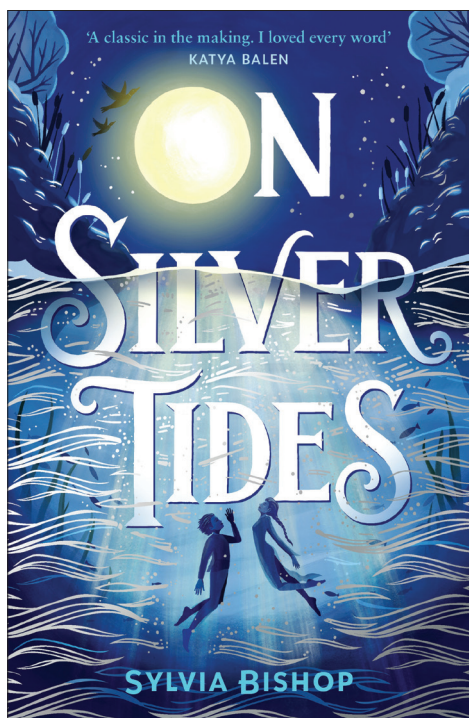


READING GROUP GUIDE



On Silver Tides

by Sylvia Bishop

Published by Andersen Press

ABOUT THE BOOK:

Kelda has always protected her little sister Isla from danger on the rivers, and from the suspicions of their community. For Isla cannot breathe underwater – and so her very existence is forbidden by silvermen’s Lore.

Now the rivers of England are growing sick: monstrous creatures are awakening and a fierce torrent of blame falls upon Kelda’s family. When betrayal comes, the sisters escape on a desperate journey upstream. Joining forces with a mysterious boy, Kelda discovers the darkest depths of her kind’s secret history. But to save both her sister and the very life of Britain’s waterways, Kelda will have to make a sacrifice – one that will change her life forever.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Sylvia Bishop is the author of several books for young readers, and her work has been translated into seventeen languages. She lives in Bristol, England. When not writing, she can be found reading, performing comedy and – when she gets the chance – swimming in rivers.

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE:

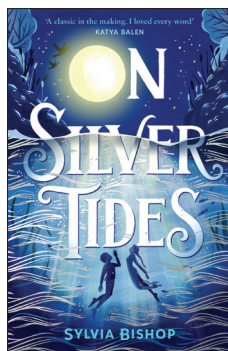
This resource is intended to be used by groups who have read *On Silver Tides*. For resources based on a short extract from the book, please see the separate Teaching Resource.

GETTING STARTED:

To begin, ask what group members liked about the book. What did they enjoy? How did the book make them feel? Would anyone like to expand on their feelings? Why did the book make them feel that way? Was it a specific moment, or a reaction to the writing?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. We get some information about life among the silvermen, but there is still a lot we don't know! What questions do you have?
2. Did you feel like you could imagine what it would feel like to be amphibious? What helped?
3. How do you feel about Firth's betrayal of Isla? Can you see his point of view?
4. People blame Isla for the problems on the River. Why do you think we often look for people to blame for big problems? Can you think of any real-life examples?
5. All the creatures in this book are from British folklore. Had you heard of them? Do you know any others?
6. Maggie tells Kelda there are 'no guarantees'. What do you think she means?
7. What do you imagine Isla's future might look like? What about Kelda's?
8. If there was a sequel, or another story in this world, what would you want to see?



WRITING PROMPTS

1. There are several scenes in this book describing the experience of being a silverman in a river. We know that there are also merfolk who live at sea. What do you imagine their underwater experience might be like?

- Take some time to look at how the author has built the underwater world on pages 38, 114 and 117. What sort of details has she used?
- What details might you need to know about the ocean, to write something similar? Spend a little time researching the sea to gather the details you need.
- Then let your imagination take over!

2. Kelda meets several creatures from old British myths. There are lots more! Write another adventure for her that could happen on her journey, imagining that she encounters a different mythological creature.

- Research the creatures and monsters of British myth and legend. What can you find out?
- In *On Silver Tides*, the creatures are borrowed from mythology, but have been changed. What is the one central inspiring thing about your creature that you want to keep? What other ideas does it inspire for you?

3. We read the story of *On Silver Tides* from Kelda's viewpoint. What might it look like from a different point of view? Choose a point in the book, and write a diary entry from another character's perspective. You might like to try:

- Firth, on the day he betrays Isla
- Mam, on the day Isla is born
- Isla, at the end of the story
- Aeron, when he has learned that the last child like Isla was killed

