

About *MESSENGER 93*

“She will fall in seven days,” say the crows. “As she falls, so do we all.” Who falls? wonders M. The ominous, supernatural message starts M on a quest that could save more than one life. But what if the person in danger happens to be her nemesis?

Along the way, M meets up with Gray, a Cree boy with his own hopes of saving a runaway Indigenous girl. As they begin a wild journey through the city and into the bleak northern woods, M grasps for the true meaning behind the crows’ messages and pushes deeper and deeper into worlds she doesn’t know or understand, holding fast to a questionable dream that she might be a modern-day Joan of Arc.

About BARBARA RADECKI

Before transitioning to writing, **Barbara Radecki** was an established actor with many film and television roles and hundreds of commercials to her credit. In recent years, several of her screenplays have been optioned or sold. As a screenwriter, her most recent film, *Modern Persuasion*, came out in 2020. Born in Vancouver and now based in Toronto, Radecki was nominated for the Kobo Emerging Writers’ Prize for her first YA novel, *The Darkhouse*.

Curriculum

Grade 9, 10, 11, 12 English (Compulsory English 9-12, Canadian Literature, Studies in Literature)

Student Objectives

After reading *Messenger 93*, students should be able to:

- Identify the important ideas and supporting details in texts.
- Make and explain inferences about texts, supporting their explanations with stated and implied ideas from the texts.
- Extend understanding of texts by making connections between the ideas in them and personal knowledge, experience, and insights; other texts; and the world around them.
- Analyse texts in terms of the information, ideas, issues, or themes they explore, examining how various aspects of the texts contribute to the presentation or development of these elements.
- Identify a variety of elements of style in texts and explain how they help communicate meaning and enhance the effectiveness of the texts.
- Identify the perspectives and/or biases evident in texts and comment on any questions they may raise about beliefs, values, and identity.
- Identify a variety of text features and explain how they help communicate meaning.
- Identify and analyse the perspectives and/or biases evident in texts and comment on any questions they may raise about beliefs, values, identity, and power.

Getting Started

- Have the class read the author's acknowledgements before reading the novel. Discuss cultural/voice appropriation in the context of literature.
- Give a brief introduction to Joan of Arc and her role in the Hundred Years' War.
- Talk about the structure of a quest narrative and ask the class to name books they've read that follow the structure.

Discussion and Essay Questions

- Predict what the crow's message might mean. "You are Messenger 93 ... You must find her ... She will fall in seven days ... As she falls, so do we all ... Only you can save her ... Save her, save us all." (p. 4) Ask the students to update their predictions at various points while reading.
- Compare and contrast the traits of a character from the main narrative to a character in M's storyboards. (e.g. M and Infinity Girl.)
- Why might the author have chosen a crow to start M's journey?
- Compare and contrast M's character to Joan of Arc.
- How is the search for Krista different than the search for Jocelyn? Do the searches have any similarities?
- Compare Gray's motivation to search for Jocelyn to M's motivation to search for Krista.
- What does Krista's emoji message mean? Only you. Single eye. Finger pointing up. Scissors, tiny paired stars. (p. 36)
- Discuss Gray's definition of white savior. (p 215-216)
- Write an analysis of one of the following characters:
 - a) M
 - b) Gray
 - c) the crow
 - d) Remy
 - e) Dusty
- On page 281, M asks herself, "Was I trying to help Jocelyn and save Krista, or was I riding some mission to fake-glory?" Discuss.

Activities

- Make a storyboard.
- Make a stop-motion video using your storyboard or recreate a scene from the book.
- Write a message with emojis. Have the class try to guess the meaning of the message.