



Teacher Notes

Oceanforged: The Wicked Ship

by Amelia Mellor

Teacher notes prepared by Bec Kavanagh

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Themes

- Courage
- Determination
- Independence
- Heroism
- Magic, myths and legends

About the Book

The realm of Aquinta has fallen into a dark age. And no one knows that better than thirteen-year-old Cori, who is fighting for her life in a pirate crew more beastly than Aquinta's sea monsters.

But Cori's life changes when she finds the Oceanforged Gauntlet - a piece of armour belonging to the legendary Champions who once ruled the islands. Whoever wears the armour wields the Champions' magic and has the power to return Aquinta to its lost glory.

Cori must begin a treacherous journey to find the rest of the armour. But first, she'll have to escape from her captain, who craves the gauntlet's magic for himself ...

The quest begins in the first instalment of an epic new fantasy adventure series from the bestselling author of The Grandest Bookshop in the World.

About the Author

Amelia Mellor is an author, teacher and nature nerd. She is the creator of *The Grandest Bookshop in the World*, *The Bookseller's Apprentice* and *The Lost Book of Magic*, a multi-award-winning historical fantasy trilogy based in Melbourne where she lives. She holds degrees from Monash University and The University of Melbourne. To find ideas for *Oceanforged*, Amelia spent three days at sea, swam with sharks, hiked in jungles, got lost in Italy, handled real pirate artefacts and scuba dived on a shipwreck. When she's not writing or researching, she's usually tending to her collection of tropical fish or attempting a wildly ambitious craft project. You can find her at authorameliamellor.com and holding up traffic in museums.

Before Reading

- Discuss your preferences and habits as readers. Who enjoys fantasy novels? What do you like about them?
- Based on your knowledge of the fantasy genre, what do you think you might find in this book?
- Read the blurb of the book aloud. What does it mean that the realm of Aquinta has fallen into 'a dark age'? What does this suggest about Cori's role in the story?

Comprehension questions

- What are some of the things that Cori didn't want to be? What do you think she does want to be?
- When Cori recalls the storm that killed her parents, she remembers that 'the Prime Council had sent help to the parts of the city that were never in real danger, while thousands drowned below their feet' (p17). What does this tell you about the class structure of this world?
- What does Cori discover about the Champions? Why do you think she's so drawn to them?
- How is Cori's life on the Harridan different to her life as a Page? What does she hate about both?
- What makes Cori feel a 'flutter of excitement' when she reads the warning on the buried building at Fin Island?
- What does Cori find inside the pillar? Why does the gauntlet attach itself to her?
- How does Cori know what to do with the gauntlet?
- Why do you think the Prime Council called the gauntlet 'a mighty evil' (p63)? Is there warning fake, or is there anything truly dangerous about the glove?
- What is a 'natural'? What powers do Tarn and Ray have? What's the cost of using magic?
- Ead tells Cori that 'artifices and potions are made to give us control over magic. They are our tools. We are not theirs.' (p110) What does she mean by this? What factors influence Cori's decision about whether or not to keep the artifice? Do you believe that she's in control of her own decision?
- Why is Tarn so angry at Cori for leaving? Do you think he's right not to trust her? What does Cori do to change his mind?
- How does Zin react when she discovers that Cori has the gauntlet? Why do you think she reacts this way?
- Where does the term 'oceanforged' come from? What does it mean? What are the other oceanforged artifacts and what do they do?
- What are some of the traits that the Champions have all had in common?

Comprehension questions cont.

- What plan does Cori come up with to steal the artifact from the Captain?
- Who is going to accompany Cori on the next leg of her journey?

Literacy

Worldbuilding

- Worldbuilding is a part of every story, but is particularly important in stories where the writer transports the reader to a different reality. In these cases – often genres such as fantasy or science fiction – the writer needs to distinguish the rules of the new world, and the way it differs from the readers own world, ideally without a long (and possibly boring) explanation. Authors do this through worldbuilding, which basically refers to the techniques that writers use to bring their story worlds to life. Writers bring story worlds to life in a variety of ways, including:
 - Setting (what does this world look like? What is the geography of the world?)
 - Character reactions (do characters respond to things that the reader finds unusual as normal or abnormal?)
 - Sensory descriptions (what do things feel/ look/smell/sound/taste like?)
- Consider the following examples from the novel. Which of the above categories do they fall into?
- 'On the vast ocean, inside the rotting ship, behind the locked door with the barred window, Cori was trying to escape again.' (p1)
- 'We forbid keeping secrets or hiding loot from our crewmates. I picked butter seeds the last time we went ashore, and I didn't share them.' (p5)
- 'The city was a tangle of canals, bridges and colourful buildings. At the top stood the white spires and golden domes of the Prime Council's Radiant Palace.' (p12-13)

Literacy cont.

- 'Maybe the pirates that stalked the channels of the Blackrocks were to blame, or the fierce merfolk and their sea serpents who had once attacked Towerpeak.' (p14-15)
- How do these examples, and any others you can find, contribute to the worldbuilding of the novel? What kind of world do they bring to life?

The Hero's Journey

- The Hero's Journey is an outline of a story structure often used in fantasy or science fiction. It is used to explain the journey that hero's in these narratives undertake as they travel from the world of the known (their home) into the world of the unknown in order to return home, transformed in some way. Popular examples from film and television include *The Hobbit* and *Star Wars*.
- A simple outline of the hero's journey (and other, similar, structures can be found here <https://www.grammarly.com/blog/literary-devices/heros-journey/>)
- The twelve steps of the Hero's Journey were defined by Joseph Campbell and are:
 - The call to adventure
 - The refusal of the call
 - Meeting the mentor
 - Crossing the threshold
 - Tests, allies and enemies
 - The approach to the inmost cave
 - The ordeal
 - The reward
 - The road back
 - The resurrection
 - The return
 - The freedom to live

Literacy cont.

- Often in a series, some of these steps won't come until later books, when the hero really completes their adventure. But often you can still map out a hero's journey in the individual books, as well as across the series as a whole. Discuss each of the steps in detail – what do they mean? See if you can find each of the following in *Oceanforged*:
 - The call to adventure
 - Meeting the mentor
 - Crossing the threshold
 - Tests, allies and enemies
- What other stories can you think of that follow this structure?

Final reflections

- What do you think will happen to Cori and her friends next?
- What questions do you still have from book one that might be answered in the next books in the series?
- Where would you put this book on the shelf? What other books does it remind you of?

Creative activities

- Cori first discovers the Champions through the paintings of them that have been hidden in the storeroom. Create a Champion and draw a picture that, like the Champions described in the novel, shows them 'killing a monster, catching an evildoer, or charging into battle against an enemy nation' (p21). Give them a 'magnificent name' and write a short description for an accompanying scroll – you might try to use the old-fashioned language that Cori struggles to read.
- Using the details provided in the book, draw a map of the Oceanforged world. Include a brief summary for the kinds of people who live in each place, and make a note of any key scenes that take place in each.

Creative activities cont.

- Use the Hero's Journey structure to plan a new adventure for Cori, following on from the events of book one in the series. Which new allies will she meet and what challenges will she need to overcome? Will this bring her any closer to the end of her journey?
- Zin tells Cori that 'every large town in Aquinta has a secret band of Loyalists.' (p150-151). Write a letter from Zin to one of the other groups of Loyalists explaining what has happened in book one and telling them about Cori. Write a scene in which this group receives the letter, and imagine their response.
- Sometimes villains become more interesting when we try to imagine how they ended up the way they are. Create a backstory for Captain Scrimshaw. How do you think he ended up becoming the Captain of the Harridan? How did he learn about the gauntlet, and why is it so important to him to have it for himself?