



NIGHT GAMES

'A book of note
which has justly
earned comparisons
with Helen Garner's
The First Stone.'

THE AUSTRALIAN

SEX, POWER AND SPORT

ANNA KRIEN

SHORTLISTED FOR THE WALKLEY NON-FICTION BOOK AWARD 2013

Teaching Notes by Ernest Price

Teaching notes

BY ERNEST PRICE

THEMES: football and Australian sport culture, consent, toxic masculinity, power

YEAR LEVEL: 10–12

Contents

Section A: Synopsis and learning activities for before reading

Section B: Learning activities for reading

Section C: Learning activities for after reading

Section A

Synopsis and learning activities for before reading

SYNOPSIS

Anna Krien's *Night Games* provides a rich way for schools to approach questions of consent and assault. Krien uses the story of a rape trial to explore the complex cultures of power that characterise the world of Australian sport. Her account of these dynamics will give students an opportunity to consider how issues of consent and power play out in their own communities.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES FOR BEFORE READING

- ◆ Due to the nature of the material in the text, it is important that students establish boundaries for their discussion of the text. Prior to reading, ask students to consider:
 - ▶ Their prior understanding of the concept of consent
 - ▶ The classroom conditions necessary for the discussion of sensitive material
 - ▶ Support systems in place if they are triggered by their work.
- ◆ Ask students to consider the connotations of the title *Night Games: Sex, Power and Sport*.
- ◆ Krien's work was first published in 2013. Have students consider:
 - ▶ The political climate in 2013, including the parties in government
 - ▶ Dominant popular culture in Australia in 2013
 - ▶ The relative popularity of the various football codes throughout Australia.
- ◆ The author's note outlines the choices that Krien made in composing the text. Have students identify the rationale she provides for anonymising the central players in the text. Do they agree with this decision?

Section B

Questions for reading

PROLOGUE

- ◆ What are the implications of Krien outlining the gender composition of the jury for the rape trial?
- ◆ Why does Krien emphasise that the judge and prosecution decided the defendant was 'not a footballer at all'?
- ◆ Why is Krien concerned about her journalistic objectivity?

PART I: THE FOOTY SHOW

- ◆ What are the implications of the title 'The Footy Show'?
- ◆ Chapter 1
 - ▶ How does the discussion of the 2010 Australian Rules Football grand final establish the boundaries for the text?
 - ▶ How does Krien characterise the immediate media reaction to the rape allegations?
 - ▶ Why does Krien juxtapose Justin's trip to work with the media storm?
 - ▶ What is the impact of Krien outlining the history of sexual assault allegations in the footballing codes?

- ▶ What connections does Krien make between racism and sexism in the world of football?
- ◆ Chapter 2
 - ▶ What is the effect of Krien's characterisation of David Galbally?
 - ▶ How do you react to Justin's anger at Sarah Wesley?
 - ▶ Why does Krien include transcripts from the trial?
 - ▶ What is the purpose of the discussion about Sarah Wesley's outfit on the night in question?
 - ▶ Why does Krien question the decision to separate the allegation towards Justin from what occurred inside the house?
- ◆ Chapter 3
 - ▶ Why does Krien open the chapter with a discussion of Justin's defense team?
 - ▶ What is the effect of Krien including her first-person reactions to the trial in her narrative?
 - ▶ What parallels does Krien make between the cultures of the AFL and the legal profession?
 - ▶ Why does Krien include the dialogue between the women in Justin's life?
 - ▶ How does Krien's description of Sarah's photos shape the reader's understanding of her character?
- ◆ Chapter 4
 - ▶ Why does Krien open the chapter with a discussion of the march responding to Jill Meagher's murder?
 - ▶ What are the connotations of Jill Meagher's attacker being called 'opportunistic'?
 - ▶ What is the distinction between being 'compelled' but 'not forced' to do something?
 - ▶ Why does Krien include a transcript from *Four Corners*?
 - ▶ How do the questions at the end of the chapter highlight Krien's thinking about masculinity and the trial?
- ◆ Chapter 5
 - ▶ How does Krien characterise the potential draftees?
 - ▶ What does the concept of 'prolonged adolescence' contribute to Krien's analysis of the case?
 - ▶ How does the quote from John Stoltenberg frame the reader's understanding of the text?
 - ▶ What is the cumulative effect of the examples that Krien uses in this chapter?
 - ▶ Why is the concept of mateship central to this chapter?
- ◆ Chapter 6
 - ▶ How does the case from 2004 frame Krien's discussion of contemporary debates?
 - ▶ Why is the language of 'pranks' crucial to the discussion of football culture?
 - ▶ Why do Krien and her interviewees have different perspectives on humour?

- ▶ What is the purpose of Krien reintroducing her first-person response at the end of Part I?
- ▶ What is the role of the victim in the pranks that Krien describes?

PART II: THE GREY ZONE

- ◆ What are the implications of the title 'The Grey Zone'?
- ◆ Chapter 7
 - ▶ Why does Krien consider it important to 'listen to what is not being said'?
 - ▶ How do you respond to the ways that the lawyers characterise the alleged assault?
 - ▶ How does Krien use this specific case to explore the way that courts approach allegations of sexual assault?
 - ▶ What does Krien suggest are the ongoing implications for someone who is accused of sexual assault?
 - ▶ Why does Krien include anecdotes from her own experiences with boys and men?
- ◆ Chapter 8
 - ▶ What is the impact of Krien's description of the Crown prosecutor at the start of the chapter?
 - ▶ How do you respond to the dialogue from the night of alleged assault?
 - ▶ Why does Krien emphasise her reaction to the accusation that Sarah Wesley is a 'liar'?
 - ▶ What role do the excerpts from Detective Inspector Alan Firth play in the text?
 - ▶ How has your understanding of the 'grey zone' changed throughout the chapter?
- ◆ Chapter 9
 - ▶ What role does the media play in setting the boundaries of the trial?
 - ▶ How does Krien's use of dialogue shape the reader's understanding of the courtroom dynamic?
 - ▶ What does the quote from Vivian Berger suggest about the relationship between feminism and the legal process?
 - ▶ Why does Krien question whether it is worth sacrificing 'a few good men for the greater good'?
 - ▶ Why does Krien include a short scene emphasising the exhaustion of the participants in the trial?
- ◆ Chapter 10
 - ▶ Why does Krien open the chapter by restating the timeline of events?
 - ▶ What are the implications of the search for 'perfect' victims?
 - ▶ Why does Glenn Davies emphasise the 'great disparity' between the seriousness of rape and the low conviction rate for the crime?
 - ▶ How does the 'corroboration warning' function?
 - ▶ What is the effect of Krien's use of figurative language at the end of the chapter?

- ◆ Chapter 11
 - ▶ Why does Krien open the chapter with the excerpt from the handbook issued by the Rape Crisis Centre in 1984?
 - ▶ What assumptions does Krien believe are still at play in conversations about rape and sexual assault?
 - ▶ How does the ongoing question of the bedroom scene plague Krien?
 - ▶ Why does Krien draw attention to the role that the police played in the investigation?
 - ▶ Why does Krien close the chapter with a discussion of the blurred lines between insiders and outsiders?
- ◆ Chapter 12
 - ▶ What parallels are there between the *Night Games* case and the allegations against Andrew Lovett?
 - ▶ How does Krien portray the intersection of racism and sexism in her discussion of Lovett's case?
 - ▶ What role does the idiom of football (e.g. a 'hand pass') play in the discussion of sexual activity in this chapter?
 - ▶ What are some of the issues that Krien outlines in her discussion of the way that the football leagues have handled allegations of rape and sexual assault?
 - ▶ What does the Duke University anecdote reflect about cultural changes around issues of sexual assault?
- ◆ Chapter 13
 - ▶ Why is Krien concerned by her inability to contact Sarah for her work?
 - ▶ How does Krien's analogy of power as a seesaw operate?
 - ▶ What are some of the perspectives of the role of the victim in a trial that Krien covers in this chapter?
 - ▶ Why does Krien question the role of restorative justice?
 - ▶ What is the effect of Krien finishing Part II with a discussion of how Justin and Sarah have become fixed in their views?

PART III: THE WINMAR MOMENT

- ◆ What are the implications of the title 'The Winmar Moment'?
- ◆ Chapter 14
 - ▶ How does Krien characterise the setting of the locker room at the opening of Chapter 14?
 - ▶ Why does Krien focus on the story of journalist Jacquelin Magnay?
 - ▶ What are the implications of Krien's statement that 'being a god now came with responsibilities'?
 - ▶ How does Krien characterise her own relationship to football?
 - ▶ Why does Krien end the chapter with the words of Australian sociologist Lois Bryson?
- ◆ Chapter 15
 - ▶ How does the story of Denis Pagan reflect the culture of Australian Rules Football?

- ▶ What does Damien Foster suggest about how to change the culture of the league?
 - ▶ Why does Krien critique the NRL's advertisement targeted at women?
 - ▶ What does Krien see as 'the two most powerful ends of football'?
 - ▶ Why does Krien end the chapter questioning the relationship between the police force and footballers?
- ◆ Chapter 16
 - ▶ Why does Krien open the chapter with a quote from police officers involved in the Milne case?
 - ▶ How does the identity of the alleged victim in the rape reported in November 2004 impact the case?
 - ▶ Why does Krien include a transcript of Ricky Stuart's recollection of his meeting with Superintendent Adam Purcell?
 - ▶ How does Krien characterise Purcell's approach to working with footballers?
 - ▶ What are the implications of Krien's anecdote about the player who wasn't allowed to pay for his burger and chips?
- ◆ Chapter 17
 - ▶ How does Krien characterise Olivia Beaumont?
 - ▶ What are the implications of the statement from the young player quoted in 'Code of Silence'?
 - ▶ Why does Krien ask questions of Justin's behaviour?
 - ▶ How does the NRL use homophobia to draw attention to sexism?
 - ▶ What role does pornography play in developing players' understanding of sex and power?
- ◆ Chapter 18
 - ▶ Why does Krien open the chapter with the words of Charmyne Palavi?
 - ▶ What are the connotations of the phrase 'the "normal" barriers of consent'?
 - ▶ What distinction does Phil Cleary draw between a 'sex scandal' and 'criminal violence'?
 - ▶ How does Krien suggest that people learn 'the rules' of sexual relationships in the world of football?
 - ▶ Why does Krien close the chapter with a quotation from Virginia Woolf?
- ◆ Chapter 19
 - ▶ How does Krien suggest that Savannah Dietrich found solidarity and power?
 - ▶ What are the mechanisms that Kimberley Duthie employed to tell her side of the story?
 - ▶ Why does Krien draw attention to the line between childhood and adulthood in this chapter?
 - ▶ What does Krien suggest about the role of the media in the Duthie case?
 - ▶ How do cultures of drugs and alcohol contribute to the world that Krien is exploring?

- ◆ Chapter 20
 - ▶ What is the effect of Krien opening the chapter with her visit to the Victorian Women's Football League grand final?
 - ▶ How does this interview with Debbie Lee compare to the other interviews included in the text so far?
 - ▶ Why does Krien draw attention to *The Footy Show* in this chapter?
 - ▶ What role does the 'Nicky Winmar moment' play in Anna Krien's interview with Tony Wilson?
 - ▶ How does Krien feel that women have been used to 'reinforce a certain code of masculinity and hierarchy'?

PART IV: END GAME

- ◆ What are the implications of the title 'End Game'?
- ◆ Chapter 21
 - ▶ Why does Krien reference *Home and Away* and *Law and Order* at the start of this chapter?
 - ▶ How did the testimony of the 'Mount Eliza Drinking Team' work against the complainant?
 - ▶ How does Krien portray the exchange between Thomas and Hackett?
 - ▶ How does Krien characterise Rajan Adani?
 - ▶ Why does Krien end the chapter with an anecdote about John McCarthy?
- ◆ Chapter 22
 - ▶ Why does Krien open the chapter with the story about Timothy Boyle and his friendships?
 - ▶ What are some of the changes that Krien observes in football culture?
 - ▶ Why does Krien make note of her personal feelings towards Nate Cooper?
 - ▶ What role does the transcript from *This American Life* play in this chapter?
 - ▶ Who do you consider 'the victim' at this point in the text?
- ◆ Chapter 23
 - ▶ How does Krien characterise Justin as he gave his statement to police?
 - ▶ Why did the defense choose to play the video of Justin rather than putting him in the witness box?
 - ▶ Why does Krien include so much of the dialogue between Justin and the police officer?
 - ▶ How do you feel about the observation that the jury was tiring of the trial?
 - ▶ This chapter is shorter than most of the chapters in the text. What effect does that have, as the text comes to an end?
- ◆ Chapter 24
 - ▶ Why did the courtroom 'feel alive' as the closing addresses began?
 - ▶ How does Krien depict the laneways that feature so heavily in the case?

- ▶ Why does Krien draw attention to the gender composition of the jury at this point in the text?
 - ▶ What are the implications of ‘no one turn[ing] up for Sarah’?
 - ▶ Why does Krien close the chapter with a depiction of both Justin and his girlfriend?
- ◆ Chapter 25
 - ▶ How does Krien characterise Malcolm Thomas?
 - ▶ What is the cumulative effect of Thomas’s repetition?
 - ▶ How does Thomas portray Justin?
 - ▶ What perspective does Thomas have on the issue of consent?
 - ▶ Why does Krien believe that Justin is ‘the absent one in the story’?
- ◆ Chapter 26
 - ▶ Why does Krien again reference *Law and Order* at the start of this chapter?
 - ▶ What is the effect of Krien’s first-person reflection at the start of this chapter?
 - ▶ How does Krien see herself in relation to Sarah?
 - ▶ What does Krien believe is possible in reforming football culture?
 - ▶ Why does Krien choose to end the chapter without revealing the verdict?
- ◆ Epilogue
 - ▶ What does Krien see as the role of football in society?
 - ▶ How does Krien portray her own relationship to sports?
 - ▶ What does Lipsyte suggest is the relationship between ‘jock culture’ and ‘other American pathologies’?
 - ▶ How do you respond to the anecdote about how Justin talks about women after the trial?
 - ▶ Why does Krien close the text with Justin’s question about Sarah Wesley’s safety?

Section C

After reading

1. THEMES

A. Consent

Central to the issues that Krien investigates are questions about what constitutes consent in sexual and romantic relationships. She considers how consent is complicated by issues of power, and how it intersects with highly masculine environments like the world of football.

Krien also considers the ways that legal definitions of consent are not necessarily in line with community understandings of what is acceptable in sexual

relationships. By threading her account of the unfolding court case through the text, Krien exposes the way that consent is discussed under the legal spotlight can prove traumatic for women.

The focus on football culture highlights the way that social definitions of consent are dependent on the company that people keep, and the prevailing political and social views of the time. The complexity of these understandings of consent, and the way that they have evolved over time, underpin every element of *Night Games*.

B. Football culture

Krien explores the way that the football world, in all its incarnations, creates a unique and highly unusual environment for players and all of those that come into contact with them. Beginning with the knot of players and friends at the centre of the case in question, Krien untangles the attitudes that permeate the football community.

She explores what is unique to the football codes in Australia, and what is common to sports cultures around the world. Krien looks at the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander footballers in Australia, and considers the ways that experiences of racism intersect with the demeaning attitudes towards women, which have long permeated football clubs in Australia.

Krien considers the ways that the football community has evolved over time, particularly in light of the increasing professionalisation of the sport. She considers what has remained integral to the culture, particularly in regard to strict codes of masculine bonding and footballers being treated as god-like figures in their communities.

C. Gender

Krien explores the highly gendered, and often sexist, world of football in Australia. From considering the way that male players speak about and to women to chronicling the many allegations of sexual abuse against active male footballers, she shines a light on the ways that football at best excludes and at worst objectifies women.

Alongside the sexualised perception of women, Krien looks at the ways that women are often marginalised in footballing activities. She speaks to women who play, administrate and support football, and explores the ways that their often negative experiences may intersect with or at least illuminate the experiences of women who have alleged sexual assault at the hands of footballers.

Krien considers the types of masculinity that are promoted in the football world, and how these understandings of masculinity are often predicated on demeaning attitudes towards women. She chronicles the way that these masculinities can also restrict the men who are bound by their codes, and be reliant on often homophobic attitudes towards other men.

D. Power

At the core of the issues that Krien discusses are fundamental power imbalances. Understanding and acknowledging these imbalances is crucial to her exploration of the way that consent functions in relationships between footballers and women, and indeed more broadly between men and women.

These power imbalances are perhaps amplified in Krien's portrayal of the legal system. Under the spotlight provided by lawyers and judges, the women who have made sexual assault allegations are, by definition, forced to relive their experiences in the process of working through the legal system.

The men who face these allegations have their own complex relationships to power. They are often adjacent to power, able to access the legal help and media profiles that afford them some protection from the worst aspects of the allegations. Conversely, being the subject of such serious allegations raises the prospect of the men being unfairly tarnished by unproven charges.

E. The media

Krien's self-conscious narration exposes the ways that the media is complicit in the positive and negative aspects of football culture. Both alleged perpetrator and victim are subject to some form of 'trial by media', as their 'credibility' is consistently examined by the press.

Krien also considers the ways that media institutions like *The Footy Show* allow sexist attitudes towards women to be perpetuated in the name of comedy and commentary. These central ideas persist in various iterations, whether in the populist format of a talk show or in opinion columns in broadsheet newspapers.

F. Guilt and innocence

Krien considers the ways that ideas of guilt and innocence are fluid and changeable when issues of sexual assault are before the courts. By exploring her own feelings towards the protagonists on either side of the case, she exemplifies the complexity of trying to establish the truth in a fraught and contested 'grey zone'.

Krien also depicts the ways that members of the football community and broader society attribute guilt and innocence to the parties involved. Here she considers the ways that power and gender can intersect to deeply influence the ways that people understand the guilt and innocence of the parties involved. Her interviews with people adjacent to the court case serve to underscore the preconceptions that people hold about the guilt and innocence of the alleged perpetrator and victim.

2. TEXT FEATURES

A. Form and structure

- ◆ Krien's use of a **journalistic non-fiction** form allows her to compile a cross section of perspectives in a case of complex trauma. This gives readers the opportunity to engage with all elements of a deeply polarised issue. She also inserts elements of a **first-person narrative** to give readers insight into how an individual may respond when on the front lines of such a potentially catastrophic event.

- ◆ The text is structured in a series of four **parts**, each containing a series of **chapters**. These parts chronicle the court case at the centre of the text, while also exploring communities and cultures adjacent to the case itself. This allows Krien to look at how the case can be read as a symbol of broader social problems.
- ◆ The text is **non-linear**, allowing Krien to situate the case that she is following within the context of broader social and political trends. This gives her the space to shine a light on broader questions of power and consent, both within the footballing community and broader society.
- ◆ Krien uses **excerpts** from court transcripts, interviews, newspapers and social media throughout the text. This serves to place the case within its context, and to show the confluence of forces at play in the case.

B. Narrative voice

- ◆ As discussed above, Krien makes use of the **first-person narrative voice** to demonstrate how an individual may react to the full range of complex issues on display in the courtroom. It also gives Krien a mechanism to discuss the role of the media in creating the narrative around the case. As part of this conversation, she explores the silences in the story that stem from the fact that she was unable to gain access to the complainant.
- ◆ Krien centres the **idiom** of the footballing community throughout the text. This points to the ways in which the culture of the football world contributed to the case in the text, and to the power that the community holds in broader society.
- ◆ Throughout the text Krien includes excerpts from **interviews** with people on all sides of the case. Including these voices gives Krien the opportunity to examine their culpability in the case.

C. Characterisation

- ◆ As discussed above, Krien uses **transcripts** and **excerpts** to explore the perspectives of a range of participants in the case. This serves to demonstrate their core characteristics, as well as their relationships with each other.
- ◆ Krien also uses rich **imagery** to describe the key personnel in the case, painting a picture not only of their individual traits but also of their broader social roles.

D. The figurative level

- ◆ Krien employs **metaphors** and **similes** to convey the complexities of the culture of the football world, as well as the nuances of the relationships between the characters in the text.
- ◆ As discussed above, she also uses **imagery** to convey the characteristics of the key players in the case. Krien utilises **archetypes** to look at the social forces in play in this individual case.

3. EXTENDED ANALYTICAL RESPONSES

Students may be asked to respond analytically to the work in *Night Games*.

Some possible essay questions:

- ◆ ‘*Night Games* shows that consent is complex in the world of football.’
Do you agree?
- ◆ ‘In *Night Games*, the line between guilt and innocence is blurry.’ Discuss.
- ◆ To what extent does Krien blame the media for the conflict in *Night Games*?
- ◆ ‘Krien suggests that the footballing world is broken.’ Do you agree?
- ◆ ‘There is no clear victim in *Night Games*.’ Discuss.
- ◆ ‘Power shifts in *Night Games*.’ Discuss.
- ◆ ‘Krien’s first-person narration shapes readers’ understanding in *Night Games*.’
Do you agree?
- ◆ To what extent does *Night Games* show change in the world of football?
- ◆ ‘*Night Games* is a courtroom thriller.’ Do you agree?

Ernest Price is an English and humanities teacher at Richmond High School in Victoria. He has worked at government secondary schools across Victoria, leading instruction in English, literacy and the humanities.