

Shadows and Light series

Mother Cary's Butter Knife by Nicola Davies

- Author Nicola Davies
- Illustrator Anja Uhren
- Hardback, 40 pages
- Size 200 x 150mm
- For readers aged 9 +
- Recommended for teaching Year 5+
- Price £8.99
- ISBN 9781910862476

Author and illustrator's websites:

www.nicola-davies.comanjahren.myportfolio.com**Reading Log**

Keep a reading log so you can record thoughts and ideas and viewpoints as they develop and change during the course of the story. This can include:

- Predictions
- Plot development – summarising each chapter
- Character studies – deduction and making inferences and refining opinions as the story progresses
- Author techniques – style analysis: form, language, imagery, foreshadowing, motifs, themes, viewpoint, tone.
- Vocabulary – clarifying unfamiliar words and extending personal vocabulary.

When considering discussion points, try out your ideas with a response partner before entering into whole class discussion.

MOTHER CARY'S
BUTTER KNIFE

First Impressions**Discussion points**

(Prediction and inference)

Make a note of your opinions.

- Look at the title only – don't peep at the blurb! What genre of fiction do you think *Mother Cary's Butter Knife* is?
- It comes from the Shadows and Light series. What does that suggest about the storyline?
- Who do you think the character on the front cover is?
- Read the blurb. Does this give you more clues?
- Do you want to adjust your prediction?
- Why do you think Keenan's love of the sea is a 'priceless talent'?
- Can you think of other talents that might be called 'priceless'?
- Think, pair, share: discuss possible ways that the plot might develop, map these out quickly and share with the class.



End papers

Discussion

- Look carefully at the end papers. Which character do you think is Keenan Mowat?

Quick writing challenge

- Using thought bubbles, suggest what might be going through the minds of the three characters.

Title page

Discussion

- Look at the dedication. What do you think the author means when she says 'Where this story was born'?

Rapid research

- Find out where Grimsay is.

Pages 2 and 3

Discussion

- Why do you think the illustrator chose this shape for the illustration?
- What art materials do you think she has used?

Vocabulary

- Scan the text on page 3 to find the following words:
 - fragile
 - refuge
 - bounty
 - stature
 - brawn
- Can you work out what they mean from the context?
- Look them up in the dictionary to confirm that you are correct.
- Construct a sentence, using three of the words.
- Find synonyms in the thesaurus for 'fragile'.

Close reading

- Find the metaphor in the first sentence. What does it mean?
- Can you see any patterns or differences in this first page with other tales you know?
- Create a role-on-the-wall cut-out of Keenan Mowat by drawing around the smallest person in your class.
- As you discover more about Keenan, jot the information on post-its, placing them inside his head for thoughts and on his heart for his feelings and outside the cut-out for his physical appearance.



Pages 4 and 5

Discussion

- Look at the double page spread. What information can you glean from this?

Pages 6 and 7

Vocabulary

- Scan the text on page 7 to find the following words:
 - mooring
 - cutlery
 - refinement
 - swanky
 - scallop

- convertible
- Can you work out what they mean from the context?
- Look them up in the dictionary to confirm that you are correct.
- Construct a sentence, using three of the words.

Discussion

- What does the picture suggest about Keenan?
- Which words in the text reinforce this idea?

Author technique

- Find an example of personification.
- Find a simile and explain what it suggests.

Pages 8 and 9

Discussion

- How do you feel about the man in the car?
- Do you trust him? Give reasons for your opinions.
- How would you interpret the man's warning?
- What effect does he have on Keenan?
- Predict what Keenan will need the hook, axe and silver sword for?
- What do you make of the old man's exit?
- Do you think the sea has different moods?
- How does it make you feel? Or do you feel differently about it at different times?

Author technique

- Examine the description of the ancient man. What do you notice about the imagery the author has chosen?



Pages 10 and 11

Discussion

- What do you notice in the double spread illustration?
- How do you think the illustrator created the watery effect on the sea?

Pages 12 and 13

Vocabulary

Scan the text on page 12 to find the word 'gaffing':

- Can you work out what it means from the context?
- Look it up in the dictionary to confirm that you are correct.
- Construct a sentence, using the word.

Discussion

- What will happen if Keenan takes the butter knife?
- Do you think he will ask first?



Pages 14 and 15

Writing challenge

- Look at the double page spread. In pairs, tell the next part of the story, as you think it may have happened.
- Write it up as a narrative or a play script, not forgetting stage directions.

Pages 16 and 17

Discussion

- Think about the expression 'the calm before the storm.' What do you think that means in the widest sense?

- What indications are there in the text that things are not as they should be?
- What does the word 'luring' suggest?

Rapid research

- Find out about the Beaufort wind force scale.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beaufort_scale
- Print off a copy, showing wind speed, wave height, sea conditions, land conditions, sea state photos and warning flags.

Creative challenge

Either:

- Create your own set of symbols for all 12 forces. Write in full the abbreviations in the wind speed and wave height columns.
- Devise a set of questions that you can ask the class, using the information on the Beaufort scale.

Or:

- Find out about the different kinds of clouds and the sort of weather they are associated with and make either an infographic, a booklet or electronic presentation to communicate clearly what you have found out.



Pages 18 and 19

Discussion

- What is unsettling about this scene?

Writing challenge

- Create a diamante, a seven line poem, shaped like a diamond.

Line 1: 1 word (subject/noun that is contrasting to line 7)

Line 2: 2 words (adjectives) that describe line 1

Line 3: 3 words (action verbs) that relate to line 1

Line 4: 4 words (nouns) first 2 words relate to line 1 last
2 words relate to line 7

Line 5: 3 words (action verbs) that relate to line 7

Line 6: 2 words (adjectives) that describe line 7

Line 7: 1 word (subject/noun that is contrasting to line 1)

Model example

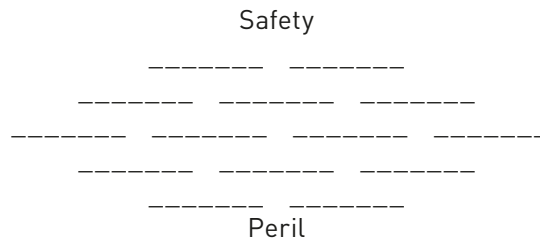
Mountain
High, rocky
Flying, looking, killing
Eagle, power, fear, rabbit
Living, moving, making noise
Deep, beautiful
Valley

You could use this skeleton:

Calm

Storm

Or this one:



Pages 20 and 21

Drama

- In threes, act or mime the scene on the boat.

Musical challenge

- Create music, either using instruments or a program such as Garageband to accompany the action and suggest the increasing size of each wave.
- It might help to map out the actions so that you can match the music to it.

Author technique

- How does the author convey the size and strength of the waves?



Pages 22 and 23

Vocabulary

- Scan the text on pages 22 and 23 to find:

- Consumed
- Propeller
- Sheered off

- Can you work out what they mean from the context?
- Look them up in the dictionary to confirm that you are correct.
- Construct sentences, using these words.

Discussion

- What is unusual about Keenan's reaction to the third 'deadly wave'?
- What does the simile 'soft as a kiss' suggest about the storyline.



Pages 24 and 25

Discussion

- Which part of the story does this illustration depict?

Writing challenge

- Create a word shower that describes the sea, waves, water, storms, rain and clouds. Create a shape poem in the form of a wave or a cloud or downpour to convey the feeling and mood of the weather.

Pages 26 and 27

Author technique

- Find the pair of alliterative words used to describe Keenan's brothers.
- In pairs, generate your own alliterative words to describe them.

Vocabulary

- Scan the text on page 26 to find the word 'pearlescent':
- Can you work out what it means from the context?
- Look it up in the dictionary to confirm that you are correct.
- Think of other things that might be described as 'pearlescent'.

- Construct a sentence using this word.

Rapid research

- Find out about marram grass. Where does it grow and why is it important?

Drama

- Conscience Alley: should the boys get in the car with the ancient man?

Create two lines, approximately a metre apart, each line taking an opposing viewpoint.

One person, taking the role of one of the brothers, walks between the two lines as each side voice their thoughts. The brother then has to determine what his decision will be. A number of people could take turns as the brother, so that more than one argument can be voiced. Gestures and expression can be added and arguments improved.

Discussion

- What do you think the man means when he says 'time to pay your bills for this night's work.'?

Pages 28 and 29

Discussion

- What do you think has happened to the two brothers when they turn left and right?



Pages 30 and 31

Drama

- Conscience Alley: should Keenan withdraw the knife?

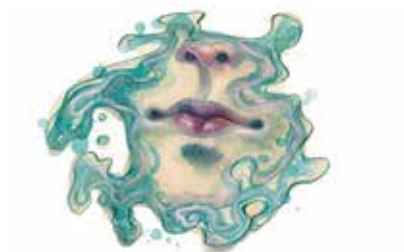
Create two lines, approximately a metre apart, each line taking an opposing viewpoint.

One person, taking the role of Keenan, walks between the two lines as each side voice their thoughts. Keenan then has to determine what his decision will be. A number of people could take turns as Keenan, so that more than one argument can be voiced, gestures and expression can be added and arguments improved.

Pages 32 and 33

Discussion

- Do you think Keenan should give the girl the knife? What might happen as a result?



Pages 34 and 35

Discussion

- Would you obey the old man if you were Keenan?
- Did anything surprise you on reading page 35?

Drama

- Hot seat the three brothers at this point in the story, preparing questions and possible answers first.

Rapid research

- Find out where Wisconsin is in an atlas or on the internet.
- How long would it take to travel there today?
- How much would it cost?

Pages 36 and 37

Discussion

- Look closely at the double page spread. What are the differences between the three brothers in this picture? See how many you can find.



Pages 38 and 39

Discussion

- How do you think Keenan's two brothers felt about their lives as shopkeepers?

Writing challenge

Either:

- Write a letter from Keenan to his two brothers

Or

- Write a letter from one or both of the brothers to Keenan, indicating what life is like for them.

Discussion

- What do you think the significance of Keenan's dreams is?
- Why are the words 'long, lonely shore of his soul' used?
- When did you read something similar to 'So calm the stars admired themselves in the silky sea.'?
- Why did Keenan's 'heart turn in his chest'?
- Are there any other sentences or phrases that seem familiar?
- Why has the author done this?

Pages 40 and 41

Discussion

- So, what has happened?
- Why has this happened?
- Why is the final picture upside down?
- Thinking back over the story, what patterns do you notice?
- What has puzzled or surprised you?

Creative challenge

- Write and illustrate your own 'Shadows and Light' tale.
- Don't forget techniques such as repetition and the 'magic three.'
- If you look on Anja Uhren's website, you will see that she makes hand-made books of her work, which you could also do:

<https://anjahahren.myportfolio.com/>



End Papers

Discussion

- What is the significance of the broken boat in the background?
- Re-read the blurb. Has your understanding of it altered as a result of reading the story? If so, why?
- Why do you think the book was called Mother Cary's Butter Knife?

Extension activity

Discussion

- Watch Anja Uhren's animation, The Letter:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00os2f0Let4>
- What similarities and differences are there when you compare this with the book?

SHADOWS AND LIGHT SERIES:

Mother Cary's Butter Knife

Elias Martin

The White Hare

The Selkie's Mate

These notes may contain links to third party websites. Graffeg does not endorse such website(s) or their contents and is not responsible for such contents and makes no representations or warranties regarding the contents, accuracy or functionality of such website(s).