



2009
FINALISTS

JUNIOR FICTION



Enemy at the Gate

Philippa Werry

Scholastic New Zealand

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Target Age 10+

In 1936 a deadly disease has New Zealand terrified. Known as infantile paralysis, or polio, the disease appears to strike at random. Schools close. Going to the pictures is out of the question. Seeing your friends is dangerous. Caught up in the confusion and fear, 12-year-old Tom finds refuge in his dream: to run in the Olympics like the famous Jack Lovelock.



Philippa Werry was born in Christchurch and is a trained librarian. She was inspired to write *Enemy at the Gate* by a story often told by her father-in law about his childhood. When he was about eight years old, he and his younger brother were sent to live on a farm in the Peel Forest in Canterbury. They spent three months camping in a tent in a field, seeing nobody except the relatives who owned the farm. This was because there was a polio epidemic, and their parents decided this was the best way to keep them safe. Philippa thought this was a really interesting topic, so she started to research more about it.

Great Activity and Event Ideas...

1. Research Project: New Zealand History. Find out about epidemics in NZ's past. What is an epidemic? When were they? Where were they? What happened? Record your findings.
2. Disaster Plan: Make a plan for an epidemic disaster. What would you need? Where would you go? How would you keep yourself safe?
3. Talk about modern epidemics. Find out about an epidemic in a country today. Discuss: How you would feel if you lived in this country? What kinds of things would be important to you? Do you think it would change the kind of person you are?
4. Imagine you and your family are in a community affected by an epidemic. Write a diary entry expressing your thoughts and feelings about the situation you are in.
5. Find out about one of these organisations: United Nations, International Red Cross, Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders). What do they do to prevent epidemics? How do they help countries that have an epidemic?



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Activity

Using information you have gathered from other activities, design a poster giving basic facts about the risks of an epidemic and how to stay safe.

