think the Antarctic medical should also test for a sense of humour.

Pre-voyage, I thought physical strength would be vital, but words matter as a way of coming to terms with the scale of Antarctica and many readers have gained vicarious experience because books can travel further than one writer.

Joanna George, a Professional Writing and Editing student at Box Hill TAFE interviewed Hazel about her ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION

Q1. How did you feel about being one of only three females amongst thirty-seven polar expeditioners?

A1. It was challenging, especially as I was the oldest and had to pass the stringent 6 hour medical plus search and rescue training. I have researched books in challenging places before such – with the fire brigade, New Zealand's Milford Track and also trekking in Nepal. But being beset in the ice for weeks was the most extreme. I'm grateful now that I had the opportunity, especially to see the stunningly beautiful icebergs.

People's motivations always interest me and that's why I did the 'Difficult Personalities' (Choice) book with Dr Helen Mc Grath. That book has been read on the Antarctic bases now too.

Q2. You experienced an on-board helicopter crash and were beset in the ice for eighteen days. What life skills did you learn?

A2. I learnt from the other expeditioners how to respond fast in dangerous situations like possible polar fire but also how to cope with long stretches of enforced inactivity when you can't exercise outside due to blizz conditions. I learnt the value of words and creativity in coming to terms with the significance of extreme situations and the sheer size of Antarctica and your own insignificance. – having an imagination helps a lot! .

A sense of humour and creativity are survival skills greater than any form of physical strength.

Q3. Can you tell me more about Antarctica's Frozen Chosen?

A3. Antarctica's Frozen Chosen (Lothian) is a young adult eco-thriller I researched and started writing while beset in Antarctica. 21 year old Kyle who is a last minute substitute expeditioner to count ele seals, has to face physical challenges but also the issue of how far you go for a mate. Since e-mail via satellite and navigation are so important during expeditions, Kyle e-mails his activist girlfriend Jade who uses web chat to find out about eco-issues.

. My original plot revolved around anthrax, but this was replaced after September 11th. The 'boffins' were very helpful in checking facts for me and so I'm confident that my new plot is credible. The expeditioners are quarantined due to a bio-crossover from animal to human, and that's why a mutiny is threatened. It's also a fairly 'blokey' book which appeals to adult male

readers who like the technical details of the Antarctic setting such as the vehicles, satellite links and the wildlife.

Q4. Whilst you were in Antarctica you interviewed station leader Marilyn Boydell for your book, *Healthy Women; Getting the Balance Right* (Choice Books). What was one link that she and the other female interviewees shared?

A4. *Healthy Women* is a book about high profile women who have coped with loss. I interviewed Marilyn because she was living in an extreme icy environment and her role as station leader required 24 hour attention. She has helped me with additional Antarctic research for my pre-schoolers Tv Animation about Antarctic vehicles and the plays I have written around a fictional Antarctic Base.

Q5. Apart from the expeditioners at Casey Station, were expeditioners located at other stations in Antarctica?

A5. Yes, Mawson, Casey, Davis and Macquarie Island are bases for which Australia is responsible under the Antarctic Treaty.

Q6. You researched many of your books by being a participant-observer in Antarctica. Do you always research your material first hand?

A6. Yes. *Antarctic Writer on Ice* (Common Ground Publishing www.booksonwriting.com), is the writer's raw data of creating in difficult circumstances and contains many interviews with expeditioners. As my laptop died, I e-mailed to my daughter in Australia, via satellite. So it's ironic that this book is now available in e-book format as well as on audio, in Braille and has just reprinted in its fourth edition in conventional print format. Antarctica is simultaneously hi-tech and basic survival and you do become aware of all senses in a different way and notice colours and even smell Australia as you return.

For further information: Check www.hazeledwards.com

Originally published by Lothian 'Antarctica's Frozen Chosen' is now published and distributed by Hachette Livre.

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