

TEACHING & ACTIVITY GUIDE

SEA SERPENT'S HEIR BOOK TWO: BLACK WAVE

MAIRGHREAD SCOTT and PABLO TUNICA

Overview: The high-fantasy, high-seas adventure continues! As more secrets about her origin are revealed, Aella begins to embrace her dangerous and powerful dark side, leading her down a path from which there may be no return...

The acclaimed YA fantasy graphic novel trilogy continues in this new chapter from the superstar team of Mairghread Scott (*Star Wars: Resistance, Guardians of the Galaxy*) and Pablo Tunica (*TMNT Universe*).

IMPORTANT SETTINGS

- Fort Green
- The Tower of Clouds
- The Empty Court
- The Tempest (ship)
- Cor Manishin
- The Bastion (ship)
- Lys Kaleeb/The Dawn City
- Blackshingle

NOTABLE CHARACTERS

- Aella
- Nix
- Zuri
- Bashir
- Uncle Garret
- Xir
- Kiana
- Ryanna/the Queen of Mercy
- Jaspreet
- Captain Oren Raik
- Fetu
- Na'Yeh
- Dawn Sister
- Noon-Day Father
- Evening Brother
- Black Sun Mother
- Shy'anar

KEY THEMES

- Vengeance
- Grief and loss
- Guilt
- Destiny and free will
- Wanderlust
- Faith
- Family and legacy
- Fairy tales and legends
- The sea
- Secrets
- Betrayal



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Does the relationship between Aella and Xir change over the course of the book? If so, in what ways? Use at least two examples from the text.
2. Aella begins the book lamenting that she has destroyed everything because she is “a monster.” At times in the book, Aella and Xir certainly behave in ways that could be considered “monstrous”: violent, bloodthirsty, bent on revenge. When the book is done, do you think of Aella/Xir as a “monster”? Why or why not?
3. The art style of Sea Serpent’s Heir Book Two: Black Wave is very expressionistic, with colorful details and exaggerated movements and expressions. When Aella is signing contracts with the different pirate crews and factions, it becomes clear that impressions formed from outward appearances may not align with true character. Pick out two characters from this sequence and describe (a) what you thought that character would be like when you first saw their design and (b) if your presumptions were correct.
4. At the beginning of Chapter Three, we are shown Aella and Bashir’s contrasting viewpoints on the war waged against the Church of the First Light. Why do their perspectives differ so drastically? At this point in the story, whose version of events aligns more with how you’ve responded to the story so far?
5. Two things happen during the raid on Blackshingle that alter Aella’s quest: someone she kills, and something she finds. Describe those two events and the ways in which they change Aella’s goals and her character.
6. At different points in the story, we are shown flashbacks to the childhoods of two different characters: Bashir and Zuri. In what ways are they similar? In what ways do they differ? And how do their pasts influence the choices they make?
7. On his journey for the Sun’s Rage and the Sun’s Mercy, Bashir reflects on a saying of the Church of the First Light: “A kind heart is a small sin.” What does this suggest to you about the nature of the Church? Do you see other things in the text that support this interpretation?
8. In Chapter Six, Aella is betrayed by someone close to her. Hints regarding this character’s lust for violence and power are sprinkled throughout the text; find 2-3 examples and describe how they foreshadow this character’s treachery.
9. Family, specifically the relationship between mothers and their children, is a central theme in Sea Serpent’s Heir Book Two: Black Wave. How



does this tie into the “miracle” that occurs in the book’s finale?

10. How do you interpret the “twist” in the last panel of the book? Write 2-3 sentences on what you think it means and what it implies for the story going forward.

ACTIVITY IDEAS

1. At the beginning of Sea Serpent’s Heir Book Two: Black Wave, Aella has gone through a traumatic event, and she begins to behave differently: taking her mother’s place, she becomes more commanding, violent, and harsher to her crew and family. Think about different turning points in your life - good ones or bad ones - and what changes, if any, those events made on how you behave or treat others. Write a 1-2 page story or draw a short comic about this time in your life.
 2. Many scenes in Sea Serpent’s Heir Book Two: Black Wave involve ritual and heritage, from Aella attempting to fill her mother’s shoes to Bashir undergoing the gauntlet for the Sun’s Rage and the Sun’s Mercy. Do you feel that there is anything you are inheriting, in terms of a role or set of expectations, from your elders, and/or is there anything you feel it is vitally important for you to pass on to the next generation? Write a page or two on this subject. Alternatively, if you feel this doesn’t apply to you,
3. The artwork pops with color, ambiance and tone. Look through the book and find 2 to 3 panels that catch your attention. Write a paragraph on each panel explaining why it caught your attention. Analyze the colors, art style, any text on the page, and how it all goes together to tell the bigger story.
 4. Sea Serpent’s Heir Book Two: Black Wave features a variety of pirate crews that sign on to help Aella in her quest for vengeance. Design your own pirate crew or faction. You can write about them, draw a comic, select music that would be their vibe, or do a combination of all three. Figure out the best way to represent your pirate crew and then share what you’ve created during a group discussion.



TEACHER'S KEY

Reading/Interest Level: Grades 8-12

COMMON CORE ALIGNED PRE-READING

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

Sea Serpent's Heir Book Two: Black Wave presents many instances in which the characters must make carefully weighed, challenging decisions, often while overwhelmed with complicated emotions like grief and rage. Point a few of these instances out to students, and then ask them, either as an individual project or in groups, to determine the following:

- What were the different characters in the scene attempting to accomplish?

- What options did the characters potentially have other than what they chose?
- Were the decisions made based more on intellect and calculation, or emotion?
- What effect did the decisions have on the characters and the story?
- What might have happened had they made different decisions?
- All points should cite examples from the text. Students could complete this project either as a presentation or as a short paper.

COMPREHENSION AND COLLABORATION

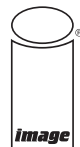
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.B

Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C



Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

Break students up into small groups. Assign them the roles of the different pirate guilds, bands of criminals, and religious orders in Sea Serpent's Heir Book Two: Black Wave. In their groups, the students must determine:

- What does my group want and why? (Cite examples from the text.)
- What does my group need in order to fulfill its goals (whether or not this actually happens in the story)?
- What sort of agreements, contracts, or conflicts will I need to have with the other groups to achieve these goals?

Once that is complete, the student groups should circulate around the room to speak to the other groups to

determine:

- Are our goals aligned? If not, in what ways do they conflict with each other?
- Is it possible to negotiate a deal so we can either work together or at least coexist to meet our goals?
- If conflict is inevitable, what form might it take?

Each student group should write up their observations and make a short presentation on what treaties they were able to negotiate and/or what conflicts erupted. The groups should cite examples from the text supporting the goals of their assigned organization and any personality or emotional conflicts that might make negotiations particularly challenging.

TEXT TYPES AND PURPOSES

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.1

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

One of the key themes of Sea Serpent's Heir Book Two: Black Wave is mercy vs. vengeance. For this assignment, each student will write a mid-length paper exploring:

- The points in the text where mercy



and vengeance, in their various forms, come into conflict.

- How 3-4 of the main characters embody or exemplify mercy and/or vengeance in their actions, or struggle with the conflicting impulses.
- What the text is ultimately trying to say about these opposed forces.

Alternatively, the student could write a compare/contrast essay between Sea Serpent's Heir Book Two: Black Wave and another work of their choice (with instructor approval) that deals with the themes of mercy and vengeance.

ACTIVITY GUIDE

1. Be prepared to offer trigger warnings and lead some difficult discussions on some of the more intense themes and events in Sea Serpent's Heir Book Two: Black Wave, including death and grief, betrayal, rage and vengeance.
2. For the "ritual and heritage" assignment, lead a class discussion on the rituals of day-to-day life. Students may need some prompting to view certain secular activities, from sweet sixteen parties to job interviews, as forms of ritual.
3. The "artwork" prompt can also be used as an additional opportunity for students to get creative: rather than simply writing about an example of the art that speaks to them, the

student could try drawing their own version, making note of the particular aspects that appeal to them and how they implemented those aspects in their own work.

4. For the "design your own pirate crew" assignment, students may wish to dress up, form "pirate crews" of their friends, develop unique ships or ship names, write sea shanties, or otherwise or turn the assignment into a creative showcase. Encourage them to stretch out and have fun with it.

RECOMMENDED TITLES FOR FURTHER READING

- *Stardust* by Neil Gaiman, illustrated by Charles Vess. Vertigo, 2019.
- *The Witch Boy Trilogy* by Molly Knox Ostertag. Graphix, 2017.
- *Noroway Book 1: The Black Bull of Noroway* by Cat Seaton, illustrated by Kit Seaton. Image, 2018.
- *Ava's Demon, Book 1: Reborn* by Michelle Fus. Image, 2023.
- *Hollow* by Shannon Watters and Branden Boyer-White, illustrated by Berenice Nelle. BOOM! Box, 2022.

