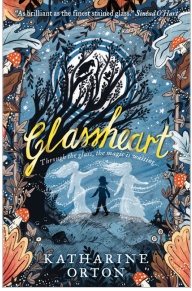




Walker Books Classroom Ideas



Glassheart

Katharine Orton
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*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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Outline:

"Through the glass, the magic is waiting..."

Nona and her uncle travel everywhere together, replacing stained-glass windows in war-torn buildings. When a mysterious commission takes them to the lonely moors of Dartmoor, Nona discovers a wild and powerful magic which threatens everything. Can Nona protect those she loves – even if it means fighting darkness itself?

Glassheart is a beautifully imaginative and rich adventure about determination, courage and the power of love, set in the aftermath of World War Two. Perfect for fans of Abi Elphinstone, Sophie Anderson and Catherine Doyle.

Author/Illustrator Information:

After gaining an English degree and an MA in creative writing, Katharine Orton worked for Barefoot Books in Bath before leaving to focus on her writing and her young family. She signed with her agent after taking part in the brilliant WoMentoring Project. Her first novel, *Nevertell*, was published to critical-acclaim and was an instant bestseller. *Glassheart* is her second book. She currently lives in Bristol.

How to Use These Notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

These notes are for:

- Primary Years 4-6
- Ages 9-12

Key Learning Areas:

- English

Example of:

- Fiction

Themes/Ideas:

- Magic
- Adventure
- Family



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Discussion Questions and Activities:

Before reading

Before reading *Glassheart*, view the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:

- The title of the book
- The author
- The publisher
- The blurb

Based on the cover, what do you think this story is about? How do you think it will begin/end? Revisit your answer after reading the story to see if your predictions were correct.

Exploring the text

What are the themes in this novel? As a class or in small groups identify and list the themes. Individually write a statement of belief about each theme.

Identify the orientation, complication and resolution of the story. Ask students to try to identify this structure in other books or movies. As a class, discuss how these narrative features give meaning to stories.

Discuss the title of the book. Do you think this is a good title? Why or why not? If you were asked to choose an alternative title for the book, what would it be? Remember, a good title should capture the audience's attention and give them some idea of what the book is about.

Consider the world Katharine Orton has created in *Glassheart*. What elements in the world seem based in fact, and what seems fantastical?

In small groups, explain how Nona demonstrates the following character traits in the novel:

- Resourcefulness
- Courage
- Resilience
- Compassion

Glassheart is set in England, in the aftermath of WWII. What do we learn about the war from the novel? How has the impact of the war lingered for Nona and Antoni?

How does the setting affect the story? How might the story be different if it were set in an alternative time period?

"Just because they weren't related, it didn't make them any less close. She clenched her jaw. Together they were a family" (page 86). How do Uncle Antoni and Nona show what it means to be a family? How would you define your own 'family'? Does it go beyond just your close blood relations?

Why is Nona's piece of glass important to her, even before she finds out its magical properties? What does it represent and symbolise to her and why?

Compare and contrast the characters of Serafin and Alesea. How are they similar or different? You could consider how they treat Nona and Castor, the powers they have, or how they react to the events of the novel.

"They read your fears, Nona. Ones so deep that even you may not be aware of them. And they reflect them back at you – like a mirror that shows only bad things." (page 187). How do the rattlesticks show Nona her fears? How does she overcome the things she's afraid of throughout the novel?

"I used to think that some things were too big to discuss," he went on quietly. "And, if I'm honest, that it was a terrible burden to other people to hear them. I thought the only thing for it was to leave it in the past where it belongs. But now I'm not sure it gets left behind at all." He cleared his throat. This was obviously hard for him to say. "Perhaps sharing what you can, with someone you trust, in whatever way you choose, can make it lighter for a time." (page 328). Towards the end of the novel, Uncle Antoni realises he has been struggling to express some of his emotions and feelings of grief and loss from the war. Discuss this quote and why it's important to express your feelings, as well as the ways we can help our friends and ourselves when we're going through a difficult time.

Keep a "Vocab Journal" while reading the novel. Make a note of any words you come across that are unfamiliar and look up their meaning. Also keep track of any words or phrases that you particularly like and write a note next to each explaining why you like that word/phrase.



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Creative Responses to the Text

"It's an umbrafell. Those are places that exist in two worlds at once. They're rare and special. That tree down there – see it? It's holding the spirit world and the human one together. Happens by chance and every umbrafell has a different power, depending." (page 51)

Invent another umbrafell, and write a short story about it. What makes your umbrafell special and why?

Design your own cover for the book with new imagery and a new tagline that will persuade and interest people in reading the book.

Castor tells Nona to think of an animal she wants to be able to transform into, one that doesn't draw attention, and she picks a wren. If you had that magical power, what animal would you want to become and why? Share your answer with a classmate.

Choose a scene in the novel and rewrite it from the perspective of another character. Focus particularly on the character's attitudes and feelings, rather than simply recounting events. You could choose Uncle Antoni, Castor, Alesea or Serafin. How might another character see and experience events differently to Nona?

Imagine that a movie was being made of *Glassheart*. In small groups, create a soundtrack to accompany some of the key scenes, thinking particularly about the mood you want to convey. You could either make a compilation of existing songs or compose your own musical pieces. Present your soundtrack to the class, explaining why you have chosen the pieces you have. Also choose your ideal cast for the movie and create a movie poster.

Other Great Titles From Walker Books



Nevertell
Katharine Orton
9781406385182
Classroom ideas available



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Serpent's Curse**
C. J. Haslam
9781406388480



Malamander
Thomas Taylor
9781406386288



**And the Ocean Was Our
Sky**
Patrick Ness
Illustrated by Rovina Cai
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