

“The Year It All Ended” by Kirsty Murray
Parts of Speech Highlighting Activity

Text Suitability: S2.3 – S4 or Years 8-9

Extract: Prologue – *Before* (pp. 8-10)

Tiney woke to the sound of voices drifting past her door. She slipped out of bed and tiptoed down the hall. Louis and Will stood by the woodstove in the kitchen, their faces lit by the flames that glowed in the open firebox. They were already dressed and Will had a bag slung across his shoulder. When they saw Tiney they grinned, their eyes shining in the gloom of the morning kitchen.

‘Where are you going so early?’ asked Tiney, rubbing sleep from her eyes.

‘To Glenelg,’ said Louis.

‘For a swim,’ said Will. ‘Do you want . . .?’

‘. . . to come along?’ asked Louis.

Tiney felt breathless in their company. For a moment she couldn’t speak, glancing shyly from her big brother to her cousin. Louis and Will both had Wolfgang for their middle name, and ever since they were small everyone in their family had called the inseparable pair ‘the Wolfs’. One of Tiney’s very first memories was watching them wrestling on the back lawn, tumbling over each other like a pair of wolf cubs while she shrieked with excitement. In Tiney’s imagination, Louis, with his thick dark hair, was the black wolf while blond Will was the golden wolf.

‘How about it, little goose?’ said Will, not unkindly.

Louis reached out and tickled her under the chin. ‘She’s my littlest swan maiden, not a goose, aren’t you, Titch?’

Tiney slapped his hands away. ‘I’m not a goose or a swan, and you know they don’t let girls swim with boys at Glenelg Beach.’

‘Don’t worry, we’ll be too early for the warden. Hurry and grab your togs. We don’t want to miss a minute of sunshine.’

Tiney laughed and slipped quietly into her bedroom to dress, not wanting to wake her sisters.

The tram rattled down King William Street and on past Goodwood. Tiney sat between Louis and Will, dizzy with happiness to be allowed to be their mascot for the day. It was 1912. She was eleven years old.

The beach was dazzling; turquoise and blue water, white and gold sand with a few promenaders strolling along its length. The sea was calm and still, a mirror reflecting the morning sky. In the shadow of the long pier, Tiney changed into her woollen bathing costume and then skipped through the warm sand to where Louis and Will stood waiting for her, water lapping about their ankles. They wore identical black bathing suits though Will’s skin had a honey-gold glow from working in the vineyards while Louis was pale after a long winter of studying.

With Will on her left and Louis to her right, Tiney waded out into the cold waters of Holdfast Bay.

‘Race you to the deep,’ called Louis. He dove into the sea and Will plunged in beside him. A wave of icy water washed over Tiney.

‘Freezing!’ she shrieked.

Before she could let out another cry, the boys burst out of the sea and each grabbed one of Tiney’s arms. They swung her into the air, over the clear ocean, up and up. Tiney would never forget the feel of Will and

Louis’ arms about her, the water rushing past her face, the sunlight cutting through the surface, the blue, blue sky above. She would hold the memory of the two young men, the air, the sky and the sea, like a perfect jewel of her childhood, for the rest of her life.