

Teacher Resource:

From the cutting room of Barney Kettle by Kate De Goldi

(These questions presume that students will have read the novel)

1. What do you think the title of this book means? What is a cutting room? What is it that might be being used *from* the cutting room?
2. The book begins with a letter. At the end of the letter there is an asterisked footnote where the author explains that the title at the top of his letter (*From the Cutting Room of Barney Kettle (via the meticulously ordered files of DTS)*) is a homage to ‘the incomparable Mrs Kongisburg’. Google E.L. Kongisburg and see if you can find out what the narrator’s ‘little joke’ is.
3. This story is told from a number of points of view. Whose are they? Where are they? Why do you think the author used the different points of view?
4. Can you imagine – or draw – a map of the High Street (including Luna Square), based on what you learn in the first couple of chapters? Can you describe streets like that in other cities or towns that you know?
5. The High Street in the book is an imaginative reconstruction of the real High Street of Christchurch. You can learn about that from this website : <http://www.highstreetstories.co.nz/>. What might ‘imaginative reconstruction’ mean?
6. Can you find out what has changed on the High Street of Christchurch? What are the buildings there today?
7. There are a number of rather colourful adults living or working on the Street. Who are your favourites? Any you don’t like the sound of? Can you describe one of them in detail and draw some conclusions about their personality, based on what the author shows in the text? (Physical descriptions? Behaviour? The way they speak? The kind of work they do? Their relationships with others?) Can you write or visually create a portrait of an adult you find interesting or unusual in some way?
8. Can you describe Barney and Ren’s characteristics? Do you think they’re a good team? Why, or why not?

9. Ren and Barney collect as many stories as possible from the Street inhabitants, including their parents. They're making a kind of oral and visual history. Who might you interview if you were to set out on a similar project? Family members? Neighbours? People in your school community? Retailers in your suburb? People in a church community? What kind of questions might you ask?
10. Can you describe a zine, from what you learn in the book? What are the themes or subjects of some of the zines in Albert Anderson's shop? If you were to create some zines of your own, what subjects would you like to draw and write about?
11. There are quite a few biscuits in the book. Can you name them all? List your favourite biscuits and why. If you were to invent a biscuit in the spirit of Iced Rodents, what would yours be called? What would its ingredients be?
12. What do you learn about Orange Boy and Crimson Girl from the zines? Do your feelings for them change as the story progresses? Why?
13. Why do you think the author has the unseen narrator talking at the end of every chapter? What effect does it have?
14. The book Ms Temple is reading to Ren's class is *Milkweed* by Jerry Spinelli. You might like to read it and see why listening to the story helps Ren solve the mystery of the zine creators.
15. Obi & Girl have created a version of Monopoly called Crazopoly. Can you imagine your own version of Monopoly? What would its setting be? School? The Mall? A holiday venue? Something else altogether?
16. There are a lot of collections of nouns in this story – as Ren notes when she's making lists in Chapter 2. Nut varieties. Sewing tools. Sweet & biscuit varieties. Ancient medical instruments. Musical instruments. Japanese objects. Kinds of maps. Stolen objects. Dale from Dale's Copy Centre loves saying the brand names of his various copying machines. You could say the world is made colourful by all the things we name. And the things we do (verbs). Can you list the nouns and verbs of interests you have or activities you take part in? Skateboarding? Playing an instrument? Visual art? Filmmaking? Cooking? Collecting? Gaming? Clothing & costume? Etc
17. Chapter 8 and the Epilogue solve a few mysteries. About the story's narrator. What has happened to Barney, Obi & Girl. The many meanings of *The Untold Story*. How do you feel about these 'endings'?
18. Can you say what the book is 'about'? Is it about one thing or many?