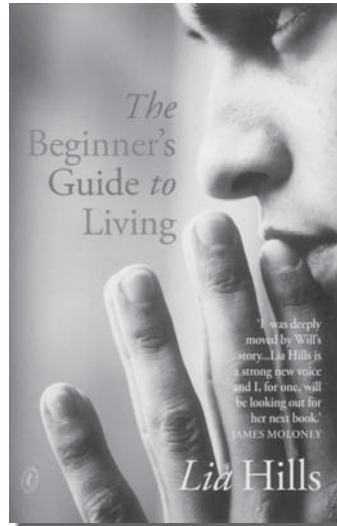




YOUNG ADULT FICTION



The Beginner's Guide to Living

Lia Hills

Text Publishing

ISBN 978-1-921520-07-5 pb RRP \$25.00

Target age 14+

Seventeen-year-old Will is in turmoil after the sudden death of his mother. Will begins a search for the answers he craved, using his mum's old camera to document the experience and scrambles to find an idea for which he can live and die.

This is a stunning novel about grief, ideas and experience, about those moments in your life that change you forever.



Lia Hills is a poet, novelist and translator. Recent publications include her award-winning poetry collection, *the possibility of flight*. Her translation of Marie Darrieussecq's novel, *Tom Is Dead*, was published by Text in 2009. Born in New Zealand, Lia now lives in Melbourne.

Great Activity and Event Ideas

1. In the novel Will writes questions to himself to help him cope with his mum's death. What four questions do you think you would ask yourself if in the same situation?
2. The novel contains many themes, death of a parent, drug use, sex, alcohol use and religion. Which of these themes was most important to you and why? Provide a quote from the book to show your chosen theme.
3. Will met Saul while out in the bush. Will asked Saul "Do you think we were meant to meet?" But Saul does not believe those sorts of things. (p. 231)
Do you believe in fate, prayer, random acts? If so why? If not, why not?
Break into small Focus groups and discuss your views.
4. Taryn gives Will a CD by Jeff Buckley, not Will's usual thing (p.36).
If you had a friend in the same situation as Will what CD would you give them and why?
5. Throughout the book are photos that Will has taken. Work in teams of two and take three photos that you feel best describe the feelings that Will may have had when he sees the words on his mother headstone at her grave; *To live on in the hearts of those we love is not to die.* (p. 247)



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**CHILDREN'S
BOOK AWARDS**

**2010
FINALISTS**



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Activity

In the book they talk about 'Aphorisms' - short statements that say something profound.
(p. 123)

'to open your eyes is to risk getting something in them'

'if life could be explained in one sentence, it would have not words'

As a class, discuss what these Aphorisms mean and how you came to that conclusion. Now write two of your own and explain in detail what they mean to you or show their meaning in a visual way, eg. a collage, installation, series of photographs, painting.