

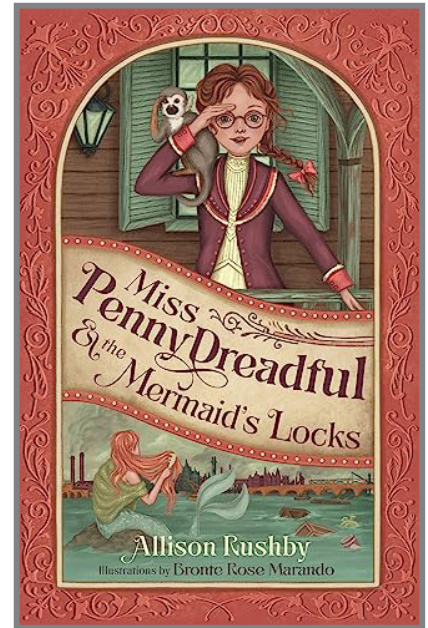
Miss Penny Dreadful and the Mermaid's Locks

AUTHOR

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ILLUSTRATOR

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Mid Primary

SYNOPSIS

Searching for a new story idea for her aunt's famous penny dreadfuls, Penny and Aunt Harriet decide to follow up a newspaper article about a mysterious mermaid's grotto. Hidden down a secret passageway on the banks of the Thames River, the only way to enter is through a tavern, aptly named The Mermaid's Locks. In the glittering grotto, Penny and her aunt find a comb with some strands of the mermaid's red-gold hair.

Penny sets out to investigate—can the mermaid truly be real? Also, why doesn't Mr Crowley, Aunt Harriet's publisher, want her to write about it? Meanwhile, another cryptic postcard arrives from Penny's missing parents. Nothing is as it seems in Penny's world. Will Penny be able to finally piece together all the clues?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Allison Rushby, the daughter of an author, was raised on a wholesome and steady diet of classic English literature. Some of her favourite books, re-read countless dog-eared times include Rumer Godden's *The Dolls' House*, Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*, Dodie Smith's *I Capture the Castle* and Noel Streatfeild's 'Shoes' series.

She has long been a fan of cities with long, winding histories, wild, overgrown cemeteries, red brick Victorian museums, foxes and ivy. She prefers to write with a cup of Darjeeling tea by her side and a Devon Rex cat curled up in her lap.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Bronte Rose Marando is a Sydney based illustrator. Her whimsical artwork is influenced by our natural world, a love of narrative, the unknown and all things mysterious and magical. When she isn't drawing you can find Bronte with her nose in a good book or wandering about antique stores.

STUDY NOTES

BEFORE READING

- Before reading, 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.

WHILE READING

Orientation

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

Complications

- It is the author's job 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

- 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?

Setting and World-building

- Consider the world the author has created in this novel and then 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?

Resolution

- How does the story conclude (resolution)?
- Compare the ending of the story with how you imagined it ending at the end of the first chapter. Were you surprised by where the story went?

AFTER READING

- 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.
 - Once you have chosen your soundtrack, think about your ideal cast and setting. Then create a movie poster advertising the adaptation.