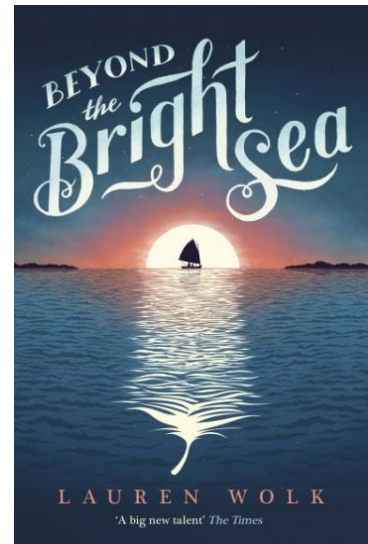


## 2018 Carnegie Medal shortlist Talking Points

Title: **BEYOND THE BRIGHT SEA**

Author: **Lauren Wolk**

Publisher: **Corgi (PRH)**



The book begins with a prologue, which is supposed to tantalise a reader and make you want to read on – how does the author do that in *Beyond the Bright Sea*?

### SETTING AND PERIOD

For this book, Wolk recreates a 1920s setting. She has said she likes to include just enough historical detail (so it feels real), but not too much (so it's too alien to the readers) – what kind of period detail did you notice? Do you think the way she uses this is effective?

If you read the author's note at the back of the book, what did learning about the real place that inspired this setting add to your experience of reading the book? (Had you heard of the Elizabeth Islands before? Did this book make you curious to find out more about them in real life today?)

The island setting is important to the book. "An island is one thing when a man has a boat, quite another when he doesn't," says Miss Maggie. What's the appeal of island setting in a book?

One of the aspects of the period that we learn about in the book is how leprosy patients were treated at the time. Did this surprise or shock you? Was it what you'd have expected?

### OSH

How would you describe Osh's character? He can be anti-social, and he carries some dark secrets, but he is kind-hearted enough to take in and care for the baby he finds. Why do you think he does it?

We're told that if Osh was starving he would just cut one arm off a starfish – what does this tell us about him?

What do we – and Crow – learn about Osh's past as the book unfolds? Does what you learn about his background, his experiences, change how you think of him?



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Children's Book  
Awards

## THE OTHER CHARACTERS

Compare how much we learn about Osh's background to how little we learn about Maggie's. There's so much we never know. Did you find yourself wondering about her back-story, or speculating about it?

At what point in the book did you come to understand who the villain of the book was, and why he was a threat to Crow? Is he a typical fictional baddie?

Why are the other islanders wary of Crow? There are at least two quite different reasons why they might not have made her welcome...

## SOLVING MYSTERIES

The book is full of mysteries – the most important, perhaps, is that of Crow's origins. How much were you able to guess in advance from the clues the author gave you?

Crow says she carried her questions around with her *"like a sack that got heavier as the years went by, even though I had become accustomed to the idea of it. Even though I was not unhappy with the life I had."* Why has it taken her so long to start trying to answer the questions?

New mysteries keep being added to the book – but some will never get solved, and they're left open for the reader to keep wondering about. Do you like that, or do you feel the author should tie up every loose end tidily before the book is over?

Crow's aim is to assemble answers to the big question about her own background – but does she learn the answers to other bigger questions along the way?

## FAMILY

How does Osh feel about Crow's curiosity about her origins?

What do you think the book tells us about how identity is defined, and how family is defined?

## CONCLUSIONS

Wolk has said she likes her books to contain "the juxtaposition of the dark and the light". How does she balance these things in the ending of *Beyond the Bright Sea*?

She has also said that she misses the characters, and "maybe I'll write a sequel . . ." So what do you think should happen next?

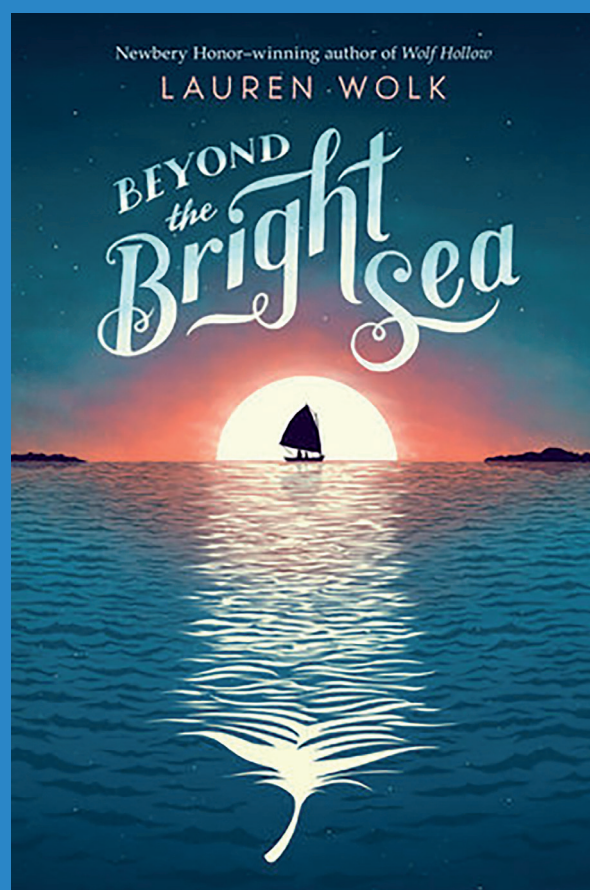
## AND FINALLY...

Does this Carnegie-shortlisted book deserve to win? Why, or why not?



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& Kate Greenaway  
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Awards

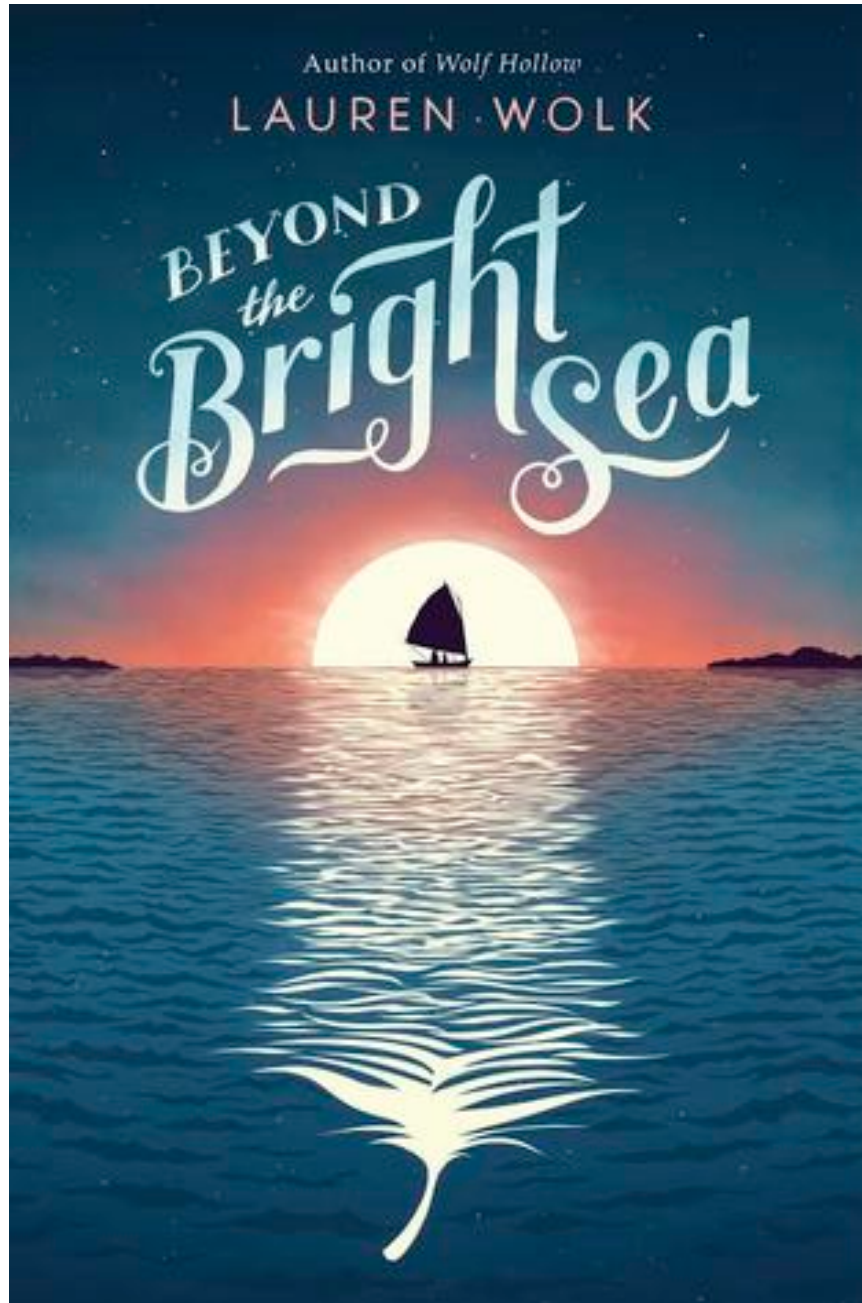
# The Carnegie Shortlist 2018



## EMC Resources: *Beyond the Bright Sea*



# ***Beyond the Bright Sea*, by Lauren Wolk**



## Before reading

### Bright Sea stories

This activity is based on the beautiful front cover of the novel. It is an opportunity for you to think as a writer about titles, descriptive detail, structure and plot.

1. Look at the cover of 'Beyond the Bright Sea'. Complete the Chambers-style grid (Appendix 1) based on what you see. This is a way of organising your thoughts. You can also use the grid to think about a chapter or a few pages you want to focus on.
2. With your classmates, discuss possible storylines that might suit a story with this front cover. Think about: colour, movement, sounds and any potential characters who might feature in this setting.
3. Complete the 'And then' storyline sheet (Appendix 2) for a story based on this front cover. You might do this in two ways:
  - a. Start with one sheet and pass it around until your sheet is returned with a complete storyline
  - b. Work in groups deciding on a storyline together
4. Begin writing your 'And then' story, or another one in your class. Compare different versions that you have written across the class.

## During reading

We recommend working through the novel without pausing too often, before doing more detailed work afterwards. The novel does offer several opportunities for reflection, particularly about identity and family. Here are some exploratory ideas for specific chapters:

### The Prologue

This activity focuses on introducing the structural feature of a prologue. It's an important opportunity to discuss the form of a novel.

1. Read the prologue together as a class.
2. Discuss the following questions:
  - What is a prologue? What is its equivalent at the end of a novel?
  - When does it seem like the prologue for the story was written? Why is this interesting/unusual?
  - What purpose does the prologue serve here?

### Chapter 1: Names and appearances

This activity is focused on identity, a major theme in the novel. It will get you thinking about how you can relate to the story and the main character.

1. Chapter 1 introduces you to the main character of the story, a girl called 'Crow'. What characteristics do you associate with this bird?
2. What might a girl called 'Crow' look like? You might like to draw her and keep these drawings for when her appearance is described in more detail.



3. Read chapter 1 as a class/small group. There is a focus on names, and whether they matter or not. Think about:
  - Do names matter?
  - What does your name mean to you?
  - Can you understand Crow's question to Osh when she asks 'What's my real name?' and he responds 'What do you mean by *real*?' What is a real name?
  - Is it right for Osh to worry about Crow's interest in where she came from?
4. Crow tells us that the other Islanders stay away from her and seem to be afraid of her. Look at the description of her in chapter 1 then answer these questions:
  - Why might this be?
  - Is it fair?
  - What are the Islanders judging her on?

## **Chapter 1 and 2: Setting**

Thinking about the novel's setting is valuable in getting you to think about Crow's life on the island, where she does not attend school and lives in a one room house with Osh.

1. Think about setting in the novel in the first two chapters. How is life different for Crow and Osh compared to yours?
2. Why do you think the writer chooses an island setting for her story? Think about the possible genre of the novel.
3. At the beginning of Chapter 2, Crow and Osh's cottage is described. Think about the language used to describe their life:
  - Is it simple or luxurious?
  - Is it described positively or negatively?
  - Do you think Crow likes where she lives? How do you know?



## **Chapter 8: The letter**

When Osh gives Crow the letter he found attached to her as a baby, it's a really significant moment in moving the plot forward and working towards solving Crow's mystery. This activity will get you thinking about your role as a reader in this mystery.

1. Read to the end of chapter 8.
2. A significant part of Crow's mystery is revealed in Chapter 8; the letter she arrived on the island with. Who do you think wrote this letter? Do any of the words still remaining on the letter give away what their relationship to Crow might be?
3. The letter is worn and faded and Crow can only make out certain words. Using the worksheet provided (Appendix 3), you should try to complete the letter, thinking carefully about who wrote it.

## **Chapter 38: The sailor**

This activity gets you thinking about the characterisation of Crow, and how you feel about her and her hope that the sailor is her brother.

1. Read up to the end of Chapter 38.
2. The first line of Chapter 38 is 'Getting back to the sailor was more important than hiding the treasure again.' What does this show you about Crow and what she values?
3. Analyse the writer's use of language in this chapter: how is language used to make us feel from p269-271? You should each individually pick out a phrase/sentence and write it on to a blank piece of paper. Add your thoughts about how language is used to make you feel, highlighting some of the words that are important in creating that feeling.
4. Move around the room looking at each other's work, adding your thoughts to your classmates' choice of phrase/sentence on their sheet:
  - Do you agree that the phrase/sentence they have chosen creates an effect on you as the reader?
  - Do you agree with their analysis of the words? If not, could you add some of your own analysis, either developing their ideas or challenging them?
5. Discuss what you have found out about the language in this task. How effective is it at getting across Crow's emotions?



## Working through the other chapters

The following might be areas to focus on in class discussion, or as short pieces of reflective writing. You could attempt them at various points in your reading.

- **Characterisation:** Osh and Miss Maggie are particularly loveable characters. How does the writer use language and plot to build up our love for these characters throughout the novel?
- **Mystery:** keep a record of clues the writer gives us to solving the mystery of Crow's birth. We as readers can piece the mystery together as Crow does. Stop to regularly predict what might happen, or what we might find out next.
- **Foreshadowing:** this can be seen at the end of chapter 3, 16, 23, 31, 32, 35. Why does the writer use foreshadowing and how is it linked to the genre of the story?
- **Past and present:** Throughout the novel, Osh is focuses on the present rather than the past. One particular line of interest is in chapter 7: 'You start looking back now and you might not see where you're going'. Do you agree with his standpoint that the past doesn't matter?
- **Role on the wall:** At first, Crow is horrified by the idea that she might be from the Penikese Leprosy Colony. As the novel develops, she grows to know the story of her parents and becomes very attached to the idea – she wants to be from there and from them.

Track Crow's development using a 'Role on the Wall' (Appendix 4). On the outside of the figure keep a record of how she presents her feelings to the outside world; on the inside write about her inner feelings.

Use different colours every time you rethink her character.

- **Genre:** it is possible to find elements of mystery, adventure and horror genres in the novel. See if you can find sections that you think clearly belong to one of these genres.

## After reading

### Climax

This activity gets you thinking about whether the novel has a clear climax or whether you can argue that there are several climaxes.

A story climax is defined as:

*A decisive moment of maximum intensity in a story.*

The following might all claim to be the climactic point in *Beyond the Bright Sea*:

When Crow receives the letter from Evelyn Morgan
When Crow finds out about her brother from Mrs Pelham
When Crow finds Mr Sloan at the old Leprosarium
When Crow visits Penikese island and finds the treasure
When Crow and Osh escape Mr Kendall
When Crow is in the cottage alone and Mr Kendall breaks in
When Mr Kendall threatens Osh and Miss Maggie
When Mr Kendall falls from the tree

- Work in small groups to discuss which moment you believe to be the true climax of the novel and discuss your reasons for this to present back to the whole group.

## Morals and messages

Stories teach us lots of things, and many stories have a moral or message that the writer has intended us to take away after reading. This activity gives you an opportunity to think about what the writer's moral or message might be, and what you've learned from the story.

- Put the following statements in order from 1-5, depending on which you think is the most important one to take away from the story.

We should not live in the past.
Our names do not define us.
All the people you love are just as important as one another.
Family is a broader thing than just people we are blood related to.
It doesn't matter where we're from.

- Write a reflective paragraph about the statement that you have selected as most important. Why have you chosen the statement? How does the novel get this message across to the readers?

## Crow as Agony Aunt

Throughout the novel, Crow learns a lot about her identity and her family. This activity gets you into her mind, encouraging you to think as she does.

- As a class, brainstorm Crow's personality traits and qualities.
- Imagine that Crow is an agony aunt, able to draw on her own experiences to help others. Keeping her traits and qualities in mind, write a response as Crow to one of the Agony Aunt letters in Appendix 5.
- After you have written back to one of the letters, share your responses around the class and decide which is most like Crow's voice and why.

## **The Elizabeth Islands**

This activity builds on what you learned about the Elizabeth Islands when reading the novel. When completing it, you should think about how much you can learn from a novel alone, and how much additional knowledge you need for it to make full sense.

You will need a computer for the activity.

1. You are going to run a research project on the subject of The Elizabeth Islands. First, start with what you've learnt about them from the story. Make a list in a small group.
2. Next, in your group use internet searches to add to what you already know about the Elizabeth Islands. Some possible things you might want to focus on are:
  - Location of the islands
  - Names of the individual islands
  - Size of the islands
  - Number of inhabitants
  - Life on the islands
  - Wildlife on the islands
  - Interesting facts about the islands
3. Report your group's research back to your teacher. You can do this in any way you like and might consider: a fact file, a blog, an annotated map, a 'radio show' discussing the Islands' history, a YouTube video, or any other way you can think of!

## Appendix 1: Aidan Chambers 'tell me' style grid

<p><b>I like ...</b></p>	<p><b>I don't like ...</b></p>
<p><b>I want to know ...</b></p>	<p><b>It reminded me of ...</b></p>

## Appendix 2: 'And then' storyline sheet

<b>What happened?</b>
<b>What happened next?</b>
<b>And then?</b>
<b>And then?</b>
<b>And then?</b>
<b>And then?</b>
<b>And then?</b>
<b>And then?</b>
<b>And then?</b>

## Appendix 3: The Letter

*if I could*

*for now*

*hope you*

*bright sea*

*better off*

*lambs*

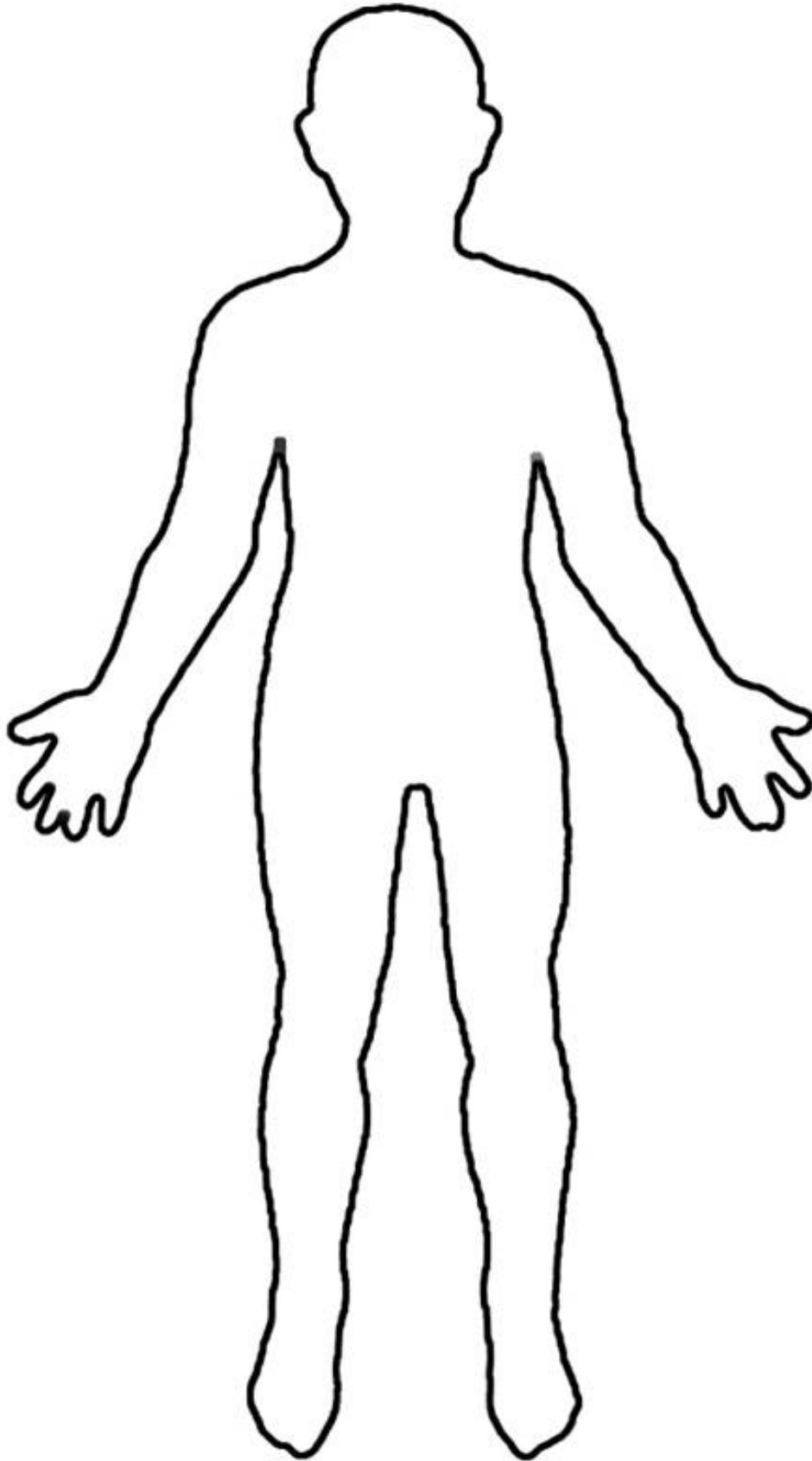
*little feather*

*I left something*

*day it might help*



## Appendix 4: Role on the wall



## Appendix 5: Agony Aunt letters

Dear Crow,

*I'm very confused. I recently learnt that my Dad had a wife and two children before he met my Mum and had me and my sister. I can't figure out why we weren't told about this family until now, and I'm so curious to know what my other sister and brother are like. I always wanted a brother. I'd like to try and find them but I'm worried about upsetting my Dad, my Mum and my sister. I don't want them to think that they are not enough for me because we are a great family, but I really want to know what the others look like and whether they are like me. What do you think I should do?*

*Anisha*

Dear Crow,

When I was very small, my Mum had another baby that sadly died. I don't feel upset about it but I know my Mum does not like talking about it and, when she does, she cries. She won't tell me what happened to the baby, but I have overheard some conversations about a serious illness. I'm worried that I might have been born with this illness too, but I don't feel that I can talk to my Mum about it. What should I do?

Craig

Dear Crow,

My grandparents on my Mum's side died before I was born, but I know they played a really important role in World War II, as my Mum keeps their medals locked away in a safe. I once searched their names on the internet and found they were mentioned in an article about British spies. When I asked my Mum whether it was true, she told me to keep my nose out and not to ask questions, but I can't just forget what I've seen! What if there's loads of interesting stuff to find out? What do you think I should do?

Emily

## Cards for Literary Analysis

These cards have been designed for use with any short story or novel. You can select a particular card to work with or rely on your teacher to give you a particular area of focus. You could then work through the bullet points on your card or select a few that seem most interesting or relevant for a particular text.

### Setting

- In which different settings does this story/novel take place? What part does each setting play? Which setting is most significant and why?
- How important is setting to the story/novel as a whole? Does the setting have a particular impact on the story/novel, or could it be set almost anywhere?
- What difference would it make if this story/novel was set somewhere else? E.g. another country, a rural rather than urban setting, in space!
- How effective do you think the writer has been in creating a sense of place? Are there any particular examples of setting you think are particularly well written? If so, why?
- Is there anything particularly interesting or special about the way setting is used and presented? In what ways is it similar or different to stories/novels that explore similar themes and ideas, or that are written in the same genre?
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about setting. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



### Characters

- Who is your favourite character, and why?
- Who do you think is the most important character, and why?
- Who are the other significant characters? What different roles do they have?
- What is special or unusual about the way one or more of the characters is presented?
- Which character would you most like to be friends with, and why? Which character might significant adults want you to be friends with, and why?
- Are characters paired or grouped in any particular ways? E.g. friends, rivals, etc. What ideas are raised by these pairs or groupings?
- Are the characters typical of ones found in this kind of story/novel? Are they distinctive and individual, or stereotypes? Explain your answer.
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about characters. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



### Form and structure

- What do you think is interesting about the way this story/novel begins?
- What were the key moments in this story/novel? How did they shape the story/novel as a whole?
- If you had to describe the path of this story/novel, what would it be? E.g. journey from childhood to adulthood, from grief to happiness etc.
- What did you notice about the end of this story/novel? Was it what you were expecting? Did it tie up loose ends, or leave some things unresolved?
- Does this story/novel belong to a particular genre? If so, how does it fit in with other stories that you know in the same genre?
- Does the story/novel use just one form or does it include more than one E.g. letters, diary entries, poems, newspaper reports
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about form and structure. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



### Themes and ideas

- What, to you, are the five most important themes and ideas in this story/novel? If you had to narrow your list down to one theme or idea, what would it be and why? In what ways is this theme presented? E.g. if the theme is love, what exactly does the story/novel have to say about love?
- Does this story/novel deal with big issues that affect the whole world, or small ones that affect individual lives? Give reasons for your answer.
- Does this story/novel contain any themes or ideas that have made you look at the world in new ways? If so, what are they, and how have they changed your views?
- Does this story/novel contain any themes and ideas that explore how people should act and behave? If so, what are they and do you agree with how they are presented?
- Are the themes and ideas presented in ways similar or different to other stories you have read, including stories of the same type, or in the same genre?
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about themes and ideas. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



## Language

- Identify one or two of your favourite passages in the story/novel where language is used particularly well? Explain how it is used.
- How would you describe the language used in this story/novel overall? E.g. poetic, plain, chatty etc.
- Would you say the language in this story/novel is original or creative in any particular way? If so, how?
- Are there any patterns in the language used? If so, what are they, and what is their effect? Are there any other patterns, such as of imagery and symbolism?
- How is dialogue used in the story/novel? Do characters, for example, speak in particularly distinctive ways?
- Is the language similar to how it is used in similar kinds of stories/novels? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about language. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



## Narrative

- How does the writer try to capture and keep the reader's attention? How successful are they in doing this?
- Is the narrative told in order from beginning to end (a linear narrative), or does it move backwards and forwards in time? What is the effect of the order in which events are told?
- Can you think of any other ways the story/novel could be told? For example, by a different character, or in a different order? How would this affect your experience of reading?
- Would you say that this story/novel is told in a particular original or creative way? If so, how?
- Is this story/novel told in a way that is typical for its genre?
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about narrative. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



### Point of view and voice

- Through whose eyes do we see the events of the story/novel? Do readers get just one point of view or several?
- What do you find interesting about the point or points of view presented?
- If the story/novel is told from different points of view, how does the writer do this?
- What would the story/novel be like if told from someone else's point of view? Whose point of view would you choose, and why?
- How would you describe the tone of voice used to tell the narrative? Does the narrative draw attention to itself by using a particular tone, or is the tone pushed to the background? What is the effect of the choice made by the writer?
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about point of view and voice. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



### Audience and overall personal response

- Who do you think this story/novel was written for, and why? Are there any other groups of people who you think should read it?
- What was your experience of reading this story/novel?
- What would you recommend about this story/novel to other people?
- Which parts of this story/novel did you most enjoy? Were there any parts that you didn't enjoy?
- Do you think this story/novel could be improved in some way? If so, how?
- What other stories (or films, TV, plays etc.) does this story/novel remind you of? In what ways?
- Who do you think should read this book and why?
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about personal response and audience. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



# BEYOND THE BRIGHT SEA

By Lauren Wolk

Corgi Books

2018 Carnegie Medal shortlist,  
eligible for Amnesty CILIP Honour

**'Simple, sparing prose and a vivid sense of time and place combine beautifully... provides profound comments on identity and what it means to belong.'**  
*Judging panel*



## UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Article 6: We all have the same right to use the law

### ABOUT THIS BOOK

Set in 1925 Massachusetts, this book explores identity. Crow is washed up on an island as a baby and is 'adopted' by loner Osh. But, age 12, she sets out to discover her roots, unwittingly putting everyone she loves in danger.

A determined and independent heroine, Crow pieces together her past with a growing awareness of what family truly means. The story illustrates that children have a right to identity, and a right to their own opinions and to be heard. It also explores how we treat people and things we are afraid of and how everyone has the right to dignity and respect regardless of illness or disability.

### HUMAN RIGHTS IN THIS STORY

Right to identity; to education; to healthcare; to equality; to safety; to freedom of movement; to privacy; to have opinions and to be heard.

### YOU CAN TALK ABOUT...

#### Crow

- What makes Crow a good role model? What do you like about her?
- Does she always do the right thing?

#### The right to identity

- Why does Crow need to know where she came from? Would she have been better off not knowing?



- Why do names mean so much to Osh and Crow? By the end, is Osh's name important or not?
- Crow learns about her origins. Osh keeps his past a secret. Why is he so reluctant to talk about it?
- Osh says 'What you do is who you are' (page 75). Do you agree?

### The right to a family

- Why does Osh foster Crow?
- How does he feel when she wants to look back at her past? Why?
- Crow is determined to find her brother. Why?
- Crow says 'There are better bonds than blood...'. What does she learn about family?
- What does family mean to you? Are all families treated with the same respect?

### Discrimination

- How do you feel about how the islanders treat Crow? How would you have treated her?
- Why did Miss Maggie want Crow to go to school and Osh didn't?
- Crow says 'If I wasn't good enough for them before, I don't think I want to be one of them now' (page 84). What do you think?
- Is Crow right to blame the islanders for not helping those on Penikese?
- Has fear ever affected your behaviour?

### Finally

- The story is set in 1925 – could it have taken place today? How?

### ACTIVITY

Imagine what happened to Osh before he reached the island and smashed up his boat. What did he leave behind? Read what he says on page 7. Think about the fact he rarely shares his name and how he responds to the police officers.

### RESEARCH

Find out about Hansen's disease (leprosy) today, and how discrimination and stigma prevent people accessing the treatment that can cure it.

**'And then, one night, when I was twelve, I saw a fire burning on Penikese and I decided that it was time to find out where I'd come from and why I'd been sent away. But I didn't understand what I was risking until I nearly lost it.'** *Crow*

## WE ARE ALL BORN FREE AND EQUAL

The atrocities of World War II sparked a determination to protect the rights of all human beings everywhere. On 10 December 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The preamble says it must be shared, learned by children and be a part of all our lives.

When using these notes, you can download for reference:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights simplified version, especially useful for younger children [amnesty.org.uk/udhr](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/udhr)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child [unicef.org/crc](https://www.unicef.org/crc)

For more free educational resources from Amnesty International go to [amnesty.org.uk/education](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/education)



The CILIP Carnegie & Kate Greenaway Children's Book Awards

