

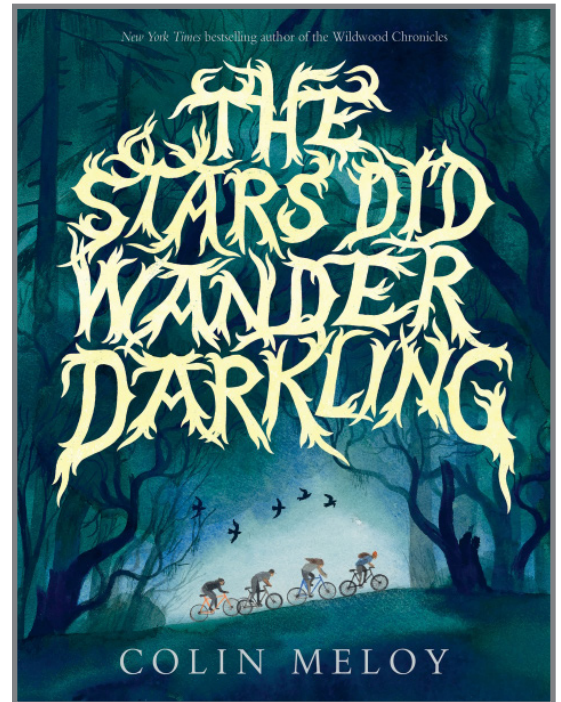
The Stars Did Wander Darkling

AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR
COLIN MELOY

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Mid to Upper Secondary
(Violence)



SYNOPSIS

Maybe Archie Coomes has been watching too many horror movies. All of a sudden, the most ordinary things have taken on a sinister edge: a penny on a doormat. A man in a brown suit under a streetlamp. The persistent sound of an axe chopping in the middle of the night. He keeps telling himself that this is Seaham, a sleepy seaside town where nothing ever happens. Or at least nothing did, until his dad's construction company opened up the cliff beneath the old—some say cursed—Langdon place. Soon, though, he and his friends can't deny it: more and more of the adults in town are acting strangely. An ancient, long-buried evil has been unleashed upon the community, and it's up to the kids to stop it before it's too late . . .

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

Colin Meloy is the author of *The Whiz Mob* and the *Grenadine Kid* and the New York Times bestselling Wildwood Chronicles as well as two picture books, *The Golden Thread: A Song for Pete Seeger* and *Everyone's Awake*. He is also the singer and songwriter for the indie rock band the Decemberists. Colin lives in Oregon with his wife and frequent collaborator, illustrator Carson Ellis, and their sons.

STUDY NOTES

- Before reading the novel, 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.
- 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.
- The orientation sets the scene, mood and introduces the characters. Identify the following in the opening scene of the novel:
 - Which character/s are we introduced to?
 - What mood is the author setting?
- Activity: Write what you think could happen in the story based on how the writer has set the story up.

- It is the author's job to create trouble for their characters. They need to make it difficult for the characters to achieve their goals. What trouble (complications) does the author create to make it difficult for the main character to achieve their goal/s? Can you identify the climax of the story, the moment of highest tension?
- Characterisation is how the characters in a novel are described physically, their point of view, their personalities, their private thoughts and their actions. Draw a picture of a character from the book and then describe their personality in five words. Compare your ideas of that character with other people in your class. Did you imagine the same person?
- How does the story conclude (resolution)? Compare the ending of the story with how you imagined it ending after you read the end of the first chapter. Were you surprised by where the story went?
- Consider the world the author has created in this novel and answer the following questions:
 - Can you describe it?
 - How is it different to the world you live in?
 - Which elements of the world seem realistic, and which seems fantastical?
- Design your own cover for the book with new imagery and a new tagline that will persuade and interest people in reading the book.
- 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. How might another character see and experience events differently to the character in the novel?
- Imagine that a movie was being made of the novel. 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.
 - Choose your ideal cast for the movie and create a movie poster.