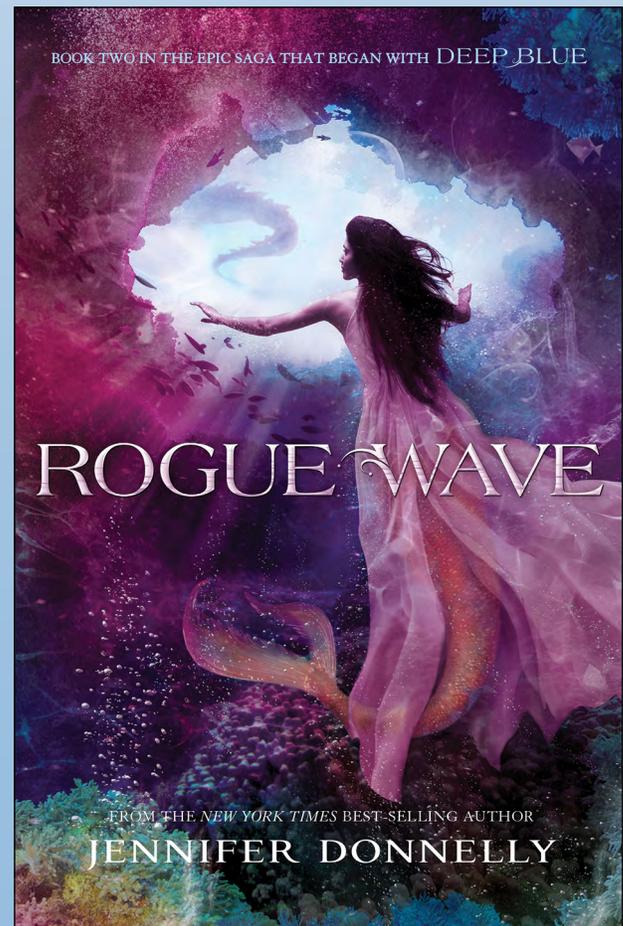
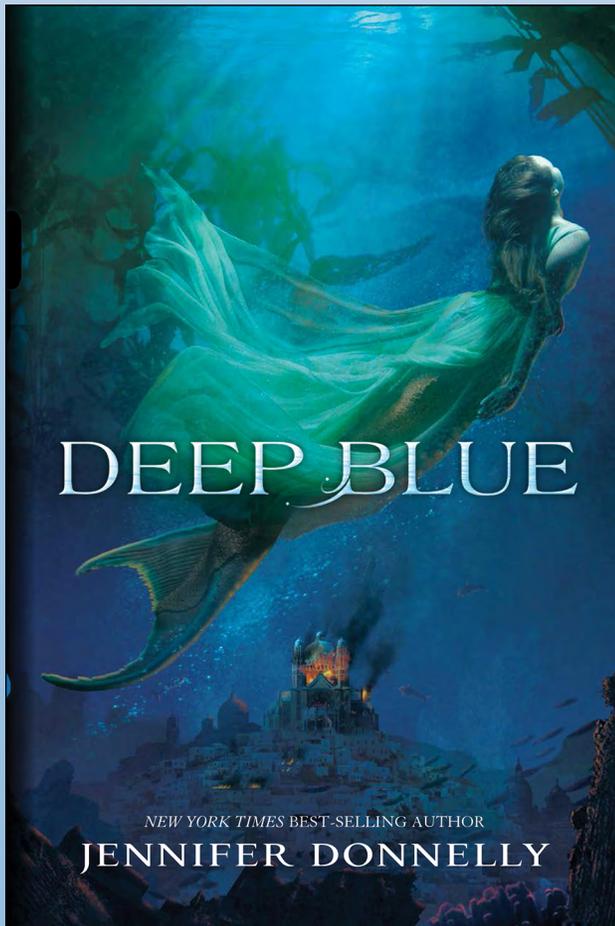


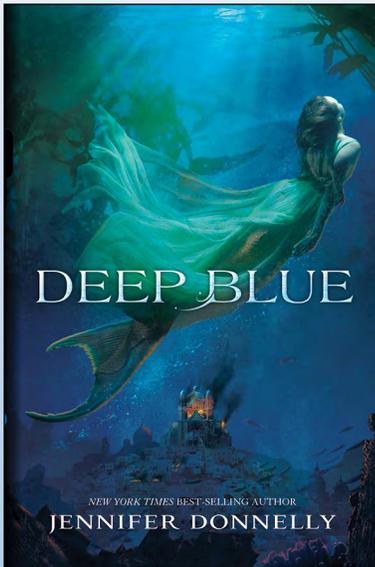
WATERFIRE SAGA



This guide is aligned with the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards (CCR) for Literature, Writing, Language, Speaking and Listening. The broad CCR standards are the foundation for the grade level-specific Common Core State Standards.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Disney • HYPERION BOOKS



WATERFIRE SAGA BOOK ONE

DEEP BLUE

ABOUT THE BOOK

Deep in the ocean, in a world not so different from our own, live the merpeople. Their communities are spread throughout the oceans, seas, and freshwaters all over the globe.

When Serafina, a mermaid of the Mediterranean Sea, awakens on the morning of her betrothal, her biggest worry should be winning the love of handsome Prince Mahdi. And yet Sera finds herself haunted by strange dreams that foretell the return of an ancient evil. Her dark premonitions are confirmed when an assassin's arrow poisons Sera's mother. Now Serafina

must embark on a quest to find the assassin's master and prevent a war between the mer nations. Led only by her shadowy dreams, Sera searches for five other mermaid heroines who are scattered across the six seas. Together, they will form an unbreakable bond of sisterhood and uncover a conspiracy that threatens their world's very existence.

pre-reading

Read the prologue aloud to the reading group; then ask students to discuss.

- 1 What connections do you make to the text?
- 2 Does it remind you of any other type of literature?
- 3 What imagery stands out?
- 4 Predict what you think the rest of the novel will be like based on this section.
- 5 Which characters do you think will be the most important to the story?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What is happening on Miromara's borders? Explain what Serafina's Dokimí will provide for her and the country. Why is it so important? What role does her mother have?
- 2 Describe two things Serafina sees in the looking glass that surprise her.
- 3 As Serafina prepares for her Dokimí what does she learn about Crown Prince Mahdi? Why does this matter to her? Can you imagine agreeing (as Serafina must) to "a marriage as a matter of state, not a matter of the heart"?

- 4 Who is Thalassa? How does she help Serafina with her last preparation before the ceremony (*and* put Lucia in her place)? What happens during this critical practice?
- 5 What does Thalassa teach Serafina about living a public life? Why? What does Serafina trust her with? How did Sera fall for Mahdi?
- 6 Describe Neela. Why is she important to Serafina? What does she reveal about Mahdi, after much prodding and avoidance?
- 7 What do they discover after their escape out the window? Does Mahdi confirm the rumors about him or dispel them? Is Sera able to act indifferent, as she wants to seem?
- 8 When Serafina goes to her mother to break off the betrothal, what does she discover about the match's necessity? Would you be willing to put aside your own happiness for your country?
- 9 Describe the first part of the Dokimí ceremony. What is the test? What creature can declare a principessa "a true daughter of the blood," and how?
- 10 Did all of Sera's preparation for the ceremony pay off? Who was most proud? In the end, how is the ceremony cut short?
- 11 Describe the attack. Does Sera's mother show great courage, or do you think she's foolish? What happens to Sera's father?
- 12 What advice does Isabella give her daughter? What's happened to the palace? Who does Sera believe is to blame? What evidence is there for this theory?
- 13 What magic is used for Sera and Neela's escape? Who helps them? How do they help themselves? On the journey to Tsarno, what do they learn about those hunting them?
- 14 Who is Baco Goga? What does he do to the girls? How does he hope to profit? Who betrayed them?
- 15 What has Traho done to the canta magus, Thalassa? What information does he want? What does Sera provide him instead? How does she get the idea?
- 16 How does Neela know about Sera's dream? How are their chants different, slightly? What do you think that means?
- 17 How is Neela able to free herself from the bands? Who appears to aid them in their escape? Do you think they should trust them or not? Why?
- 18 How does Thalassa save Sera and the mermen who are helping them escape? What surprising information does she learn about this band of outlaws she once feared?

- 19 Describe the Lagoon. Who typically inhabits this city near Venice and the terragogs? Where are they taken? What important information do they learn from the leader of the Praedatori about both their purpose and the origins of the attack?
- 20 What were the logistics of the attack and who was responsible? What reason would he have to attack Miromara? Why does Sera trust the terragogg Duca Armando?
- 21 Who is Blu? How does he help settle Sera down so she can sleep? Is she falling for him? Is Blu falling for her? What clues make you think yes or no?
- 22 Describe the double attack at Duca Armando's home. How do Neela and Sera manage to escape once more?
- 23 Analyze the elements of the world of Rorrim Drol. What makes this episode into the world of the mirror so nightmarish? Which elements did you find most disturbing? What characters inhabit this world? How are things controlled within this world? Is this a metaphor for our own lives?
- 24 Compare Ling with Neela and Sera. What characteristics make her unique? What qualities does she add to the trio?
- 25 On her journey, how is Sera treated by Miromaran mermen? What do they offer her? Why does she have difficulty accepting that she is their leader?
- 26 What is shoaling? If it is so dangerous for the mermaids and mermen, then why do they do it? What does it offer? What happens when Sera goes shoaling?
- 27 Is Mfeme the most frightening antagonist presented so far? What makes a worthy antagonist? Explain what happened to Ling. How did the girls slow down his pursuit of them? What else did they discover about him in this episode?
- 28 Summarize the aid that Lena offers the girls. What creatures does she keep as pets? How do Ling's talents serve Lena? How does Neela use her talents to protect the girls as they prepare to journey onward?
- 29 When they finally reach the mouth of the river, what greets them? What other creatures block or hinder their journey up the river? Which one did you find most frightening?
- 30 Characterize the other mermaids they meet along the river journey. What are the most important aspects of their personalities and traits? Why do you think they keep adding to their number?
- 31 Describe the entrance to and passage through the witch's cave. Who else do they discover has arrived? Why do Sera and Astrid end up in a confrontation that verges on the edge of violence? What do they blame each other for?
- 32 Describe the attack from Abbadon and the six girls' first work together. What exactly does Vrăja want them to do? Where would they have to go to accomplish this task? Who doubts their ability to make a difference?

- 33 What do they learn is the true story of Atlantis according to the bloodsong? What do the six teenage merls have to do with it?
- 34 What do the girls learn about each of their ancestors and their powers? Which power would you most like to wield? Why?
- 35 When the girls are left alone, what makes them laugh together? What questions need to be answered for them to defeat Abbadon? What is Serafina's idea about where the talismans could be hidden?
- 36 What does Astrid reveal about the attacks? Do you believe her? Why would their enemies be planting false evidence? What purpose would that serve?
- 37 What does Vräja teach Sera about leadership? How should she inspire the others? Who must she first believe in? Do you think that is the most difficult task or not?
- 38 How do the girls practice and grow their powers together? Who has arrived? How did he find them once more?
- 39 What is Serafina's idea to get Abbadon to hear the girls' resolve to fight for their people? What do they do to get its attention? Does it work?
- 40 What promise do the girls make to one another? Why? How do they escape in the end?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

- *CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.*
- *CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.*
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- *CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5: Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.*

CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

- *CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).*

SPEAKING & LISTENING, COMPREHENSION AND COLLABORATION

- *CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.*
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CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

READING, WRITING, AND RESEARCHING

VOCABULARY

It's important to practice the skill of understanding new vocabulary words in the context in which they appear. This builds your vocabulary rather effortlessly, and it also helps with comprehension when facing more difficult text. Insert the words below in the context where they make sense:

decorum **inscrutable** **scimitar** **decimated** **baroque**
betrothal **proximity** **alliance** **reconcile** **immobilizing**

- 1 “[The Dokimí ceremony] It must go well. We desperately need this _____ with Mitali. Now more than ever.” (Ch. 1)
 - 2 “Only the [ceremony] where I take my _____ vows and swear to give the realm a daughter someday.” (Ch. 1)
 - 3 They’d be bought and sold. Confined in small tanks for the goggs’ amusement. Their numbers would be _____ like the tunas’ and the cods’. (Ch. 1)
 - 4 A new palace had been built high on a seamount—a _____ construction of coral, quartz, and mother-of-pearl—for the royal family and its court. (Ch. 2)
 - 5 Like many rules of the adult world, a lot of Merrow’s _____ decrees made no sense to her. They still had to be followed, though, whether she liked it or not. (Ch. 3)
 - 6 A matching turban with a narwhal’s tusk protruding from it graced his head. A _____, its gold hilt encrusted with jewels, hung from his belt. (Ch. 10)
 - 7 It was hard to _____ the Miromarans, a people so cultured and refined, with such a gruesome ritual. (Ch. 10)
 - 8 Magic depended on so many things—the depth of one’s gift, experience, dedication, the position of the moon, the rhythm of the tides, the _____ of whales. (Ch. 12)
 - 9 Her people were cheering her, even more loudly than they had after the blooding. They’d abandoned all _____ and were tossing up their hats and helmets. (Ch. 12)
 - 10 She flailed and tried to break away, but one of the guards grabbed her hair and pulled her head back, _____ her. (Ch. 20)
- *CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.4.A: Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.*

STRUCTURE

Within a novel, authors play with the idea of time, with devices such as flashbacks or pacing. These techniques give readers a glimpse of a character’s motivation, or they’re used to create mystery, tension, or surprise. Fill out the following chart based on your reading of *Deep Blue* and use it as a starting point to discuss these writing techniques. (There is no one right answer here; it is an exploration of your opinion).

Scene	Motivation	Mystery	Tension	Surprise
The prologue, where the river witches sing				
When Serafina reveals her true feelings for Mahdi to Thalassa				
During the Dokimí ceremony, when they are attacked				
When Neela and Sera get stuck in the mirror world with Rorrim Drol				
When they learn the true nature of the Praedatori outlaws				
When Astrid and Sera come face to face for the first time since the attack				

Which of these scenes do you think was most effective in its purpose? Which element of pacing is most important to you: motivation (character), mystery, tension, or surprise? Why?

- *CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5: Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.*

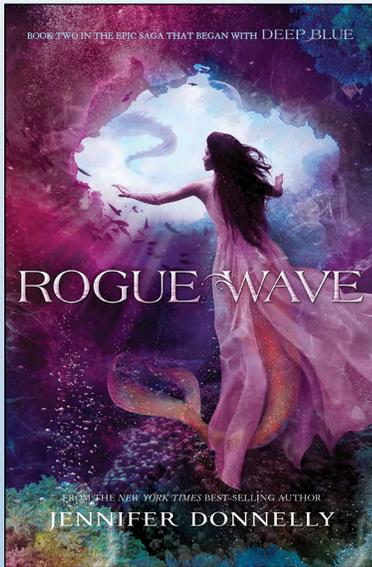
summary & theme

The ability to summarize text is an important skill to master in high school reading—and beyond. Take the opportunity to learn this skill with a book that is interesting and fast-paced like *Deep Blue*! After reading each chapter, write a sticky note that summarizes the most important plot developments in a single sentence (perhaps two if it's a long chapter). Be sure to mark the chapter number on the sticky note in the upper left-hand corner. Then sort the sticky notes into the chart:

The protagonist discovers a conflict she did not know about before	The protagonist (or her goal) is in danger of being destroyed by enemies	The protagonist meets allies who help her along the way	The protagonist makes a decision or shows a marked change

THEME DISCUSSION

- 1 What was the most important lesson that Serafina learned?
 - 2 How did she change the most over the course of the novel?
 - 3 What did she learn about herself and her society?
 - 4 How does she want to be perceived?
 - 5 What can you learn from Serafina's actions and choices that would have merit in our world?
 - 6 What do you think the author is trying to say about what it means to be a young woman in that world or this one?
- *CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.*



WATERFIRE SAGA BOOK TWO

ROGUE WAVE

ABOUT THE BOOK

Serafina, Neela, Ling, Ava, Becca, and Astrid, six mermaids from realms scattered throughout the seas and freshwaters, were summoned by the leader of the river witches to learn an incredible truth: They are direct descendants of the Six Who Ruled—powerful mages who once governed the lost empire of Atlantis. The ancient evil that destroyed Atlantis is stirring again, and only the mermaids can defeat it. To do so, they need to find magical talismans that belonged to the Six.

Serafina believes her talisman was buried with an old shipwreck. While researching its location, she is almost discovered by a death rider patrol led by someone familiar. . . . The pain of seeing him turned traitor is devastating. Neela travels to Matali to warn her parents of the grave threat facing their world. But they find her story outlandish: a sign that she needs to be confined to her chamber for rest and recovery. She escapes and travels to Kandina, where her talisman is in the possession of fearsome razormouth dragons. As they hunt for their talismans, both Serafina and Neela find reserves of courage and cunning they didn't know they possessed. They face down danger and death, only to endure a game-changing betrayal, as shocking as a rogue wave.

pre-reading

If it has been a while since you read *Deep Blue*, then fill out the character chart below and use it to refresh your memory and as a handy bookmark. The first character is complete as an example.

Character	Key Details	Character	Key Details
Serafina	Principessa of Miromara, promised to Mahdi, crown prince of Matali	Ava	
Neela		Mahdi	
Ling		Yaz	
Astrid		Vallerio	
Becca		Traho	

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 In the prologue, where did Sera return? Why did she linger in this place? What danger is she unaware of?
- 2 Why does Sera tell Rorrim Drol all her deepest fears? Which would you be most frightened of? How does he gain power over those who enter his realm?
- 3 Where does Sera first go through the mirror? What magic does she seem to have acquired? How?
- 4 Describe the temple and the goddess, Morsa, that it was named after. What was the history of the goddess? What is the most frightening thing about her?
- 5 Who followed Sera to Atlantis? Why? What's her idea with the vitrina? How could they possibly help when they're so vain?
- 6 List the important facts that Sera learns from Thalia. How was Sera able to keep her talking? Do you know anyone who is like a vitrina?
- 7 What is Orfeo's story? How did he become so evil? What evil is he responsible for?
- 8 Describe how Ling and Sera managed to escape the dreaded Opafago and the man with no eyes.
- 9 Where is Ling headed after Atlantis? Why? Where will Sera go? What did she admit about Blu? Is that why she must return to Cerulea?
- 10 When Neela visits the palace, how is she welcomed? How has Neela changed while the expectations for her have remained (irritatingly) the same? Have you ever felt a similar way?
- 11 What do Neela's parents believe about her? What evidence do they use to support this opinion? Can you blame them?
- 12 How does this lead to Neela's confinement in her own room? Have you ever felt like a prisoner of your parents' expectations? Is there any escape?
- 13 What does Serafina learn about the duca and the Lagoon from Filomena? What did the duca leave for Sera? Why?
- 14 List the series of events that begin with Sera being mistaken for a siren and end with a Latin phrase. What does this episode reveal about Sera's character?
- 15 Describe the safe house in the royal city. How does Sera make herself useful to the others there? What surprise comes to the door, and how does she react to it? Why?
- 16 What does Sera discover about Mahdi? What did she first think he was? Why? How did Mahdi try to get involved with the disappearances? How was he brought around to the cause?

- 17 List the information that Sera learns from Mahdi while they're at the safe house, evaluate it, and reorder it from most important to least important. What do you think she should do first? What would you do?
- 18 How does Sera show that she is a great leader during the escape from the safe house?
- 19 Why do Sera and Mahdi return to the safe house when Traho's troops have just busted inside? What new power does Sera show during their escape. What was she taught about what was just in war from her uncle Vallerio? Did she act in accordance with her instruction? Why?
- 20 At Neela's house they want her to go, "back to smiling until her face hurt. . . . Back to never doing anything important, or saying anything honest. Back to the eternal beauty contest." How does she feel about this? How would you?
- 21 How is Sera changing that's not entirely for the better? While looking for food, what does she discover?
- 22 Who is Coco? How does she inform Sera that she may have the key to unlocking the truth about Merrow's Progress and the clues about the talismans?
- 23 What dangers lurk when Sera and Coco retrieve the conchs needed from the stacks? How do they get help?
- 24 How is the information embedded in seemingly inconsequential material? What can that teach us about research even today?
- 25 Where is the first talisman? Why is Sera so certain of its location? What will she do?
- 26 How is Sera finally able to reach Neela through all the protection spells? How does she inspire Neela to act and escape?
- 27 List the steps Neela takes to escape her room. What help did she get? What was the cleverest part of this plan? What does Neela discover in her quest to outsmart the guards?
- 28 What is Mfeme doing with the merfolk who have been disappearing? What cruelties do they face? Why?
- 29 Who is Kora? How does Neela convince her that the information she holds is true? What do they plan to do with this information? Compare and contrast Neela and Kora.
- 30 Examine Kora's plan to free her people from the living prison where they're trapped. What's the most dangerous part of the plan? What will Neela's role be? Why?
- 31 What does Sera discover when she's being chased by sharks? Why is it a problem to encounter a ghost who died on a shipwreck?
- 32 Summarize Maria Theresa's story. What agreement does Sera make to get the talisman? Why is this such a dangerous mission?

- 33 Which part of this epic battle was your favorite? Why?
- 34 Who did Neela save from becoming a baby dragon's food? How? Why would she be considered desirable if she stayed in Nzuri Bonde, especially in a backless gown?
- 35 How did whales become part of the rescue mission? Why were they willing to get involved?
- 36 What does Neela discover upon her return home to the palace? Who captures her? What does she learn from this person?
- 37 Where does Sera take the infanta? Why? How does she nearly die in this quest? How is she revived?
- 38 Who is the true mastermind of the evil behind the attacks? What is her plan? How does it include her daughter, Lucia, and Mahdi?
- 39 Once Sera tells Mahdi everything that's happened to her, what does he ask for? Do you think this is a good idea under the circumstances or not? Why?
- 40 Describe the ceremony that binds Mahdi and Sera together. Where does it take place? Why do you think this is so important to them? What is Mahdi concerned is correct after the ceremony? Why must he leave so soon? How could Mahdi finding the infanta's fake jewel help the cause?
- 41 What do Coco and Sera learn on their way to Cerulea? Why does it make Sera hopeful?
- 42 What does Neela learn from Yaz about Vallerio? Where will all the roads lead? Why?
- 43 How do the goblins act as they march into Cerulea? Why is Sera being so cautious? What has Vallerio done to be welcomed back to the royal city? Who will now rule?
- 44 Why is Sera so surprised when Lucia faces Alítheia? What did she expect to happen? Why was Lucia able to sing Merrow's songspell so perfectly? What does it make Sera realize?
- 45 What does Mahdi communicate to Sera about the ceremony and her safety? What does he wear that is a symbol of his promise to her?
- 46 What's the plan for the resistance? Why is Sera refusing to go to the rendezvous point? What does she hope to learn?
- 47 Why does Sera feel like she just lost another member of her family? What was his motivation for his betrayal?
- 48 Where does Serafina gain strength again to do what she must? Where do you go for inspiration and strength? What did Sera discover about her parents' fate?

- 49 Where is Ling? What horrible thing does she discover at the end of the novel? What could this mean for Serafina and the others?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

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CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

READING, WRITING, AND RESEARCHING

TEXT EVIDENCE

Good readers know that they need to support their opinions with evidence, even when discussing literature. There are two ways to accomplish this. The first is to cite evidence through summarizing an important scene that shows proof, called a *Text Reference*. The second, more powerful approach is to find a *Key Quote*, pulling a sentence or two directly from the text as proof. The key quote does not need to be part of a dialogue exchange; it may be part of the narration. Use at least three key quotes or text references and cite them in MLA format. Find proof of the following information from the text:

Important Information	Key Quote or Text Reference
Sera learns how to confront her fears.	
Sera's magic is stronger than it once was.	
Using their weakness against them, Sera can gain information surreptitiously.	
Ling sometimes dreams of her old life of privilege and ease.	
Neela has fundamentally changed from the princess she once was.	
Sera is a brave merl who thinks of her people before her own safety.	
Neela learns to make important choices for herself outside typical expectations.	

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CHARACTER MOTIVATION ANALYSIS

Some characters in a novel have one motivation or purpose (often to thwart the protagonist and her goals). “Round” characters have more nuances and teach the reader not only their own story but also truths about life. Analyze the multiple motivations of these key characters and discuss how it both reveals the theme and develops major plot points.

Character	Personal goal (what they want for themselves)	Their goal/desire for their closest family and friends	Who or what they want to defeat and why
Sera			
Mahdi			
Neela			

- 1 Which character has the clearest motivation? With which character do you most identify? Why?
 - 2 How were their desires and dreams thwarted? What was their enemy’s purpose? Did this affect the plot or theme more in your opinion?
 - 3 With each choice these characters make, what is the author trying to tell us? For example, what do Neela’s choices to defy her parents tell the reader about defining oneself?
- *CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3: Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.*

VOCABULARY

Good readers know how to use the context of a sentence to discern its meaning. Practice this invaluable skill with words drawn directly from their context in the novel:

captivating **sumptuous** **venomous** **encounters** **contention**
desolate **voluminous** **debris** **colonnades** **fathomless**

- 1 He watched with eyes that were _____ pits of darkness. (Prologue)
- 2 [Rorrim Drol's] face was round as a full moon. He wore an acid-green silk robe. Its _____ folds couldn't conceal his girth. (Ch. 1)
- 3 His _____ words struck at Serafina's heart like a stingray's barb. (Ch. 1)
- 4 Its houses were broken. Its temples toppled. Its palaces ruined. It was silent. Deserted. _____ . (Ch. 2)
- 5 "I have *myself* to talk to, my dear, and there's no one more charming, or lovelier, more graceful, or wittier, or more _____ in every possible way than me." (Ch. 5)
- 6 The force of the blast knocked Serafina to the floor and sent _____ flying through the water, covering her in gravel and silt. (Ch. 6)
- 7 Blood from the cut on Ling's cheek was dripping down her jaw. She was still holding her arm. This was their life now—violent _____ and narrow escapes. (Ch. 6)
- 8 Her reluctance to return home had been a bone of _____ between them. They'd argued about it on their way to the Iele's cave. . . (Ch. 7)
- 9 As she'd swum out of the shop, she'd spotted the palace and as always, the very sight of it—with its gleaming golden domes, its soaring rock crystal _____, and vaulted archways—had taken her breath away. (Ch. 8)
- 10 The Emperor's Chamber was incredibly _____ designed to awe both friends and enemies of the realm. (Ch. 8)

- *CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.4.A: Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.*

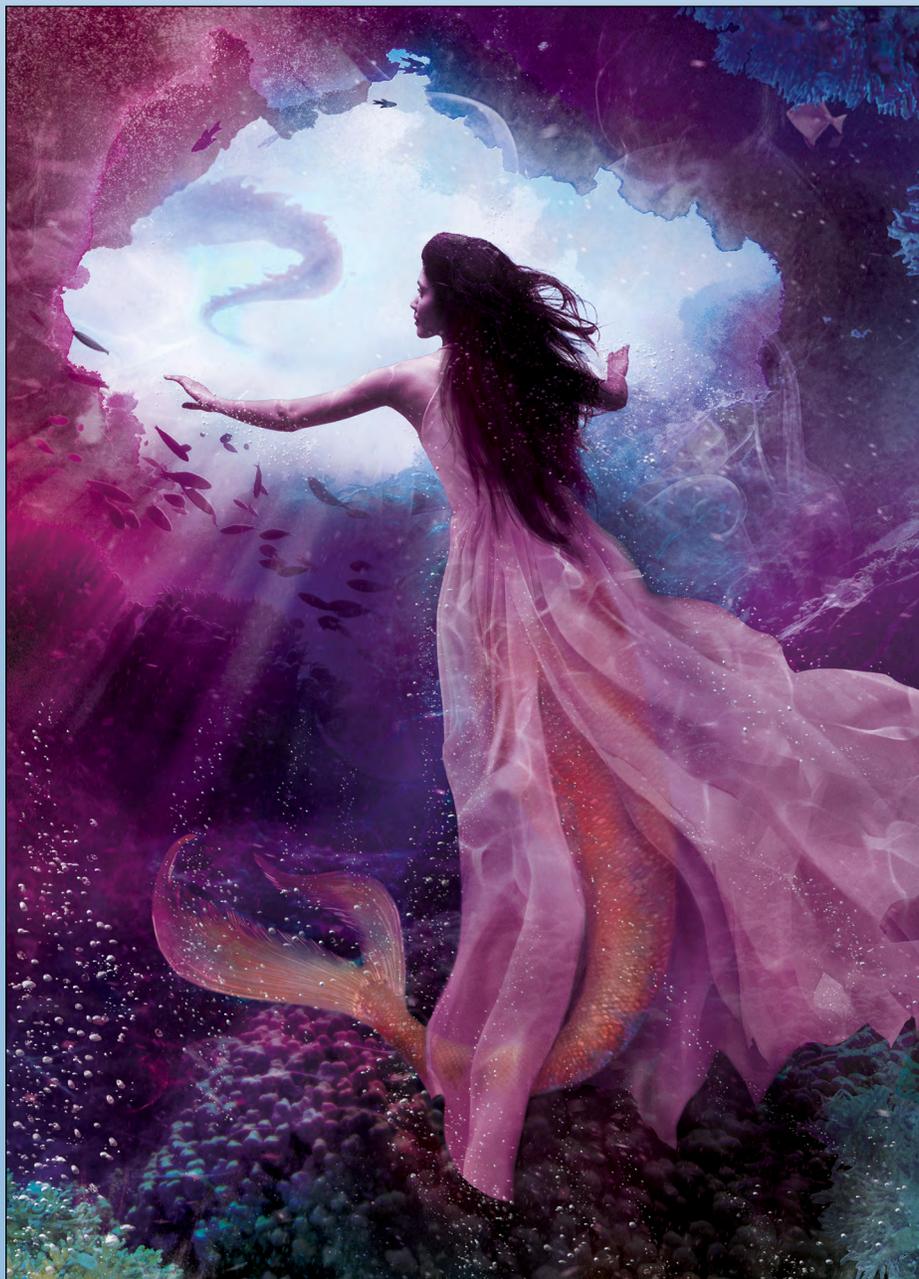


ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jennifer Donnelly is an award-winning author of both adult and young adult books, including the *Waterfire Saga*. For adults she has written a trilogy of best-selling books that includes *The Tea Rose*, *The Winter Rose*, and *The Wild Rose*. Her first young adult novel, *A Northern Light*, received many accolades, among them the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize, a Carnegie Medal in the UK, and a Michael L. Printz Honor. Her second young adult novel, *Revolution*, was named a Best Book of 2010 by *Kirkus Reviews* and *School Library Journal*, and the audiobook received a 2011 American Library Association Odyssey Honor. She lives in New York's Hudson Valley. For more information, visit www.jenniferdonnelly.com.

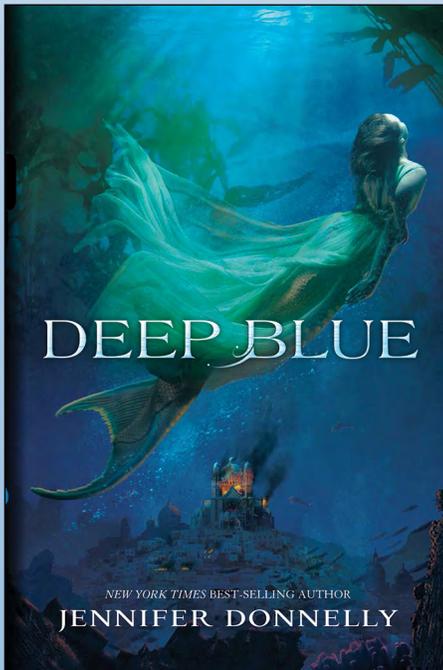


Doug Dundas



Tracie Vaughn Zimmer, English teacher and author of *Disney's Second Guard* created this guide.

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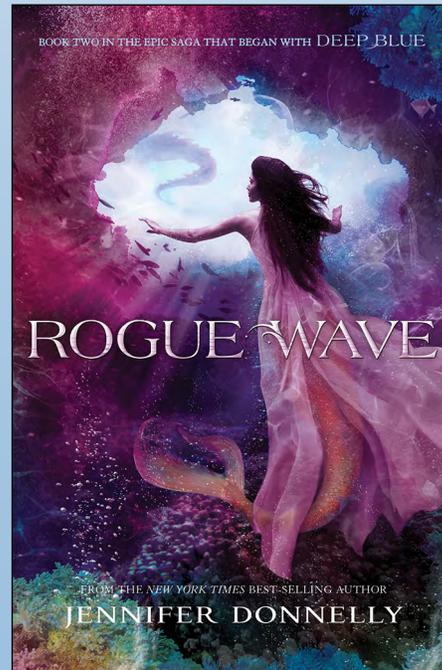


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