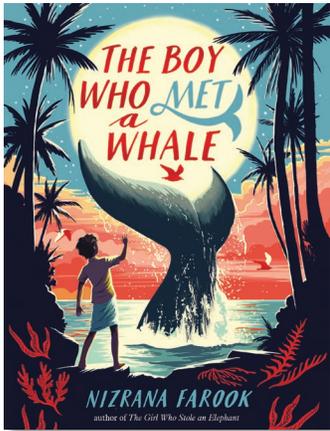


Reading Group Guide



The Boy Who Met a Whale

Written by Nizrana Farook

HC: 9781682633731

Ages: 8-12

ABOUT THE BOOK

From the author of *The Girl Who Stole an Elephant* comes A Sri Lankan fisherboy is swept up in a thrilling seafaring adventure, complete with a kidnapping, missing treasure, and a huge blue whale! From the author of *The Girl Who Stole an Elephant*.

Razi, a local fisherboy, is watching turtle eggs hatch when he sees a boat bobbing into view. With a chill, he notices a small, still hand hanging over the side. Inside is Zheng, who's escaped a shipwreck and is full of tales of sea monsters and missing treasure. But the villains who are after Zheng are soon after Razi and his sister, Shifa, too. And so begins an exhilarating escapade in the shadow of the biggest sea monster of them all.

Author Nizrana Farook has crafted another briskly paced, action-packed quest set against a vibrant, authentic landscape inspired by Sri Lanka. This delightful caper will thrill young fans of adventure and fantasy.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Study the map of Serendib on the first page. Describe the island. What else do you learn about the island from the story? Plot the adventure of Razi, Shifa, and Zheng on the map as the story progresses.
2. Razi's mother and Shifa, his twin sister, think that he is afraid of the water. Explain what Razi means when he tells Shifa, "I was never afraid of the water, I just disliked it." (p. 114).
3. Why does Razi feel guilty about his father's death? How does he blame the sea for his father's death? At what point does he forgive the sea?
4. Explain why Razi slaps Nalaka. How is this incident related to Marco and Cook finding Zheng? Why does Razi feel guilty when the men take Zheng from the hut?
5. Describe Zheng. Why does Razi have trouble taking Zheng seriously?
6. Zheng's stories seem outlandish. Cite evidence that Zheng exaggerates. How do his exaggerations make for good storytelling? When do Razi and Shifa realize that much of what Zheng is telling them is true?
7. Discuss what Zheng is hiding under his shirt. Why is Razi so curious about the item? How is he suspicious that the item is connected to what Marco and Cook want with Zheng? Why does Zheng call Razi a thief?
8. When and how does Zheng's idea of Razi change?
9. Explain the importance of the Serendib Dagger. Razi had learned about the dagger in school. How did the captain obtain the dagger? Why do Marco and Cook want it?
10. Explain how Zheng knows that the treasure is hidden on Elephant Rock. Why is he determined to complete the captain's mission?
11. Zheng wants Razi to take him to Elephant Rock. Why is Shifa skeptical of the plan? At what point does she become entranced by Zheng's mission?

12. Explain what Shifa means when she says to Zheng, “I don’t distrust you! I just don’t necessarily trust you” (p. 57). When and why does Shifa apologize to Zheng for not trusting him?
13. At what point does Shifa recognize the map as a treasure map? How does Razi figure out what the map is telling them?
14. Razi knows a lot about turtles and whales. Explain why Razi cries when he sees the whale. Why does he think the whale needs a name? Cite evidence that Razi knows how to read the sea. What else do you learn about the sea and sea life from reading the story?
15. What does Zheng mean when he says that this “adventure was unparalleled to other adventures” (p. 143)? Explain what Razi means when he tells Zheng, “You gave me my life back” (p. 190).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nizrana Farook was born and raised in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and the beautiful landscapes of her home country find their way into the stories she writes. She graduated from Bath Spa University with an MA in Writing for Young People and lives in England with her husband and two daughters.

Guide created by Pat Scales, retired school librarian and independent consultant, Greenville, South Carolina.