

# The Water and the Wild

by K.E. Ormsbee

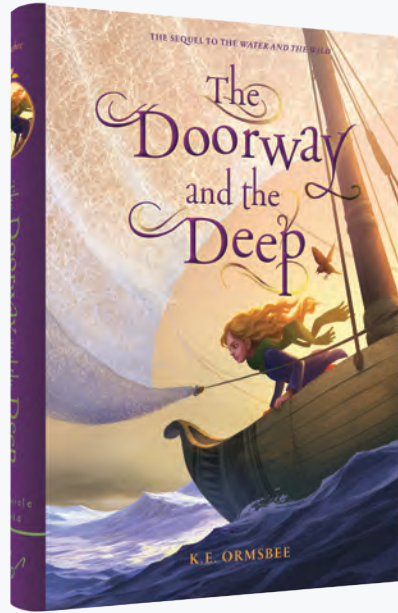
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Ages 8 to 12 \* F&P Text Level Gradient: X

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# The Doorway and the Deep

by K.E. Ormsbee

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Ages 8 to 12 \* F&P Text Level Gradient: X

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## ABOUT THE SERIES

Tumble down the roots of a silver apple tree; travel to another world full of magic, adventure, and mystery in this new, irresistible fantasy series for middle grade readers.

Follow Lottie Fiske down through the apple roots to another world—a world of magic both treacherous and beautiful—in pursuit of the impossible: a cure for the incurable, a use for the useless, and protection against the pain of loss.

## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide contains discussion questions designed to spark conversation about themes and ideas raised by this novel.

## PRE-READING ACTIVITIES



### Illuminated Poetry

Oliver finds poetry to be the most effective way of conveying his emotions and things he can't otherwise articulate. Before reading the novel, ask students to adopt one of the poems that Ormsbee indexes in the back of the books. Have the students look up the entire poem. Then, ask them to break their poem into 5-6 sections. Using the web, they should find one image that best "illuminates" that section of the poem—an image that matches the feeling, tone, mood, and imagery in that section. Then, they should use a program such as iMovie or PowerPoint to create slides of the text of the poem with their chosen images. As each line that Oliver utters comes up in the reading, ask the student with that adopted poem to present his or her illuminated poem. Lead students in a lively discussion of the poem. What meaning does it add to Ormsbee's story? Ask your students if there are any lines from poems or song lyrics that, like Oliver, they feel best captures a feeling or idea they could not otherwise articulate.

*Correlates with Common Core Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details, 5-6.2; Craft and Structure 5-6.4, 6.5*

## WHILE READING: TEXT-BASED QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES



### World Building Activity

At the beginning of the book, hand out sticky notes to students. Tell them that they will create their very own fantasy maps of the island worlds in *The Water and the Wild*: Kemble Isle and Albion Isle. They must mark each passage that refers to a landmark or the geography of the two worlds. After Chapter 3, have students use their textual clues to create a full map of Kemble Isle. After Chapter 6, students should compose their map of Albion Isle. After modeling this activity for them in class, they can complete their Albion Isle maps on their own as they read. At the completion of the book, have your students compare the worlds of Kemble Isle and Albion Isle, using these maps as a starting point. Are there any geographic similarities between the two worlds? What might be the reason for this mirroring? What are other similarities between Kemble Isle and Albion Isle that they noticed throughout the book? As a supplemental creative project, ask students to draw their own maps of their neighborhood. Then, ask them to create a fantasy world map that mirrors their "real world" map. Challenge them to write a short fantasy story that takes place in this alternate imagined universe.

*Correlates with Common Core Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details, 5-6.1, 5.3*

### Fantasy Dictionary

Tell students that every fantasy and science fiction author creates her own vocabulary that exists only in the world of her novel. Write the following words on the board: keen, halfling, Barghest, genga, wisp, Northerly, Southerly. Ask students to brainstorm the meaning of each word based on association and sound. Then, as each word appears in the book, ask students to write down the sentence in which it appears. Discuss how close their guesses were to the definition they determine from the context.

*Correlates with Common Core Reading Standards for Literature: Craft and Structure, 5-6.4*

## Major Theme: Friendship Is \_\_\_\_\_

At their heart, these novels are about something very important to each of your students: friendship. Lottie's own definition of friendship changes significantly as she matures. Early in the reading, set up a think-pair-share activity in which students write about a significant example of friendship—whether it's from their own experience or an example from another literary work—then share with a partner. Then, have them note each time the theme of friendship appears in the novels. In each context, how does Lottie define friendship? Do you think she's a good friend, or could she have handled the situation better? You might also discuss the secondary characters: Eliot, Adelaide, Fife, and Oliver, as well as the adult characters. Are they good friends, or could they improve? What do they each teach Lottie about the meaning of friendship? How does Lottie's idea of friendship evolve, and how does it reflect her own development?

At the end, ask students to fill in the sentence: "Friendship is \_\_\_\_\_" using what they have learned from the novels. Ask them to be concise in finishing the sentence. They may have a more concrete response, or they may choose to use a metaphor. They should write an additional paragraph calling on specific passages about friendship that spoke to them throughout the novel. Have them share.

*Correlates with Common Core Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details, 5-6.1, 5-6.2*

## Lottie the Hero

Frequently, society defines "hero" as someone who saves another person's life, typically in a dangerous situation. Lottie begins the story as the typical hero, out to save Eliot's life. However, as the books continue, she demonstrates many other heroic qualities. Ask students to cite examples of Lottie's heroic behavior. You can note that a hero typically has courage, but also other notably admirable qualities.

*Correlates with Common Core Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details, 5-6.1, 5-6.2, 5-6.3*

## Design Your Own Genga

Ask students to scan through the text and write down three key words that describe each of the main characters in Albion: Lottie, Fife, Adelaide, and Oliver. Have them note the passage that allowed them to draw these conclusions. Then, have them look for a description of each character's genga, and to note that down with the page citation. Discuss how each character compares and contrasts with his or her genga. Based on this conversation, ask students to design their own gengas based on what they know about their own strengths and weaknesses.

*Correlates with Common Core Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details, 5-6.1, 5.3*

## AFTER READING: CROSS-CURRICULAR, CREATIVE, AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES



Make *The Water and the Wild* and *The Doorway and the Deep* part of a larger unit on fairy tales. Provide students with a large variety of classic fairy tales. Ask them to identify fairy tale archetypes (e.g. the hero, the call to action, the sidekick friends, the villains, the quest). With this as context, as students read the books, ask them to discuss how Ormsbee uses, builds on, or challenges the classic fairy tale archetypes.

*Correlates with Common Core Reading Standards for Literature: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, 5-6.9*

**What was your inspiration for *The Water and the Wild*?**

A significant inspiration was my love for English, Irish, and Scottish folklore. I grew up on a rich diet of fairy tales, and those stories stirred up a magical inclination that has never gone away.

**How did you create the unforgettable characters who live in the pages of your book? And which is your favorite character? Which one would you like to invite to dinner?**

When I write a new story, I always start with the characters. Lottie, Oliver, Adelaide, and Fife all lived in my head long before I'd thought of a world called New Albion. They took form in my imagination, growing personalities and chatting with each other. Eventually, they became so loud that I had to put them on paper.

I couldn't possibly choose a favorite character, but I do have an extra special connection to Fife. He was a character in the very first book I wrote, and though it was spectacularly awful book, I salvaged Fife from its pages. I think he's much happier in *The Water and the Wild*.

I would invite the Barghest to dinner, because, like me, the Barghest doesn't have the best table manners. I could eat with my mouth open and keep my elbows on the table, and the Barghest wouldn't mind one bit!

**It is really challenging to create a believable fantasy world. How did you come up with the idea of Albion Isle, and how did you keep track of all the very distinctive landmarks in it?**

The inspiration for Albion Isle began as a question: What if the fairy tale creatures from British folklore were to sail westward, across the Atlantic, and set up shop on a new island? The word "Albion" is, in fact, the very oldest known name for Great Britain and is still used in a poetic context. As to keeping track of all the landmarks, I drew maps, of course! Not very well-drawn maps, but maps all the same, and these changed over time, as the story itself changed.

**Did any books inform the writing of your novel?**

Oh, plenty! Growing up, I adored C.S. Lewis' "The Chronicles of Narnia," Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*, Lewis Carroll's *Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*, J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series, and every book by Roald Dahl. Magic, talking animals, and strange new worlds have been part of my life for as long as I can remember, so it was only fitting that they be part of my book. Some other works that particularly influenced me as I wrote include J.R.R. Tolkien's *Tree and Leaf*, innumerable poems, and two plays by Shakespeare: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*. And here's a fun fact! Oliver and Adelaide's surname, Wilfer, is a tribute to my favorite Charles Dickens novel, *Our Mutual Friend*.

**What words of advice to you have for a young writer?**

Read, read, and then read some more! Read about things you love, and read about things you know nothing about. Talk back to stories; ask questions, make notes, and imagine sequels to the books you love best. Then write, write, and write some more! Write in new ways, write in old ways, and don't be afraid to make mistakes. But most importantly, live. Keep your eyes open, go new places, and make a fool of yourself. The more you live, the more you'll have to write about.

**PRAISE FOR *THE WATER AND THE WILD***

"*The Water and The Wild* is a debut children's fantasy that feels akin to the British childhood favorites I grew up reading--*The Chronicles of Narnia*, *The Dark Is Rising*, and *Alice in Wonderland*. So introduce your child to a modern classic in the making or read it yourself in nostalgic remembrance." –Jill Hendrix, *Fiction Addiction*

"Humorous descriptions and vivid creatures... should keep many readers intrigued." –*Publishers Weekly*

"Engaging... imaginative." –*Kirkus Reviews*



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

K. E. Ormsbee lives in Lexington, Kentucky. She lived in lots of equally fascinating cities before then, from Austin to Birmingham to London to Seville. She grew up with a secret garden in her backyard and a spaceship in her basement.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS TEACHER GUIDE, CONTACT JAIME WONG AT [JAIME\\_WONG@CHRONICLEBOOKS.COM](mailto:JAIME_WONG@CHRONICLEBOOKS.COM).

