



OTTILIE COLTER AND THE NARROWWAY HUNT

TEACHERS NOTES

Written by RHIANNON WILLIAMS
Published by Hardie Grant Egmont in July 2018

SYNOPSIS

A young girl must pretend to be a boy to rescue her brother from a secret order of monster hunters.

Ottolie Colter and her brother, Gully, have always fended for themselves. So when Gully goes missing one night, Ottolie sets out to find him – and soon makes a horrible discovery. Gully has been forcibly recruited by the Narrowway Hunt, a secretive male-only organisation that hunts savage, blight-spreading monsters called 'dredretches'.

Disguising herself as a boy, Ottolie infiltrates the Hunt – but quickly realises that taking her brother home won't be easy. Trapped in the heart of the dredretch-infested Narrowway, it's impossibly dangerous for them to leave. But as she trains to become a Huntsman alongside her brother, hoping for a chance to escape, how long can she keep her true identity a secret?

Ottolie Colter and the Narrowway Hunt deftly explores social constructs and perceptions of gender and class, or societal 'positioning'. It also explores perceptions of race, appearance and the expected behaviours associated with them in a non-confronting but thought-provoking way.



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Originally from Taradale, Victoria, **Rhiannon Williams** now lives and writes in Sydney, sharing an apartment with two friends and the ghost of a cat. She studied English and history at the University of Sydney, and completed a Bachelor of Creative Arts Honours at Flinders University. Rhiannon has a background in theatre and hopes to tell stories until the end of her days.

THEMES

This novel can be used as a vehicle to explore many themes and topics with students in years 4–8, including gender constructs, refugees, racism, family relationships, parental alcoholism and neglect, loyalty, courage and belief in oneself.

WRITING STYLE

Rhiannon Williams uses fantasy as a vehicle to explore some confronting and complex themes in a non-threatening and entertaining way. Students are able to consider and contemplate issues in the novel that might reflect and remind them of issues they observe in daily media and social media conversations.

STUDY NOTES AND ACTIVITIES

BEFORE READING

- Discuss the cover illustration with your students. Ask them to make predictions about the story based on the cover illustration. What do they think the story might be about? What does the title tell them about the story?
- Read the blurb. Do your students have any questions about the story after reading the blurb?
- How have student predictions changed or been influenced by the blurb?
- Ask students to make notes of their predictions to refer to later.





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QUOTES FOR CLASS DISCUSSION AND ESSAY PROMPTS

- *The Hollows were a last resort, shelter for those without means to live elsewhere.* (Page 10) Reflect on an issue in the media that might feel similar to this quote.
- *It had been over a century since the war, but whenever there was trouble Laklanders were still the first to be blamed. These days, even people with distinctly fair hair, similar to the rare, almost bluish Lakland hue, were eyed with distrust.* (Page 50) Can you relate this quote to a past or current real world situation where a group of people were perceived to behave in a certain way based on their appearance?
- *'People of all kinds can go missing,' said Mr Parch. 'It's the way of the world, but it doesn't happen very often and it's nothing for you to worry about.'* (Page 17) How does this quote make you feel? Do you feel it is something not to worry about? Why? Why not?
- *Why did girls always have long hair anyway? She had never thought to ask.* (Page 48) Do you feel this statement is true to your own experience? Do girls always have long hair? Do you have long hair? Why might the length of someone's hair be important to the way in which they are perceived?
- *Gully always knew the way. Gully always came to get her. It was her turn.* (Page 55) Think about what Ottilie might have been feeling in relation to this statement. What do you feel this statement conveys about her feelings/relationship with Gully?
- *Despite the fact that he spoke in half a whisper, Ottilie could hear that his accent was clipped. He must have come from money.* (Page 66) Ask students to speculate on why people might sound or behave differently depending on whether they have come from 'money'.
- *'What do they need food in the morning for? They've been sleeping all night.'* (Page 83) The concept of breakfast is completely foreign to Ottilie and Gully. They deem it a 'rich person thing'. Ask students to discuss the concept of privilege. Do they perceive having access to three meals a day and snacks in between as a privilege, or as something to take for granted? Have students considered or thought about the fact that not all people in the world have access to enough or more than enough food?



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OVERCOMING STEREOTYPES

- Give your students various examples of different stereotypes and then ask them to share stereotypes they see evident in their daily environments.
- Discuss the stereotypes that can surround older people, teenagers, other races, and religions.
- Discuss the ramifications of people choosing to act on stereotypical behaviour. Ask the following questions:
 - How are stereotypes developed and perpetuated in society?
 - How do these often unfair judgements, or stereotypes, impact lives?
 - How can acting on stereotypes be avoided?
 - What attitudes and beliefs support stereotypes?

FURTHER QUESTIONING/DISCUSSION

- Ask students to think about bravery. What do they consider to be brave behaviour? Do they have a story relating to their own bravery or the bravery of others? Ask them to write about the story, or to make a podcast recording recounting the story. This could also work as an oral presentation to the class supported by a Prezi (<https://prezi.com>) or a PowerPoint presentation.
- Ask students: which of the characters would they want for a friend? Why? What would they do or talk about together?
- Ask students to keep a diary as if they were a character in the story. Write down events that happened during the story and reflect on how they affected the character and why.
- Ask students to write a short story featuring a chosen character from Ottilie Colter that includes themselves as a character. How would they work together? Would they be friends or enemies? What adventures would they have?
- Superstition and old wives' tales play a role in Ottilie Colter. Ask students to list or share superstitions or old wives' tales they know of. Ask students to speculate on why and how people have used or followed superstition through the ages.



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- Ask students if they identified aspects of the narrative that reminded them of other stories they might know. For example, can they identify another story in which a ring is used to control people and their actions? Can they think of another novel in recent times that featured a badge with a bird as a symbol? (The Lord of The Rings, Mockingjay)
- Ask students to list other stories they might know where a female character has disguised herself as a male character. (Mulan)
- Ask students to make a book trailer for Ottilie Colter and the Narrowway Hunt. Reference for teachers: <https://insideadog.com.au/teachers/book-trailers>
- Ask students to write a brief prediction or even a synopsis of where they feel the next book in this series might begin. Which characters might be important to the plot line? How do they predict the series might end?

LETTER FROM OTTILIE:

- Write a letter from Ottilie to her mother. Imagining you are Ottilie and you are in her situation, take this opportunity to express your thoughts and feelings.

SIX-WORD STORY:

- Using only six words, sum up Ottilie Colter and the Narrowway Hunt and its storyline. You may choose to do this from the point of view of one of the characters.

CHARACTER VOKI

- After reading chapters 1–4, choose two characters from the book. You will be creating talking avatars using Voki.com.
- Go to Voki.com and log in or create a Voki account. (Note: If you are not logged in, you will not be able to embed your Voki in your blog/keynote.)
- Create a Voki for the your two chosen characters. Due to the word count limitations in each Voki, you



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may need to do a few Vokis for your characters to complete the speech requirements.

- You're writing the speech in first person as if each character is talking about himself/herself. Include the following details in your speech:
 - Three text details that describe their behaviors
 - How they feel about an event in the novel
 - What they might be thinking about one another/their situation
 - Their appearance – both when they first appear in the novel, and at another point in the novel – and what that says about them
 - Anything else you think is worth exploring

SUGGESTED TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITY: DIGITAL SCRAPBOOK/WRITER'S NOTEBOOK

Ask students to create a digital scrapbook or writer's notebook. This will lead students to reflect on and respond to Ottolie Colter and the Narrowway Hunt.

Students view a sample electronic scrapbook and use the project rubric to evaluate it, becoming familiar with the project requirements in the process. They use an online tool to evaluate resources on a topic related to a piece of literature and post their evaluations for class reference.

Students then use online resources to capture 'scraps' of information about their assigned topic and create a scrapbook using Keynote/PowerPoint, Prezi, iMovie/Windows Movie Maker or Animoto, making sure to cite all their sources.

They share their online scrapbook with the class, defending their choice of scrapbook entries: why is the entry important to the understanding of the topic?

Source URL – Outline/further resources: <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/literaryscrapbooks-online-electronic-787.html?tab=4#tabs>



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Choose one of the following applications to create your digital scrapbook; Pages, Keynote or Word.

- Name your digital scrapbook Ottolie Colter and the Narrowway Hunt-Novel Study
- Your name/term/start date
- Save this to your desktop. You will be working on this throughout the term as you read.
- As you follow the directions that will be given to you over the duration of the term, remember to cut and paste all URLs of all sites you use to research and create pieces (including links to images/music/film) into your digital scrapbook.
- Before reading: In your digital scrapbook, write a few paragraphs predicting what you think the novel is about, based solely on your reading of the synopsis.
- Alternatively, the digital scrapbook can be done as a writer's notebook (using an exercise book to record their reflections and responses to the text).
- Suggested entry for a Digital Scrapbook/Writer's Notebook
- Many of the activities within these teacher's notes could be included in a digital scrapbook or writer's notebook. The following activity can be repeated several times as an exercise in writing and creative responses to the novel.

Thinking about the characters in Ottolie Colter and the Narrowway Hunt:

- Go to <http://oneword.com/>
- After reading the instructions, click 'go'
- You will have ONE minute. Using the word that appears at the top of the screen, choose to do one of the following:
 - Write a piece of dialogue between two characters using the word provided, or
 - Write as much as you can about a character using the word provided.
 - Do NOT submit your writing. Instead, highlight what you have written so you can copy and paste it into your digital scrapbook. If you are using a writer's notebook, print out a screenshot of the page and paste it in. Don't forget to copy in the URL of the site and the date you did this work.



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ASSESSMENT

'For' assessment

Digital scrapbook/writer's notebook.

'As' assessment

Reading and Writing conferring, digital scrapbook/writer's notebook development (rubric assessment – self, peer, teacher), on-demand testing.

'Of' assessment

Folio of pieces, presented as digital scrapbook/writer's notebook. Practice analytical text response essays. Various written text responses that explore theme, character development etc. Students will have evidence of planning (supported via digital scrapbook/writer's notebook. This will include evidence of note taking/summarizing to support their point of view etc) within the portfolio.