

A TEAR in the OCEAN

COMPANION TO *A CRACK IN THE SEA*

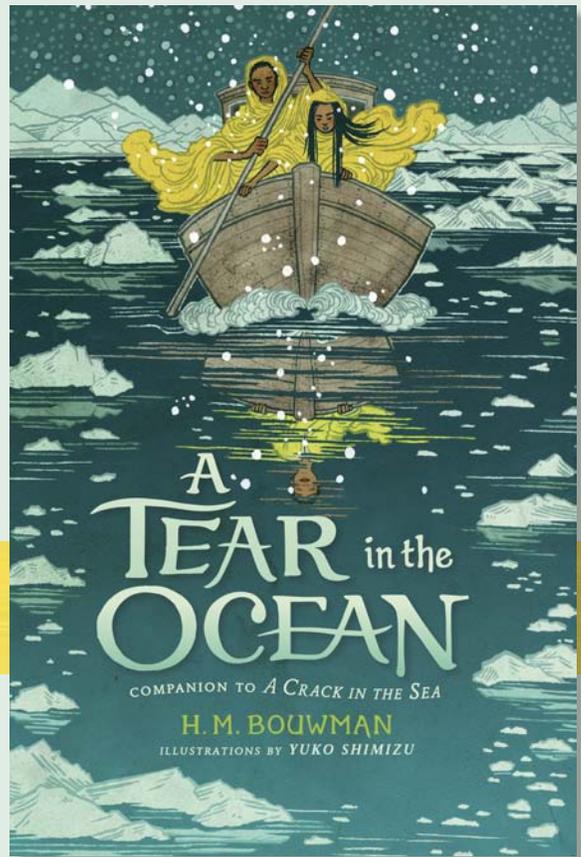
Reader & Educator Guide

Putnam, the future king of Raftworld, wants more than anything to prove himself. When the water in the Second World starts to become salty and his father won't do anything about it, Putnam sees his chance. He steals a boat and sneaks off toward the source of the salty water. He doesn't know he has a stowaway onboard, an island girl named Artie.

Artie isn't trying to save the world, she's just trying to save herself. On the run from an abusive stepfather, Artie just wants a place to call home. Putnam isn't the partner she would have chosen, but as the two face uncertainty and danger in their shared adventure, an extraordinary friendship forms.

Meanwhile, more than a hundred years in the past, Rayel is also on the run from Raftworld, escaping an arranged marriage she discovers is really a plot to kill her father. She'd planned to be gone just long enough to foil the plot, but once at sea and sailing ever southward, Rayel discovers she has an astonishing magical power that leads her to a new home and a sadness so deep it infects the world.

Told in alternating perspectives with Putnam and Artie traveling further and further into the uncharted southern sea—and Rayel, the key to the saltwater mystery, sailing the same sea in her own time—Putnam and Artie must put aside their differences and figure out why the sea is salty before it's too late.



By H. M. Bouwman

Illustrated by Yuko Shimizu

Published by G.P. Putnam's Sons

ISBN-13: 9780399545221

Age Range: 10 - 13 Years

"Bouwman offers stories of loss, hope, perseverance, and the repercussions of severed platonic and familial bonds...Bouwman masterfully infuses old fairy tales and legends into her alternate-universe adventure, meticulously weaving times and storylines into a riveting plot. All three protagonists have brown skin. Shimizu's energetic black-and-white illustrations add visual drama. A novel that will have readers reflecting on their own experiences of grief, longing, regret, survival, and overcoming."

—Kirkus Reviews

"An engaging and original coming-of-age story with an unpredictable and adventurous plot, sure to captivate middle-grade and middle-school fantasy buffs." —Horn Book

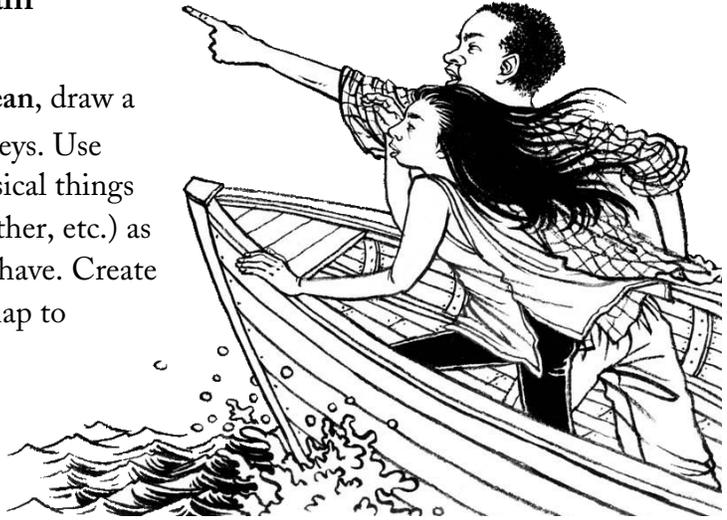
A TEAR in the OCEAN

CLASSROOM EXTENSIONS: MAPPING THE JOURNEY

Create a Meaning Map for the Main Characters

While you are reading *A Tear in the Ocean*, draw a map of Putnam, Artie, and Rayel's journeys. Use drawings and symbols to show both physical things that they pass or notice (islands, the weather, etc.) as well as experiences and realizations they have. Create a key at the bottom of each character's map to explain what each symbol represents.

Then, compare the three journeys. How are they similar? How are they different? How are they interconnected?



CLASSROOM EXTENSIONS: JOURNEYING INTO FAIRY TALES

Building Background Knowledge: Teaching Fairy Tales and the Hero's Journey

You can use *A Tear in the Ocean* to discuss fairy tale structure or Joseph Campbell's hero's journey. Knowing these structures (the hero's journey; the parts of a fairy tale) can help students analyze literature and build their own stories.

Vladimir Propp studied folktales and fairy tales in his native Russia, publishing his groundbreaking study *Morphology of the Folk Tale* in 1928. He wanted to find a structure that underlies all folk tales and fairy tales—an idea almost worthy of a fantasy novel itself. Propp collected hundreds of stories, broke them down into their pieces, and compared pieces, finally concluding that there are thirty-one different actions (he called them “functions”) that happen in folk tales. These actions don't all happen in all folk tales, but when they happen, he explained, they always happen in the same order. For example, the protagonist might be sent on a journey of some kind, and there might be an interdiction, something the protagonist is told not to do (“don't wander from the path” on the way to Grandma's house, in *Little Red Riding Hood*; “don't open this particular door” after moving into her mysterious husband's house, in *Bluebeard*) and a violation of the interdiction—the protagonist disobeys—early in the story, setting other events in motion. If you can recognize these fairy tale functions, as Propp calls them, you can predict what might happen next as you read—and you can think about structure as you write stories as well.

A TEAR in the OCEAN

Explore More:

Article: “Vladimir Propp’s 31 Narratemes: Another approach to story structure” by Scott Myers for Go Into the Story

<https://gointothestory.blcklst.com/vladimir-propps-31-narratemes-another-approach-to-story-structure-da756027ed13>

Video: “Vladimir Propp, the structure of fairy tales,” lecture from Leiden University

<https://youtu.be/V5RyV-s0yhU>

Joseph Campbell, an American scholar of literature and especially of mythology, published **The Hero with a Thousand Faces** in 1949. He too was searching for a structure underlying all stories. (Do you see a thread here? It’s like they were drinking the same water—but Campbell hadn’t read Propp, because Propp wasn’t translated into English until the late 1950s.) After studying many (mostly but not exclusively Western) fairy tales and myths, Campbell concluded that the stories share the same underlying structure, which he called “the hero’s journey.”

Explore More:

Video: “The Hero’s Journey according to Joseph Campbell” by Matthew Winkler and Kirill Yeretsky: <https://youtu.be/d1Zxt28ff-E>

Lesson Plan: The Hero’s Journey from the Creative Educator

<https://creativeeducator.tech4learning.com/2013/lessons/Heros-Journey>

If you can understand The Hero’s Journey, you can understand the structure of many stories—especially, but not only, fantasy stories. Author H.M. Bouwman has said that Propp and Campbell—though she often teaches them in college literature courses—have not been helpful to her as she drafts novels. She sets them aside when she drafts and does not actively try to link her book up to the bigger structures these authors propose—it feels too constricting to her while drafting. Other authors find it really helpful to have a structure to follow, closely or not-so-closely, as they draft. And given that Bouwman doesn’t actively follow the hero’s journey or Propp’s functions, can you find them in her story?

Classroom Extensions: Applying the Hero’s Journey

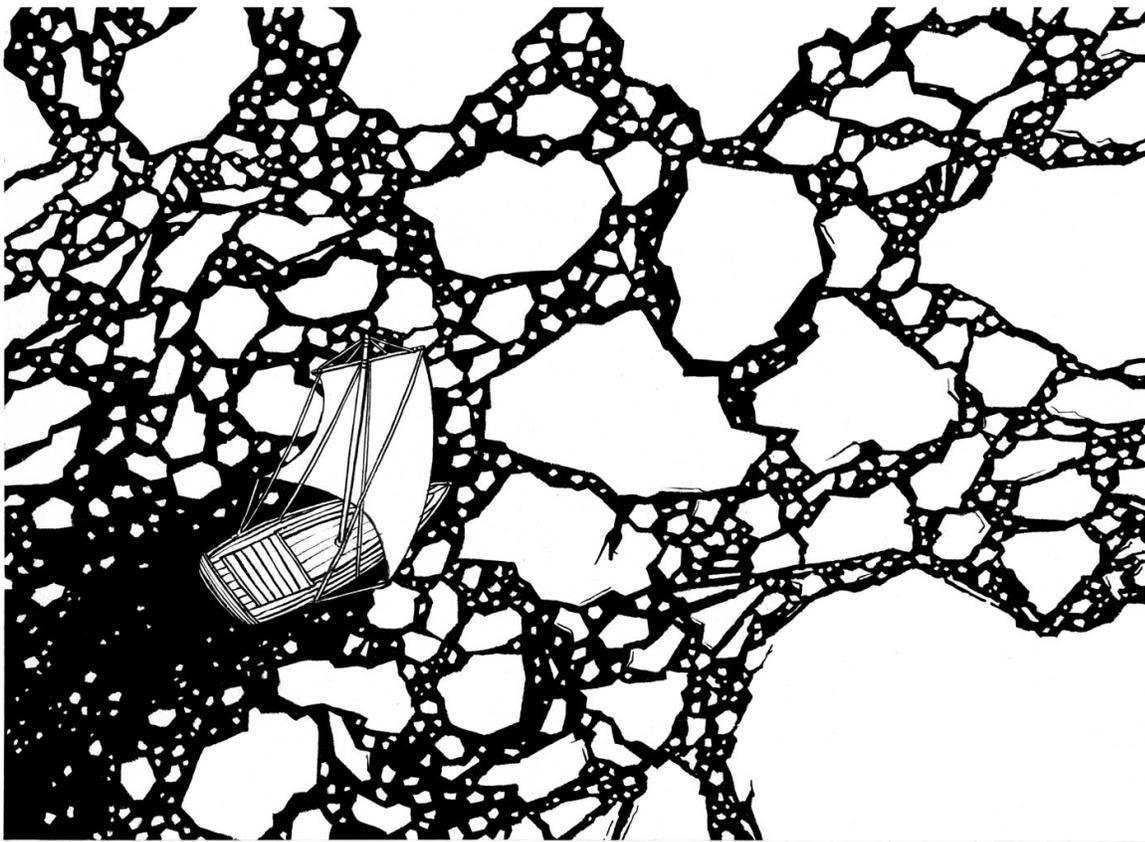
Ask your students to apply the hero’s journey to one of the Star Wars films (it works especially well with the original three films from the ’70s and ’80s) or to the Harry Potter story. How does the Hero’s Journey help them to understand these stories? What interesting differences are there between stories that share the same underlying structure? With fairy tale functions in mind, you might ask students to write their own original fairy tale. Which functions do they want to use in

A TEAR in the OCEAN

their stories, and why? With the hero's journey in mind, you might ask students to outline their own fantasy story. How closely do they want to follow the hero's journey? Do they find it helpful to have a structure to follow, or do they find it stifles their creative choices?

Classroom Extensions: Metaphor of Fairy Tale

Looking for an intermediate text to teach the fairy tale? Try the picture book *Lon Po Po* by Ed Young. In analyzing the story, students uncover the fairy tale's theme of child abduction. Would a picture book about a man who abducted children and ate them normally be taught in schools or sold to families of young children? Never. But how does turning that story into a fairy tale make



it work for young readers? How, in other words, does the metaphor of the wolf--and metaphors in fairy tales in general--help us approach difficult subjects?

Classroom Extensions: The Novel's Fairy Tale References

A Tear in the Ocean is built on some well-known fairy tales. See if you can find references to Cinderella, Hansel and Gretel, Anansi, Goldilocks, Donkeyskin, and the legends of the Encantado.

A TEAR in the OCEAN

Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, an epic poem steeped in myth, influenced author H.M. Bouwman’s writing of *A Tear in the Ocean*. In the poem’s opening lines, Ovid writes, “In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas / corpora; (I intend to speak of forms changed into new entities;).” Where in the book are “forms changed into new entities”? Why do these characters metamorphose?

Writing Prompt: The Fairy Tale of Your Life

.....
“You might find that there’s an old story you think about often—one that seems to describe you in some way, or that gets at something important in your life. Perhaps you, like Hansel and Gretel, are lost in some woods. Maybe there is a Jumbie coming after you—or an angry Djinni, or a hungry Minotaur. Or are you Persephone, kidnapped to an unwelcome place and waiting to return to your true home? Maybe you’re Cassandra, saying important things that no one listens to. Or Brer Rabbit, who lives by his wits and loves the lowly briar patch. Thinking of the fairy tale that connects to your life—or more than one fairy tale that connects to your life!—lets you see yourself as part of a bigger picture. You are not alone, no matter what dragons you face. Someone has fought those monsters before you, and you can look to them for guidance. Someone will fight those monsters after you, and you can help them.”

—H.M. Bouwman, Author
.....

Can you retell a story from your life or something you have observed using elements of fairy or folk tales?

What monsters have you faced, and how have the heroes and heroines of folk or fairy tales fought them? Write about defeating your monster.

CLASSROOM EXTENSIONS: CLIMATE CHANGE

.....
“Fairy tales provide us with the tools, aesthetic tools, to cope with a rapidly changing world. Because of its utopian potential, it can provide us metaphorically with the distance we need to contemplate our situation and then to act.”

—Jack Zipes, Critic and Historian of Fairy Tales
.....

Making Connections:

Responding to a Changing Ocean

Our ocean is changing as is the ocean in *Raftworld*. In the book, Putnam is frustrated by the unwillingness of adults to do anything about it, and he goes on a quest to find the source of the problem. Embark on your own quest (a research-based one) to figure out why our oceans are getting warmer. What are some of the effects of ocean warming on marine life and on humans?

A TEAR in the OCEAN

Watch or read teen activist Greta Thurberg's speech to the United Nations on December 14, 2018, about their response to climate change:

Video: <https://youtu.be/HzeekxtyFOY>

Text: <https://www.lifegate.com/people/news/greta-thunberg-speech-cop24>

Compare Greta Thurberg's response to Putnam's. What is your response to her speech?

Analyze how the adults in your own life compare to the adults in Putnam's. Are they being more responsive? What would you encourage them to do in order to stop the changing of the oceans? What is something you could do to help slow the change?

CLASSROOM EXTENSIONS: ART PROJECT

Making Yourself a Luck Pendant

What role did the luck pendant play in Artie's story? What was contained in it, and how did it help her?

Create your own version of a luck pendant. What would your objects or images include? What would each symbolize? What would those objects say about your life?

This project's outcome could be a necklace with a pouch holding small objects or anything else that's made up of a collection of meaningful personal symbols, like a mobile, collage, zine, 3-D model, etc.



A TEAR in the OCEAN

THEMATIC WRITING AND DISCUSSION PROMPTS

Tear vs. Tear

The book's title is a homograph. How can you read "tear in the ocean" in two different ways? What does the homograph say about themes and ideas in the novel?

Leaving Home

How does Putnam's decision to leave home compare with Artie's? How does the way that decision was made impact their actions going forward?

What are examples in our world of people who leave home? In which cases are people making that decision in way similar to Putnam? In which cases are people making that decision in way similar to Artie? How does that impact their lives going forward?

The Role of Stories

How do stories impact Putnam? How do they impact Artie? How do they impact Rayel?

How do their stories uphold traditions? How do stories help us grow and evolve?

What stories are central to your culture? What lessons do they impart? How do they uphold traditions? Are there ways that they help people grow and evolve?

What does it take for someone to be willing to tell their own story to someone else? Why is that an important step in a relationship? Why does Rayel say that Artie doesn't "owe" her story to Putnam? How do you decide who to tell your stories to?

The Connection to Water

How can the growing saltiness of the water be seen as a metaphor? What similar scenarios exist in our world? Are there other problems that surround us that people do their best to ignore?

Sailing South

Why do you think both Rayel and Putnam are drawn to sail south? What is the significance of the South in Raftworld?

How does sailing south relate to feeling "special"? Do you think Rayel and Putnam make the right decision by following that instinct? What are the downsides to doing things because they make a person feel special? How are their journeys the same? How are they different?

A TEAR in the OCEAN

The Polar Bears

Putnam, Artie, and Rayel are each followed by a bear. What do the bears represent? Why won't they ever stop following their person?

The characters had a wide range of responses to the bears. Why do you think certain responses didn't work? Why do you think certain responses did?

Chart the interactions with the bears over the course of the book for each character. How are the bear's appearances, attacks, and reduction in size a reflection of each character's trauma and how they deal with that trauma over time?

Scars Both Inside and Out

Putnam's dad and Artie both have scars from being burned. What is the significance of this? Does Putnam have "scars" too? And if so, what is his relationship to them? What do Putnam and Artie have in common?



In Artie's case, her scars are very visible to others. How does that change how others see her? How does that change her relationship with her scars? How does that change her relationship with others?

What happens when scars are emotional rather than physical? What happens when the scars are on the inside instead of the outside? How does that change things?

Can you think of a person in your life who has scars? Are they on the inside or the outside? How do they deal with them? How do you react to them?

ABOUT THE GUIDE

This guide was a collaborative project between author and University of St. Thomas English Professor Heather Bouwman, author and former classroom teacher Ann Braden, and the children's literature engagement folks at Curious City.

A TEAR in the OCEAN

A CRACK IN THE SEA: COMPANION NOVEL & GUIDE

A Tear in the Ocean is a companion to the critically acclaimed *A Crack in the Sea*. There is a Guide for Educators & Readers for this novel as well at CuriousCityDPW.com. Search for “Bouwman” in the upper right corner of the website.

A Crack in the Sea

By H. M. Bouwman

Illustrated by Yuko Shimizu

Published by Penguin Young Readers Group

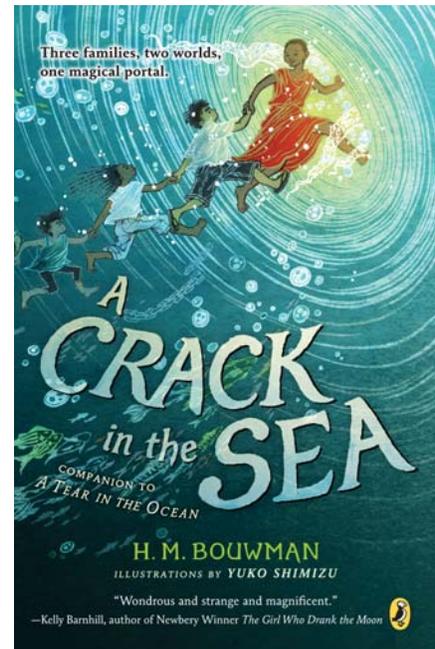
ISBN-13: 9780399545214 Paperback

ISBN-13: 9780399545191 Hardcover

ISBN-13: 9781524755164 Audiobook

Age Range: 10 - 13 Years

- Winter 2016-2017 Kids' Indie Next Pick
- Midwest Connections Pick for January 2017
- Maine Student Book Award 2018-2019 Reading List Pick for Grades 4-6 and 4-8
- Sunshine State Young Readers Award Book 2018-2019 List Pick for Grades 6-8



“Through the captivating interwoven tales of these three sibling pairs—and with assistance from Shimizu’s powerful ink illustrations—Bouwman crafts a moving narrative about family, magic, morality, the power of storytelling, and the cyclical nature of history.” —**Publishers Weekly, starred review**

“This novel touches on sensitive and tragic moments in history and gives them fantastical remediation for a provocative, immersive read.” —**Kirkus Reviews**

Fans of Grace Lin will love this wholly original book that reads like a fairy tale. A moving and thought-provoking choice for library collections.” —**School Library Journal**

“Bouwman weaves together these stories of freedom and escape with a deep sense of respect and emotion, bringing the reader directly into each family’s search for a safety that transcends both time and space.” —**Booklist**