Miriam Riverlea, "Entry on: Danger – Do Not Enter by Kerry Greenwood ", peer-reviewed by Elizabeth Hale and Daniel A. Nkelemleke. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/105. Entry version as of September 14, 2026.

Kerry Greenwood

Danger – Do Not Enter

Australia (2003)

TAGS: Antigone Creon Polyneices / Polynices Sophocles

We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Danger – Do Not Enter
Country of the First Edition	Australia
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2003
First Edition Details	Kerry Greenwood, *Danger – Do Not Enter.* South Melbourne, Victoria: Lothian Books, 2003, 96 pp.
ISBN	0734405544
Genre	Detective and mystery fiction, Novels, Teen fiction*
Target Audience	Crossover (Recommended for readers aged 10–14)
Author of the Entry	Miriam Riverlea, University of New England, mriverlea@gmail.com
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Creators

Kerry Greenwood by John Lamp, 2009. Retrieved from Wikimedia Commons, licensed under CC BY 3.0 (accessed: December 15, 2021).

Kerry Greenwood , b. 1954
(Author)

Kerry Greenwood was born in Footscray, Melbourne, and still lives there today. Best known for her Phryne Fisher crime novels set in Melbourne in the 1920s, she has also written plays, science fiction, non-fiction and historical novels for adults and younger readers. *The Delphic Women* trilogy, *Cassandra* (1995), *Electra* (1996) and *Medea* (1997), reinterprets the stories of three figures from classical mythology.

Greenwood graduated from the University of Melbourne in 1979 with Arts and Law degrees. In 1982 she was admitted to the bar, and prior to becoming a professional writer worked as a barrister and solicitor for the Supreme Court of Victoria and as a criminal defence lawyer for Victorian Legal Aid. She continues to practice as a solicitor for Legal Aid.

Danger – Do Not Enter is her third young adult book featuring teenagers Penelope Thanatopoulos and Benjamin Thorpe, and is part of the Crime Waves series, a collection of young adult crime stories by Australian writers. *The Three-Pronged Dagger* (2001), Greenwood's first Penelope and Ben mystery, won a Sisters in Crime Davitt Award in 2002.

Source:

Official website (accessed: July 2, 2018).

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Additional information

Summary

When Mr. Mosel, an old silversmith dies, his dilapidated house is condemned, and the kids at the school are threatened with expulsion if they go near the dangerous, junk-filled property. The jocks dare each other to explore, and when one of them gets injured, rumours begin to circulate that the house is haunted by the old man's ghost. Penelope's friend Ben is determined to investigate the paranormal activity. He suspects that Argent, an unhappy girl in their class who lives in the house next door and was friends with the old man, knows something.

Argent is ostracised at school for always telling the truth, even when it gets her into trouble or hurts people's feelings. She is "fierce and wary, like a small cornered animal, all teeth and claws and fear" (pp. 11–12). She is bullied by her stepmother Olivia, a controlling, conservative woman with a striking resemblance to Cruella De Vil. Seeking to make Argent embrace her new life, Olivia has thrown away her old belongings and bought her new clothes and furniture. Argent longs to go and live with her grandparents in the country, but cannot do so without any money. Mr. Mosel bequeathed Argent some silver in his will, but it has been lost within the falling down house.

Having established that there is no ghost, Ben convinces Penelope to investigate who has been entering the house. As they keep a midnight vigil, they discover that the trespasser is Argent, who has been secretly caring for an abandoned cat and her kittens. Just as Ben manages to charm the cats out of a cavity in the wall, the building collapses on them and they are trapped in the cellar. After coming close to suffocating, Penelope remembers her sister telling her that the houses in their neighbourhood were equipped with coal chutes, and they manage to escape. From the wreckage of the house, they pull Argent's old possessions, retrieved from the rubbish, and a box containing a Regency silver setting. While Ben adopts the cats, his lawyer father arranges for Argent to go and live with her grandparents.

Analysis

The themes of the text are elucidated by references to narratives about loyalty, telling the truth, and breaking the rules when necessary. In class, Penelope learns about Sir William Marshall, who

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managed to sustain his loyalties to the English royal family even while they were fighting against each other. The most revealing allegory is recounted by Penelope's great-grandmother Yaiyai. Despite her age and isolation, Yaiyai is well-informed about what is going on in the neighbourhood. In a storytelling session with Ben and Penelope, Yaiyai recounts the myth of Antigone, who defies her uncle Creon to bury her rebel brother and ends up taking her own life. Ben follows with a story from his grandmother, the tale of Thomas the Rhymer, a bard who is taken to Fairyland for seven years, and returns to the world with the gift of prophecy and is unable to tell a lie. Penelope reflects on the cross-cultural parallels between the Greek and Scottish mythic traditions, declaring that "[s]ome of them are quite similar, which just shows that history and distance can't kill a good story" (p. 36).

Ben recognises that Antigone is a model for Argent, "a thin, sallow, waspish girl…[w]illing to break a law if it is unjust." (p. 76) Her relation to the truth connects her too to Cassandra. But Penelope also identifies with this figure from her own cultural heritage. The text highlights the ordinariness of the lives of the Thanatopoulos family living in an unidentified Australian city (likely Melbourne, considering Greenwood's own background).

Although Penelope does not have much in common with her jock brother Michael, she wonders how she would feel "if Michael had been left unburied outside the city" (p. 52). While Antigone's sister Ismene is only mentioned briefly, she does serve as a counterpart for Penelope's own sister Mary. The two are not close. But it is Mary who provides Penelope with the information she needs to escape from Mr. Mosel's cellar. Their entrapment in the house, as Antigone was in her tomb, demonstrates the literal and symbolic ways in which the myth serves as a frame for this contemporary Australian mystery.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Antigone Creon Polyneices / Polynices Sophocles
Other Motifs, Figures,	Family Friendship Ghosts Justice Relationships School Siblings Step-

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and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	parents Storytelling Truth and lies

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