

# Wanderer

AUTHOR

**VICTOR KELLEHER**

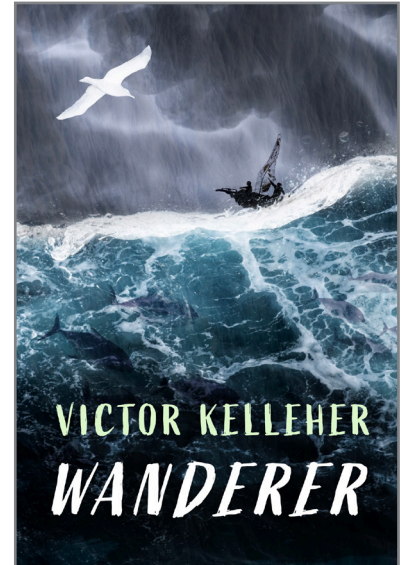
ILLUSTRATOR

**LORENA CARRINGTON**

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower Secondary



## SYNOPSIS

In a dangerous world where predators roam both land and sea, an orphaned young boatman, Dane, wanders alone. Faced with the terrors of the water and the ever-present threat of a warrior group called the Clan, he struggles to survive.

Along with his precious kayak, Dane has one other treasure: a much-loved book given to him by his mother, which is a source of comfort in the hardest of times.

When he encounters Garth, a book-loving old boat builder, and his amazing granddaughter Lana, everything changes, as he and Lana are pitched into a perilous quest that challenges all they hold dear.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

With many novels to his credit, Victor Kelleher has written successfully for both adults and for young people. Formerly an associate professor of English, he has long since devoted himself full-time to fiction. He is a past winner of the Children's Book Council of Australia's Book of the Year Award, has twice received the CBCA Honour Award, and has either won or been short-listed for many other such prizes, including the Science Fiction Achievement Award and a short-listing for the Carnegie Medal. *Wanderer*, like much of his fiction, reflects his deep concern for the natural world. He currently lives in Tasmania with his artist wife.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Lorena Carrington is a photographic artist and book illustrator based in regional Victoria. She is published in Australia with Serenity Press, and internationally with Kane Miller (US) and Wydawnictwo Tadam (Poland). She has also been commissioned for covers by publishers such as Swan River Press (Ireland), Eagle Books, and the Australian Fairy Tale Society. Lorena exhibits her work in galleries around the country. She presents at literary and arts festivals around Australia, and visits schools and libraries to give talks and hold workshops on illustration, books and story. She is the recipient of the 2020 Australian Fairy Tale Society award, for her 'outstanding contribution to the field of Australian Fairy Tales.'

## STUDY NOTES

- How do you think the epigraph (the extract from the poem 'Mouse' by Robert Burns, at the beginning of the book)

relates to the themes in *Wanderer*?

- The characters in *Wanderer* often refer to a time way back in the past, calling it ‘the Golden Years’, and many have a theory about why the world changed after that. What do you think happened to turn the world into what they are living in now?
- Stories and knowledge contained in books that have survived are very important to Dane and his friends. But the Clan hates books. Why do you think that is?
- Comrade, the wounded albatross Dane and Lana rescue, forms a real connection with the young people, and is a sign of the healing that the author mentions in his note. What other examples can you find of this world beginning to heal?
- Think about some of the questions raised by the author in his note, about the very different ways in which different people react, for example Lana, Karl and Dane. Why do you think that is?
- Orcas (also known as ‘killer whales’) are prominent throughout the book. What can you find out about them and their relationship with humans over time?
- There are several great classic stories mentioned in *Wanderer*, including *Macbeth*, *Moby Dick*, *The Pied Piper*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *The Hobbit*, and *Lord of the Flies*. Choose one of them and research when and how it was written, and by who.
- There’s a lot about boats in the novel, from Dane’s kayak to the Clan’s war canoes to the wrecked and rusting ships from the Golden Years. Look up information about one of these types of boats and how similar ones might be used today.
- At the end of the novel, Dane has become ‘the Book-Gatherer’ and is about to set off to find as many books as possible to bring them back for the library. Write a short story about the first book or books he finds, and how he gets it/them.
- Lana stays behind in Elysia to live with and help the community. Write a story from her point of view, after Dane has left.
- The children have created the Book-Gatherer’s song, which they sing to Dane when he leaves. It ends with ‘Sail away, sail away’. What’s the rest of it? Write the song as you imagine it.
- Write a page of the book Dane’s mother gave him. You can illustrate it too.
- What is the last book you read? How would you design the cover? Think about the overarching themes, the characters, the intended audience, the parts of the plot you want to reveal on the cover. Can you hint at any spoilers or twists without actually revealing them? Think about what colour does to the feel of a cover. Could you use the same image but use colour to make it look like a mystery, a romance, or a horror story?
- Collect seven things. Either inside the classroom, or from outside. They could be anything: pen, leaf, muesli bar wrapper, twig, pencil sharpener, interesting bit of gravel, feather, etc. Put them on a piece of paper in front of you. Move them around. Can you make the following three things with them:
  - A face: front on—or for more of a challenge, in profile.
  - A bird: either a real one or something more mythical...
  - A boat: it can be a tiny dinghy or a luxury yacht!