

MY NAME \_\_\_\_\_

## Shot from the Heart pg 4



**The strength of love drives  
Warwick Thornton's feature film debut  
as writer/director**

**F**rom the heart of Australia, and made with his own heart, Warwick Thornton's first feature film *Samson & Delilah* is destined to have cinema goers worldwide talking. "It's my life – everything in that film I've seen and I wanted to show the world what Alice Springs is like," he says. "It has the most beautiful angels and the most evil devils."

"It pushes itself as a tourism town but doesn't realise it is an Aboriginal town. People go there and they see this Disney version of Aboriginal culture."

"I grew up in Alice and my mob is a few hundred kilometres away. I've had old uncles telling me after seeing the film: that's my story but I did it 20 years ago. But people who are not from Central Australia are saying they had no idea these things happened."

"Rather than one person knocking on the politician's door, my heart wants the whole of Australia to knock on that door and say: these kids are in trouble."

Warwick is at the forefront of Indigenous filmmaking, constantly in demand and honoured with numerous international awards. Yet he has waited patiently for 20 years to make his first feature film.

"It's been 20 years of thinking, writing and learning from my mistakes," he says. "I didn't go to school, so I didn't learn to write. I'll think about a film for two or three years then write it in longhand in a week. I can't spell but fortunately my wife can read my writing and transcribe."

At its heart, *Samson & Delilah* is a love story, though the lovers struggle with personal issues and circumstances. Set in a small, neglected, ex-missionary township in Central Australia, Samson (Rowan McNamara) has no family, while Delilah (Marissa Gibson) has a family that doesn't want her.

The low-budget film pulls no punches about the harsh realities of growing up in the isolation of Central Australia and carries an MA15+ rating, mainly for its depiction of substance abuse.

In the opening scene, the camera pulls back as Samson is waking to a bright, glorious morning with Charley Pride's *Sunshiny Day* playing on the radio. He reaches for a coffee cup but instead of taking a sip, he inhales. Instantly the audience realises he is a petrol sniffer.

"I wanted to put it out there straight away that this kid sniffs, then we can get on with telling this amazing story about these two amazing kids that survive through their love," Warwick says. "People find it an incredibly hard film to watch, but they love it and they find it invigorating."

"I was careful not to judge and offer answers. People can go looking for their own answers, then you have ones that are different from person to person and that's really great."

Warwick knew he wanted his first feature film to be a love story, but the political impact of the film was equally significant right from the outset.

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While he has written and directed short films before, Warwick Thornton has just released his first feature film *Samson and Delilah*. He wrote, directed and shot all the cinematography for the film, set in his home town of Alice Springs.

The lead roles in the film are played by Marissa Gibson and Rowan McNamara, both 14 at the time of filming. They both grew up in communities in Central Australia, where many of the issues depicted in the film occur on a daily basis.

Consistent with traditional Aboriginal culture, dialogue in the film is minimal - the actors communicate with hand gestures and body language more often than words.



## Activity 1

Understanding what you read

Read *Shot from the Heart* on page 4

Shade one bubble.

### 1. Where is the film *Samson and Delilah* set?

- Cannes
- Brisbane
- Alice Springs
- Sydney

### 2. According to the text, what is the main reason for the Warwick Thornton wanting to make this film?

- It shows the Australian outback.
- It gives young actors a chance to act in a major film.
- He wanted people to see the real issues facing Aboriginal communities in Central Australia.
- It helps tourism in Alice Springs.

### 3. Which of the following expressions is an example of figurative language?

- my heart wants the whole of Australia to knock on that door*
- I want to show the world what Alice Springs is like*
- it is an Aboriginal town*
- at the forefront of Indigenous film making*

### 4. The main purpose of the text is to provide information about

- making Australian films.
- tourism in Alice Springs.
- Warwick Thornton's new film.
- new young Aboriginal actors in Australia.



## Activity 2

Language conventions - Spelling

The spelling mistakes in the sentences below have been circled.

Write the correct spelling for each circled word in the box provided.

The film will have cinemma goers talking.

A lot of people had no idea these things hapened .

The film shows the harsh realitys facing many Aboriginal kids.

**Each sentence has one word that is incorrect.  
Write the correct spelling of the word in the box.**

*Samson and Delilah* is Thornton's first feature film.

Thornton has one numerous international awards.

The MA15+ rating is mainly for its depiction of substence abuse.

Thornton has waited pashently to make this film.

This film will have a huge effect on its audiance.



## Activity 3

Language conventions

Which of the following correctly completes the sentence?  
Shade one bubble.

**1. Thornton says he wanted to show the world what Alice Springs \*\*\*\*\* like.**

- are
- is
- has
- were

**2. Which of the following has the correct punctuation?**

- I grew up in Alice Springs, says Thornton.
- "I grew up in Alice Springs says Thornton."
- "I grew up in Alice Springs," says Thornton.
- "I grew up in Alice Springs" says Thornton.

**3. \*\*\*\*\* my story.**

- thats
- that's
- thats'

**4. Which of the following correctly completes the sentence?**

People find it an incredibly hard film to watch \*\*\*\*\* they love it.

- so
- except
- but
- when

**5. This text is written in the**

- past tense.
- present tense.
- future tense.

**6. This text is written in the**

- first person.
- second person.
- third person.



## Activity 4 Film Review

### ***Samson and Delilah***

Rated MA

Review by Margaret Pomeranz

*Samson and Delilah* is Warwick Thornton's first feature film as writer/director after a number of successful short films and an impressive career as one of this country's top cinematographers. Despite its title it bears no resemblance to the biblical story. It's about two kids, young teenagers in a community in the central desert. Samson, (Rowan McNamara) is a petrol-sniffing layabout who would play music if only his brother would let him. He fancies Delilah, (Marissa Gibson) who looks after her grandmother – played by her real life grandmother, Mitjili Gibson – and helps her with her artworks.

Delilah is a very self-contained young woman. When her grandmother dies and the community blames Delilah, quite ferociously, she and Samson take off for Alice Springs where they live on the fringe, unable to get life together.

This is for me one of the most wonderful films this country has ever produced. It is exquisitely made, it's full of discipline. There's not a spare moment in it.

The two young performers are mind-blowingly good. You enter into their world and you're riveted there for the fairly short duration of the film.

There is a European sensibility to it. There's very little dialogue and there are long sequences, but with Thornton himself behind the camera – handheld in trying conditions – it looks fabulous.

But wait, there's more...

The emotional punch that *Samson and Delilah* delivers is one of those rare things in cinema which doesn't come along very often. And when it does you feel like falling down on your knees in gratitude.

And it's not because Thornton has gone for sentimentality. It's the reverse. He's made a tough little film about love and it's a knockout.

I'm giving this film five stars.

### **1. The tone of this review is best described as**

- boastful.
- anxious.
- enthusiastic.

### **2. The main purpose of this text is to**

- announce the launch of the new film *Samson and Delilah*.
- give an opinion about the new film *Samson and Delilah*.
- explain the history of the film *Samson and Delilah*.

## Activity 5 Writing a narrative

The common Stages and phases of an effective narrative often include:

Stages	phases
<b>Orientation</b>	This sets the scene, creating a visual picture of the setting, atmosphere and time of the story. Characters are introduced and clues are set in place for the coming complication.
	Sequence of events that is expected
<b>Complication</b>	An unexpected problem or complication occurs that affects the main character. This usually creates tension.
	Characters react to the problem.
	Problem seems to be resolved.
	A new problem occurs, which is now often worse than before.
<b>Resolution</b>	The problem is solved and the story ends.
<b>Evaluation</b>	Characters reflect on what has happened.

**Write a narrative.**

The idea for your story is DANGER.



Your story might be about a dangerous person, being in a dangerous situation, or something dangerous that is about to happen.

Your story could be about how people in dangerous situations find courage, help or understanding.

**Think about:**

- The characters and where they are.
- The complication or problem to be solved.
- How the story will end.

**Remember to:**

- Plan your story before you start.
- Write in sentences.
- Pay attention to the words you choose, your spelling and punctuation.
- Check and edit your writing when you have finished.