



Teacher Notes

Everglade: Rise of the Witch

by Kitty Black and illustrated by Rebecca Crane

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Publication details

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Themes

- Magic
- Friendship
- Being yourself
- Standing up for what's right
- Belonging
- Power
- Fear

About the Book

The first book in an exciting and funny fantasy trilogy in the tradition of Terry Pratchett and Diana Wynne Jones.

Everglade loves to hate witches. And as the daughter of the last witch, Wren Westerly is the most hated person in town. She can only imagine what would happen if the townspeople found out she can actually see magic ... even if she has no idea how to use it.

But when magic leads Wren to an enchanted necklace and reveals her secret, it's not just

Everglade chasing her. It's the Eater - a terrifying creature who is determined to drain all magic from the world, and who really, really wants that necklace.

Leaving Everglade with nothing but the necklace, two accidental travel companions, and directions from a goat, Wren finds herself in a new and infinitely more magical world. And she's the only one who can save it from the Eater. That is, if she can figure out magic.

No pressure.

Welcome to the world of Everglade, where the truth about witches is tangled with lies and being yourself is the biggest risk of all.

About the Author and Illustrator

Kitty Black is a children's author living in Perth, Australia. With a background in psychology and education, Kitty knows how important stories are for everyone. She is the author of numerous picture books. *Everglade* is her debut middle grade book. She lives with her partner and two children who are excellent at providing both noise and inspiration, although rarely in equal amounts.

Rebecca Crane is an author, illustrator, and visual development artist. She was born in Scotland, grew up in Australia, and spent time in Indonesia before moving back to the UK to study Illustration at Edinburgh University and Character Animation at Central St Martins in London. She's currently based in the Yorkshire Dales where she spends her time writing and drawing.

Before Reading

- Read the prologue aloud. Who do you think the narrator of this section of the novel is? Why do you think the author has included a prologue here?
- Explore the map at the beginning of the novel. What does this tell you about the world of the story?

Comprehension Questions

- What does Aunt Nancy make Wren say before they leave the house? What does this suggest about Wren's mother? How does it make Wren feel?
- What is Betrayal Day? Why is it so dangerous for Wren?
- How do the people of Everglade feel about Wren? How does this make her see herself?
- What crime did the witches commit? How were they punished for it?
- While she's at the Betrayal Day festival, Wren thinks to herself that 'people only notice what they want to' (p15). What is she referring to here? What other examples can you find of people only seeing what they want to see?
- How does Wren feel when she thinks about her mother? What do you think she would say to her if they met? What message does Arabella leave for her daughter?
- How does Wren feel when she says 'I'm a witch' for the first time? Why is she so afraid of her power? What else is she afraid of?
- What does Wren learn when she's at Meadow Court? How does it change her perspective of magic and her mother?
- What is Wren's fate? Why does she fight so hard to keep this a secret?
- Who or what is the sludge? What does it want from Wren?
- What advice does the Oracle give to Wren? How does she respond?

Comprehension Questions cont.

- How do Blue and Wish show their friendship for Wren? What do you think they're trying to communicate to her when she's standing up to the Eater in the final scene of the novel?

Literacy

• The Inciting Incident

- The inciting incident is a pivotal point in a story where the protagonist's everyday life is interrupted by something unusual that sends them off in an unexpected direction. Often in a fantasy story, this is followed shortly by the 'point of no return', where something happens that prevents the character from simply returning to their normal life.
- In *Everglade*, what do you think the inciting incident is? Is there a point of no return? What is it?

• Simile

- Similes can be used to reveal an extra layer of character.
- '...like he was an oyster clamped down on a pearl' (p17). What does this simile tell you about Mayor Sinclair's position in the town?
- Find another example of a simile being used in the story. What does it tell you about the character or situation it's being used to describe?
- Write your own simile to describe one of the following:

Someone powerful

People in a rush

A bad situation

Final Reflections

- Wren has defeated the Eater, but she still has to face the Everglade Witch – who do you think this could be?

Final reflections cont.

- Make some predictions for other hurdles that Wren might have to overcome in the next novel.
- How do you think Wren has changed? What strengths will she take into the next novel that she didn't possess at the beginning of this one?

Creative Activities

- Using the descriptions in the book, find or choose three words that depict the following characters. How do they fit together (or not)? How do their differences create conflict in the story?

Wren	Aunt Nancy	Mr Grey	Mayor Sinclair	Witches

- Use the description of Everglade as a template to describe/create your own story town by filling in the details below.

[NAME OF TOWN] was a [SIZE OF TOWN] with [A SPECIFIC PHYSICAL DETAIL FROM THE TOWN]. Its buildings and homes were [DESCRIPTION OF THE LAYOUT].

There was also a [UNIQUE FEATURE OF THE TOWN], which was [ADJECTIVE].

A visitor to the town might describe it as [ADJECTIVE] and buy [SOMETHING YOU CAN BUY IN THE TOWN] for their friends back home. But [SOMETHING ODD ABOUT THE TOWN].

- Make a list of all the details you learn about Mr Grey in chapter five and of the Beasts in chapter seven. Using this information, draw a picture of how you imagine him to look.

Creative Activities cont.

- Work in groups to draw more detailed images of each of the novel's key locations and place them together in the way they are mapped out at the beginning of the book. Make a list of the most significant events in each place.
- What do you think Wren writes in her goodbye letter to Blue? Write the scene in which Blue finds and reads the letter, using it to connect to the events that occur later in the book.