

Creased up



Tickled pink



Gobsmacked

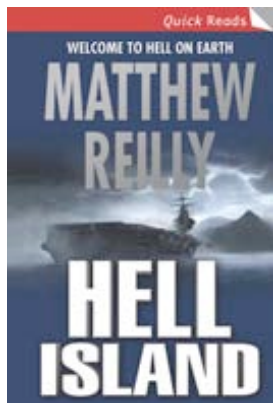


Swept away



Quick Reads

Get hooked on books.



Hell Island Matthew Reilly



Contents

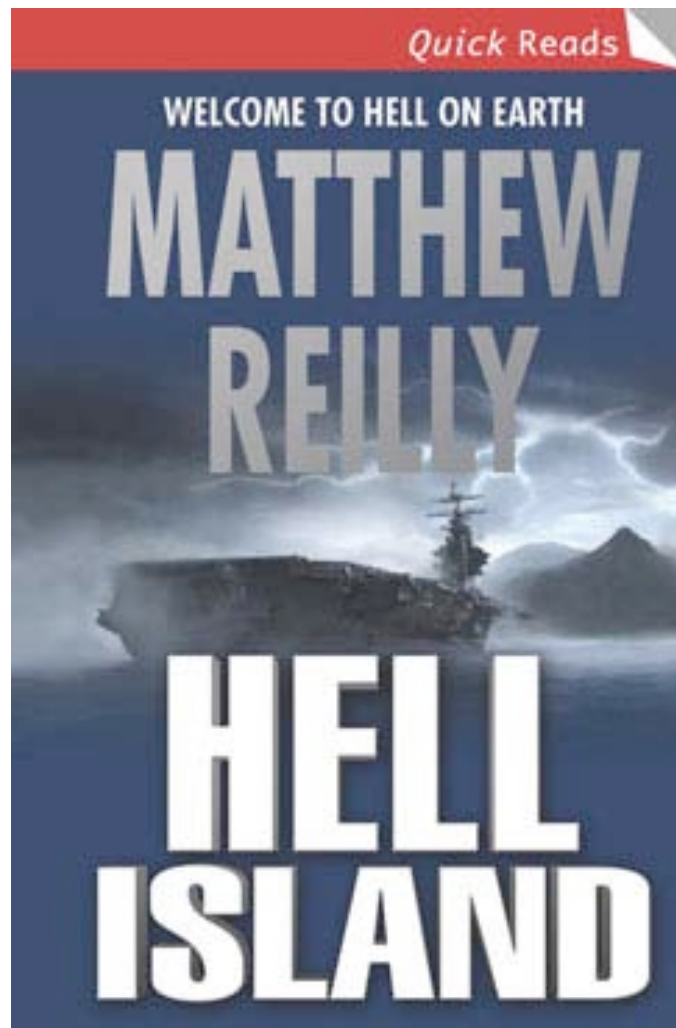
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**The
Vital
Link**

www.vitallink.org.uk



Blurb

Four groups of Special Forces are being parachuted onto an island – but who or what will they be fighting once they are there? Who is their real enemy and how many of them will return alive?

Synopsis

Hell Island does not appear on any maps. It is a secret place where classified experiments have been carried out. Experiments that have gone terribly wrong. When all contact with the island is inexplicably lost, four crack Special Forces units are dropped in. Their mission is to land on Hell Island and discover what has happened. Nothing can prepare them for what they find there. You could say they've just entered Hell. Only that would be wrong. This is much much worse.

A few words from the author

I'm a realistic guy. I write big fun action-adventure novels, so I know that my books won't win too many literary prizes – but I do

know this: my books get even the most stubborn non-readers reading. For whatever reason, a lot of people just get 'out of the habit' of reading; Reading is not only as good as TV, movies, Xbox and PlayStation, it's better.

My goal with this brand new short-novel, *Hell Island*, is to provide a 'page-burner', the kind of novel you just can't put down, and hopefully, in the process, show even the most reluctant reader that a book can outdo the biggest Hollywood blockbuster.

Readability

12/14 Level 1

Matthew Reilly

Matthew Reilly was born in Sydney, Australia on July 2, 1974. He is an action thriller writer and his books are usually based on warfare. While studying for his Law degree in 1994, Reilly wrote *Contest*, a manuscript publishers rejected. Two years later he published the novel himself and with dogged determination and sheer persistence, his talent in *Contest* was recognised.

It wasn't until his second novel, *Ice Station*, that a publisher signed him up. With its high-tech action, advanced weaponry and the likeable hero Lieutenant Shane 'Scarecrow' Schofield, *Ice Station* became a best-selling blockbuster in 1998/1999. Since then the rights to *Ice Station* have been sold to the US and the UK, and it has been reprinted in over five different languages.

Matthew Reilly is considered to be one of Australia's most successful young men, since his books have sold millions of copies and because he is only 30 (as of June 2005).

Reilly is well known for his style of writing, which, unlike any other before it, focuses entirely on Hollywood-style action scenes, relegating drama and character development to second priority. Many critics condemn this, and point out that Reilly unashamedly writes his books to read like movies; however, Reilly's fans argue that his writing style is what makes the books unique and exciting.

Reilly's main influences include Michael Crichton, Steven Spielberg and George Lucas. His latest work is a novel called *Seven Ancient Wonders*, a book inspired, or at least influenced, by Indiana Jones.

Matthew Reilly's motto is 'life's too short', and he enjoys golf, soccer and cricket. He'd also like to be a writer and director in Hollywood, as well as being the world's greatest author.

Activity 1

Anticipating action

Purpose	→ To explore the importance of the Prologue in creating tension and hooking readers into the rest of the book.
Resources	Handout 1: 'Prologue – Anticipating action' Flipchart, pens, paper
Activity	<p>In the Prologue to <i>Hell Island</i> Matthew Reilly hurls readers into his world of violent action and vivid description. It seems to be an end, but in fact it is the beginning of the book.</p> <p>Read the Prologue through with readers. Ask them to identify what they have learned about (a) where the action is taking place physically and geographically (an aircraft carrier/an island), (b) what has just happened (a battle), (c) the situation of the character (last man alive/no ammunition) and (d) bleak prospects of the character involved. Note these on the flipchart.</p> <p>Ask readers to describe their emotions as they read through the passage, e.g. interested, excited, scared, puzzled, relieved, sickened. Readers may have started feeling one thing, and switched to others quite rapidly. Was anyone bored or not wishing to read to the end of the passage?</p> <p>Ask readers to pick out some of the words and phrases used to describe Razor Haynes in the Prologue. Are these mostly about his physical or mental condition? Which for us, as readers, is more important (remembering this is the beginning of the book) – getting into Razor's thoughts or picturing his situation? What are the reasons for readers' views? Point out that Razor thinks of the enemy as 'brilliant' and 'beyond ruthless' but the descriptions we are given by the author are very physical, although not detailed. What is the tension between the physical and the psychological, and why might this be important as a pointer to the rest of the book?</p> <p>Thinking about this discussion and looking at the notes on the flipchart, would this opening section be successful presented in any other medium?</p>

continued →

Reflection	Matthew Reilly is renowned for writing novels in Hollywood movie style – fast action with characterisation and motivation taking second place. The Prologue text is short, simple and highly visual, using dramatic devices very familiar from film (a chase, apparent temporary safety, the hidden inescapable threat, the sound of unseen death).
Development	Readers might like consider how the Prologue could be filmed. Ask them to decide, in small groups, how many different shots it would take to convey the action described effectively. Readers should make short notes on what the shots would contain (with reference to the described actions of the characters), as well as any accompanying sound. Ask them to suggest a next shot in the film, after the Prologue. Share ideas with the group.

Activity 2

What's in a name?

Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ To explore the reasons for the use of nicknames in the book. ➔ To discuss the importance of 'the team' as a core value in the story.
Resources	<p>Copies of <i>Hell Island</i> Flipchart Pens, paper</p>
Activity	<p>The characters in the book have nicknames. Working together in pairs, ask readers to make a list of the characters, including their teams and their nicknames, and any explanations given in the text for them. Ask them also to list any other nicknames they might come across related to people not directly involved in the plot. Do the nicknames suggest anything to them about the characters that is not explicitly given in the text?</p> <p>Share the findings from the pairs exercise and record the results on the flipchart. Workplaces have traditionally given rise to nicknames, especially in the Armed Forces. Why might that be?</p> <p>Invite readers, through reference to their reading of the book so far, to discuss the importance of team bonding and team identification in the book. Examine this with reference to, for example, the different teams landing on the ship; Schofield and his team's survivors; the scientists and the gorillas.</p> <p>Can readers give any examples from the book of what happens when a team member breaks the team code?</p>
Reflection	<p>Nicknames can be used as a shorthand way of ascribing qualities or describing characteristics. They are part of establishing an <i>esprit de corps</i> as they may only be known and used within a specific group or team. Nicknames are particularly useful in an all action novels such as this, so that time is not taken up in description; the author uses the name of the character in the Prologue, 'Razor' Haynes, to reflect the way he dies. Names engage us with others, but nicknames can also depersonalise because they are often selected to reflect only one thing about us. How do readers feel their use is intended to work here?</p>

continued ➔

Development	<p>The gorillas have been given all the attributes of man except, apparently, names. If nicknames are a way of suggesting close team bonding, and the gorillas seem to be just as capable of working as a team (and have a leader), ask readers to consider, why haven't they been given names by the scientists?</p> <p>The setting for the book is also given a nickname 'Hell Island'. What nickname might the sailors have given their ship, or the aircrew their plane, and why?</p>
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Activity 3

The greater good?

Purpose	→ To debate some of the key themes of the book.
Resources	Copies of <i>Hell Island</i> Handout 2: 'Broadcast sheet' Flipchart Pens, paper
Activity	<p>The reasons for the experiment into which Schofield and his team find themselves thrown are given by Dr Malcolm Knox towards the end of the book, when they are prevented from wiping out the gorilla force.</p> <p>Ask readers some of the following questions, and record their ideas on the flipchart: What is the main justification given for using the Marines to test the gorillas? What qualities do the surviving group of Marines generally, and Schofield in particular, demonstrate that make them successful? Are they the same qualities as, or different from, those the scientists demonstrate? How valid is the scientist's defence of the experiment in terms of human values? Are there echoes of experiments in other stories readers may be familiar with?</p> <p>Divide the group into two. Ask them to imagine that, on their return home, the American government broadcasts an explanation of the events on Hell Island justifying the experiment, while a peace organisation broadcasts another condemning it. Invite each group to plan one of these broadcasts, using the information gathered from the flipchart discussion and their own reading. Readers can use the framework provided on Handout 2: Broadcast sheet, using note form.</p>
Reflection	<p>The book is full of action, but some key themes emerge through it – sacrifice of the few in order to save the majority; scientific use of innocent creatures to serve mankind's ends; the nature of trust and its abuse; human ability to adapt, for good as well as ill.</p> <p>Ask the groups to share the outline of their broadcasts. Have any of the key themes been picked up in their arguments for and against the experiment?</p>

continued →

Development	<p>Readers might like to work up the group notes into a short script and present it.</p> <p>The character of Schofield could be explored and compared with other 'action men' familiar to readers from film and TV. His attitude to authority is ambivalent, but he inspires loyalty and obedience within his team; is he any different from Dr Knox or Buck Broyles? If so, how?</p>
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Handout 1

Prologue – Anticipating action

TERRIFIED, WOUNDED AND OUT of ammo, Lieutenant Rick 'Razor' Haynes staggered down the aircraft carrier's tight passage. Blood poured from a gunshot wound to his left thigh. His face was badly scratched. He panted, gasping for breath. He was the last one left, the last member of his entire Marine force still alive. He could hear the enemy behind him. Grunting, growling. Stalking him, hunting him down. The enemy *knew* they had him; knew he was out of ammunition, out of contact with base and out of comrades in arms.

The passageway was hardly wide enough for his shoulders. Situated one level below the flight deck, it gave access to the senior officers' quarters on this aircraft carrier. It had grey steel walls studded with rivets – the kind you find on a warship.

In agony, Haynes arrived at a thick steel door leading from the passage and tumbled through it, landing in a room. He reached up and pulled the heavy steel door shut behind him and locked it. A second later, the great steel door shuddered violently, pounded from the other side.

His face covered in sweat, Haynes breathed deeply, glad of the brief rest. He was still shocked from seeing what the enemy force had done to his teammates. No soldier deserved to die in such a gruesome manner. It was beyond ruthless what they'd done to his men. Yet the way they had overcome his force of 600 United States Marines had been brilliant. At one point during his escape from the upper deck of the ship, Haynes had figured he would end his own life before they caught him. Now, without any bullets, he couldn't even do that.

A grunt disturbed him. It seemed to come from the darkness on the far side of the room. Haynes looked up just as a shape came rushing out of the darkness. It was dark, hairy and man-sized. And it was screaming like a chimpanzee gone insane. Only this was no chimpanzee.

It slammed into Haynes, ramming him back against the door. His head hit the steel door hard. The blow stunned him but did not knock him out. As he slumped to the floor he saw the creature pull out a shiny, long-bladed knife. Haynes wished it *had* knocked him out, because then he wouldn't have to know what it did to him next...

The death scream of Razor Haynes rang out from the aircraft carrier. It would not be heard by a single friendly soul.

For this carrier was 1,000 miles from anywhere. It was docked at an island that lay 500 miles from its nearest neighbour. It had once been known as Grant Island, but strangely it no longer appeared on any maps. It had been used in the Second World War by the Japanese as an airfield. In 1943, after extremely bloody fighting, it had been captured by the American Marines from the Japanese. Because the fighting had been so fierce, the Marines had given it a nickname.

They'd called it Hell Island



Broadcast sheet

<p>Explanation needed:</p> <p>Loss of aircraft carrier</p> <p>Loss of Marine and Special Units</p> <p>Loss of scientific team</p>	<p>Events on the island:</p>
<p>Background to the experiment:</p> <p>Saving of life long term</p> <p>Loss of life short term</p> <p>Expendable resources – human and/or animal</p>	<p>Lessons learned and recommendations for the future</p>

Further development

Useful websites

<http://www.matthewreilly.com/> official website

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew_Reilly_\(writer\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew_Reilly_(writer))

Other possible activities

Consider the importance of the island setting for this story, and others with which readers may be familiar from stories, film or TV. Readers can discuss what it is about an island that makes it so popular for writers, dramatists and filmmakers, e.g. microcosm of the world but isolated from it; opportunity for exploration (of character as well as geographically), discovery, solution; concentration of action and limitation of possibilities for outside influences on characters.

The scientists used the aircraft carrier as an 'island' for their experiment. Explore the use of maps and diagrams throughout the book, and discuss their importance. Did readers use them or not? Why were they included?

There is one female character in the book. Readers might like to trace her role in the action. Why do readers think she is there?

Comparison could be made with Tom Holt's book *Someone Like Me* in the Quick Reads series, which has a hunter/hunted theme, fast, violent action in underground tunnels and an unusual enemy.

More reading

March title	Author	ISBN
The Thief	Ruth Rendell	0091796865
Woman Walks into a Bar	Rowan Coleman	0099492288
Blackwater	Conn Iggulden	0091907039
Star Sullivan	Maeve Binchy	0752879545
Hell Island	Matthew Reilly	0330442325
The Book Boy	Joanna Trollope	0747582114
Don't make me Laugh	Patrick Augustus	1902934466
Someone Like Me	Tom Holt	1841494461
Screw It, Let's Do It	Richard Branson	0753510995
How to change your life in 7 steps	John Bird	0091907039
Chickenfeed	Minette Walters	0330440314
The Team	Mick Dennis with the Premier League	0552153729

May title	Author	ISBN
Danny Wallace and the Centre of the Universe	Danny Wallace	0091908949
Desert Claw	Damien Lewis	0099493535
Cleanskin	Val McDermid	0007216726
Name You Once Gave Me	Mike Phillips	0007216718
Grey Man	Andy McNab	0552154334
I Am a Dalek	Gareth Roberts/Dr Who	0563486481
Poison in the Blood	Tom Holland	0349119643
I Love Football	Hunter Davies	0755314700
Winner Takes All	John Francome	0755329481
The Dying Wish	Courtia Newland	0349119635
Secrets	Lynne Barrett-Lee	1905170300
The Corpse's Tale	Katherine John	1905170319

See www.quickreads.org.uk for information on these and future Quick Reads

See First Choice library booklist at www.firstchoicebooks.org.uk for mainstream books selected against criteria for their suitability for emergent readers

Audio version of the Quick Reads are available from W F Howes Ltd as part of their Clipper Emergent Reader programmes (www.wfhowes.co.uk/cerp/)

Other publications for emergent readers include those from Sandstone Press (www.sandstonepress.com) and New Island's Open Door series (www.newisland.ie)

Adult Core Curriculum References

Activity 1

Anticipating action

Rt/E3.1, .2, .4, .7, .8
Rt/L1.1, .2, .3, .5

Rw/L1.2

SLc/E3.1-.4

SLc/L1.1-.4

SLd/E3.1-.3

SLd/L1.1-.3

Activity 2

What's in a name?

Rt/E3.6, .7
Rt/L14.-.5

SLc/E3.1 -.4

SLc/L1.1 -.4

SLd/E3.1-.3

SLd/L1.1-.3

Activity 3

The greater good?

SLlr/E3.3-.6
SLlr/L1.3-.6

SLc/E3.1-.4

SLc/L1.1-.4

SLd/E3.1-.3

SLd/L1.1-.3

Wt/E3.1-.3

Wt/L1.1-.2