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The Wizard of Rondo
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The Key to Rondo (Omnibus Books, 2007)
Deltora Quest series (Scholastic Press)
Rowan series (Omnibus Books)
Teen Power Inc. (Scholastic Press)
Dog Tales (Omnibus Books, 2001)
Fuzz, the Famous Fly
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Green Fingers (Omnibus Books, 1998)
The Timekeeper (Omnibus Books, 1992)
Finders Keepers (Omnibus Books, 1990)

Teachers' Notes

Star of Deltora Book 1 Shadows of the Master

Emily Rodda

Teachers' Notes by Rae Carlyle

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Introduction

For as long as she can remember, Britta has longed for a future as a trader. She yearns to sail out of her home port of Del and across the nine seas into a world filled with adventure, wonder, and opportunities to trade with the people living on the hundreds of islands that a Del trading ship can reach.

The younger daughter of one of Del's most famous traders, Britta spent her first seven years of life secure in the knowledge that one day she too could board her Father's ship the *Star of Deltora* and join him in the adventure that she knows the great trading voyages are.

But life is not as simple and predictable as Britta's early childhood in the salt-scented harbourside home of a famous and successful trader suggested to her. Eight years ago her father's trading enterprises ended in disaster. His heavily mortgaged ship was found crewless and adrift, the captain's corpse lashed to the wheel, and a letter from the dying man detailed how the ship had found disaster and ruin. Devastatingly, the letter revealed that Britta's father was fully to blame, and had chosen knowingly to abandon his responsibilities as ship-owner, trader, and father.

Driven from their harbourside home by the fury of the close-knit trading community, Britta's mother embraces her past as a storekeeper, and will tolerate no discussion from Britta of a future in trading. Britta however, has never given up her dream, and eight years spent helping in her mother's shop, where the scents are of dried goods and cheeses rather than the salt-laden air she longs for, and the sounds are of townsfolk and carriages instead of gulls and the waves they swoop over, has only strengthened her determination to one day embark on a trading voyage of her own.

But despite her determination, Britta does not see a way of realising her dream. For how can a young girl without resources and family support become a trader - especially when she cannot risk anyone finding out who her father is? But Britta has friends, and a chance at a trading life comes unexpectedly to her. The great trading concern of the Rosalyn Fleet has announced that it is time for their chief trader Mab to take an Apprentice, and old Captain Gripp has entered Britta's name into the competition for the position. Now all Britta has to do is win a place as one of the three finalists, and she will get the chance of a trading voyage aboard the *Star of Deltora* - the very ship that her father once owned.

The competition is intense, and at times terrifying. For Britta has enemies determined to bring her down and reveal the shame that being her father's daughter entails. But Britta also has unexpected friends and allies who are willing to risk much to help her succeed. At times even the shadows seem to be on her side, and so Britta takes hold of her courage with both hands, and despite the obstacles in her way she embarks on what she hopes will be the greatest adventure of her life.

About the Author

Emily Rodda's real name is Jennifer Rowe. She was born in Sydney and completed an MA (Hons) in English Literature at Sydney University in 1973. She worked in publishing for many years, as an editor and then publisher at Angus & Robertson, before becoming the editor of the *Australian Women's Weekly* in 1988.

Always a keen reader and writer, Emily began writing children's stories in her spare time to entertain her young daughter Kate. She submitted her first manuscript to Angus & Robertson using a pseudonym—her grandmother's name, Emily Rodda—to make sure that she got an honest opinion of her work from her colleagues. This book, *Something Special*, won the Children's Book Council of Australia Book of the Year Award, as did four other of her books in subsequent years: *Pigs Might Fly*, *The Best-Kept Secret*, *Finders Keepers*, and *Rowan of Rin*.

A full-time writer since 1992, Emily Rodda has published over 90 books. In recent times she is best known for the popular *Deltora Quest* fantasy series which has sold more than any other Australian series (15 million copies worldwide), has been made into a successful animated TV series in Japan, and is published in over thirty countries around the world.

In 1995 Emily Rodda won the prestigious Dromkeen Medal. The judges of the award said of her that she 'maintains a prolific writing schedule, continues to provide a role model in promoting children's literature, and still spends many hours sharing her love of books with children and educators'. She has also won many different Kids' Choice Awards across Australia. She has won two Aurealis Awards, for *Deltora Quest Series 1* and also *Deltora Book of Monsters* with Marc McBride in 2002, and for *The Wizard of Rondo*, the second book in her *Rondo* trilogy, in 2008.

Emily has also written eight mysteries for adults under her real name, Jennifer Rowe. She has four children, and lives in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney.

For further information please consult Emily Rodda's online biography at <http://www.emilyrodda.com>

Writing Style

Star of Deltora 1: Shadows of the Master is part of the fantasy-quest genre. The language and storyline are aimed at a readership in the 8 to 12 year old range, and the book is a junior novel written in chapter format. The themes of *Shadows of the Master* include friendship, family relationships, self-determination, grudges and vendettas, magic, mystery, quest, individuality, stereotyping, bigotry, responsibility to others, and adventure.

Before Reading the Text

Shadows of the Master is set in the same fantasy world as several other of Emily Rodda's series. Her *Deltora Quest*, *Rowan of Rin*, and *Three Doors* series are all set on various islands in the world of the nine seas where the *Star of Deltora* sails. *Shadows of the Master* is internally complete and does not depend on the reader having prior knowledge of the events contained in other books set in the nine seas.

However, before reading the book it would be valuable to discuss with the class which other books by Emily Rodda students may already have read, and to ask them to share their recollections of the stories, and their knowledge of the fantasy universe that Rodda has created. The main action of *Star of Deltora* takes place sometime after the Shadowlands invasion of Deltora featured in *Deltora Quest* has been defeated, but many of the characters have clearly been influenced and the society shaped by the events of the recent past.

Students who have read some of Rodda's other novels might wish to share their predictions and ideas about characters, actions and settings. Topics to address include how setting of a novel affects our understanding of a fictional society, and how what a reader already knows about Emily Rodda's fantasy universe could influence their interpretation of events.

A more general discussion regarding the nature of the fantasy adventure/quest genre would also be worthwhile, with students being asked to consider what defines a fantasy novel, and what considerations an author might need to keep in mind when creating a universe that several disparate series of stories all share.

Reading the Text

Star of Deltora: Shadows of the Master readily lends itself to being read and studied as a whole-class activity. The language is pitched at a level for most children in Years 3 to 6 to be able to read it independently, but it is also ideally suited for being read aloud to a class. If a class set of the books is available, then alternating between independent reading followed by group discussions and whole-class reading of selected passages would be a worthwhile method of presentation.

Questions about the Text

These comprehension questions can be used either as starters for whole-class discussions during the course of reading the book, or can be handed out as a written task to be completed by individuals or in small groups. Some of the later questions may contain information that might spoil the story so it is important not to hand out any questions until all students have completed the featured chapters.

Chapter 1

- How long ago did the events in the King's memories take place?
A) Forty years ago.
- Why are Mab and the Rosalyn Fleet determined to leave Del harbour, and what happened to the ships that stayed?
A) Mab is determined to flee because the Shadow Lord is invading Deltora. The ships that didn't flee were all turned instantly to charred splinters.
- What is the Staff of Tier said to do?
A) The Staff of Tier is said to cure all ills.
- Make a list of all the characters mentioned by name in the first chapter. Next to each character, write down your predictions for what you think their role in life is likely to be in the present time. As you read the book, check your predictions against what happens and see how close your guesses were!

Chapters 2–3

- What does Margareth think has made their mother unwell?
A) Margareth thinks that their mother is ill because she has been thinking too much about the upsetting events of the past.
- How do the shadows in the shop make Britta feel, and what does she think is making her feel that way?
A) The shadows make Britta feel warm, and Britta thinks that it is her own anger causing the heat.
- What does Britta's mother think about Britta visiting the harbour and Captain Gripp, and why?
A) Britta's mother hates her visiting the harbour and Captain Gripp. Gripp was Britta's father's friend, and he reminds Britta's mother of the past.
- What does Britta give as the reason for loving the harbour area, and what does Jantsy think the real reason is?
A) Britta says that she loves being unrecognised, just 'a face in the crowd', but Jantsy thinks that it is the harbour itself and the merchant ships that make Britta so happy.
- What does Lean Alice tell Jantsy about Britta?
A) She tells him to beware, that Britta does not walk alone.
- How does Bosun react to Britta when she visits Gripp's cottage?
A) Bosun appears skittish and frightened, and does his best to stay away from Britta.
- What is the important news that Captain Gripp has for Britta?
A) Captain Gripp has sponsored Britta as a candidate to become the next Rosalyn Apprentice.

Chapters 4–7

- How does the Rosalyn Trust pass on its ownership?
A) The Rosalyn Trust holds a competition to find the next trader's Apprentice, who will one day be the Rosalyn Trader and inherit the fleet.

- Why is Britta's father so hated in Del?
A) Britta's father is hated in Del because he found the Staff of Tier and used it to bring the Isle back to life. His crew all vanished and the captain of his ship died. The people of Del believe he has betrayed them all.
- How does working in the shop make Britta feel?
A) Working in the shop makes Britta feel miserable and confined.
- How does the shop make Britta's mother feel?
A) Having the shop makes Britta's mother feel safe and secure.
- What is the Isle of Tier also called?
A) The Isle of Tier is also known as the Hungry Isle.
- What happens to people who visit the isle?
A) People who visit the isle are caught in its spell and never leave; when they eventually die they stay on as wraiths.
- Why does Britta avoid Jantsy on the morning of the test?
A) Britta avoids Jantsy because she fears that he disapproves of what she is doing.
- Which two candidates stand out as different from most of the traders' daughters? How do the rest of the girls treat them?
A) Jewel and Sky stand out from the other candidates. They dress and act differently from the rest of the girls, and are from other parts of Deltora. The other girls avoid them, keeping as far away from them as they can.

Chapters 8–12

- What does Britta think that Mab wants to talk to her about?
A) Britta thinks that Mab has found out who her father is, and is going to tell her to leave and not come back.
- What does Mab really want to talk to Britta about?
A) Britta has done very well on the test and Mab wants to talk to her about her answers, and ask her some more questions.
- When Britta writes the note to Captain Gripp she uses a secret code. What does the secret message really say?
A) The message really says 'They will be worried at home. Bosun must take note saying I am safe. Britta.'
- When Britta wakes up in the cellar, how does she know she is not on the street any more?
A) Britta can tell she is not on the street any more because the air is stale and she can smell damp and mould.
- Why is Master Sheevers/Shivers hiding?
A) Master Sheevers is hiding so that no one will take him away from the lanterns he is guarding.
- What is Master Sheevers collecting and why?

- A) Master Sheevers believes that if he can collect all 61 of the lanterns he made for the Resistance, then maybe his old life and skill will come back to him as well.
- What is the bargain that Britta makes with Master Sheevers?
A) Britta promises to give Master Sheevers the lantern she has bought, and to not tell anyone where he is, if he will let her go. Master Sheevers agrees, but insists that she also take a candlestick in trade to replace the lantern.

Chapters 13–17

- What is the exact wording of the Rosalyn Trust deed regarding candidates for the position of Apprentice?
A) The trust deed says ‘the highest scoring candidates, three at the least, are to be taken on a trading voyage in the finest ship of the fleet’.
- What is the traditional understanding of the trust’s passage about candidates?
A) Traditionally, it has been understood that only the three highest scoring candidates are to be taken on a trading voyage.
- Why is the exact wording so important to Britta and the other girls?
A) Because the exact wording is ‘three at least’ it means that all four of the top scoring candidates can go on the voyage, and there is no need for another tie-breaker.
- What is Zoolah’s connection to Britta and her father?
A) Zoolah’s brother Mikah was the captain of the *Star of Deltora*, who died trying to bring the ship home after Britta’s father abandoned him and his crew for the Staff of Tier.
- What are the ‘attendants’ that Lean Alice talks to Britta about?
A) They are the shadows that have been staying around her, and are the wraiths that serve the King of Tier.
- How did Zoolah die?
A) Zoolah died of a heart attack when the freak wave hit.
- What caused the freak wave?
A) The freak wave was caused by the wraiths that the King of Tier had sent back to find out more about Britta and where the *Star of Deltora* was going to be sailing.

Creative Activities

- *Shadows of the Master* is written mostly from the point of view of Britta. Choose one of the other characters in the novel and write a brief passage describing some of the events from their point of view. Some of the characters whose viewpoint might be interesting to think about are Jantsy, Jewel, Lean Alice, Mab, and Captain Gripp.
- At the very beginning of the story, the Isle of Tier is described as ‘an emerald ringed with black on a silver sea’. Create a mixed-media artwork showing your vision of the Isle of Tier. You might want to see what other descriptions of the isle you can find in the book, and incorporate features from them into your artwork.

- As the story unfolds, the nature of the relationships that different people have with both Britta and her father become clearer. Make a character map to show some of these relationships. On an A4 piece of paper, write Britta's name in a circle on the far left of the page, and her father's name in a circle on the far right. (You might want to turn the paper so that it is in 'landscape' orientation.) In the middle of the page, write the names of the characters who know and interact with both Britta and Dare. Draw a line from each character to Britta, and write on the line something about the relationship that they have. Do the same from each character to Britta's father, and then from one minor character to another. Some of the characters that you should include are: Mab, Sorrel, Captain Gripp, Master Sheevers/Shivers, Lean Alice, Zoolah, and Mikah. Once you have finished your character map, write a couple of paragraphs outlining what you see as the most important facts about the relationships between the various characters in the story, and what they think of each other.
- Britta uses a secret code to write a message to Captain Gripp that looks like a completely different message to anyone who doesn't know the code. Use the same code to write a secret message of your own. Remember that the 'disguise' message has to sound like it makes sense!
- In the world of Deltora and the nine seas, large ocean-going sailing ships are used to carry people and goods between one place and another. In our world sailing ships were used for hundreds of years to do exactly the same thing, and there are many stories, legends, and songs that have been written about the great sailing ships of our world. Either individually or in small groups, research sailing ships and find a story, song, or poem about them. Write your story or poem on a large piece of paper and create an illustrated border. Share your story/poem with the class, and use the illustrated works to create a classroom wall display.
- As a small child, Britta used to love playing with the model of the *Star of Deltora*, and learnt where all the cabins and parts of the real ship were. On a large piece of paper, design a ship of your own that you would like to travel on. You will want to show both the inside and the outside, and to draw your design in both plan (from above), and cross-section elevation (from the side, as if it were cut in half). For a challenge you can try making a model ship based on your design using cardboard or paper.
- The last two questions on the candidates' test were in some ways the most important, and the hardest. If you were sitting the test, what answers would you have given to the last two questions? Write a brief paragraph outlining the answer you would have chosen for the second-last question, and why you chose it. Then write a paragraph answering the last question. Share your answers with the class, and discuss which ones sound convincing and why.

- Choose one of the other books from a series set in Emily Rodda's world of the nine seas. (Deltora Quest, Rowan of Rin, the Three Doors). After reading the book, write a brief report about it. Model your report on the 'blurb' often found on the back or inside the cover of a book. The key points of a blurb are to share enough about the story to interest a potential reader, but not so much that it gives away the ending and ruins all the surprises! Present your report to the class and share your experience of the book. In your verbal presentation, also discuss if and how the setting and characters are related to the setting and characters of *Shadows of the Master*.
- During the trading competition, Britta spends her money on a pottery lantern, which she then trades to Master Sheevers/Shivers for a candlestick. Use air-drying clay or salt-dough to make a candlestick or candle holder of your own. Make it as elegant as you can, and decorate it with a glossy paint. You might also want to use glitter or some stick-on 'gems' as well to really make it shine!
- In her author's note at the end of the book, Emily Rodda says that *Some of the nine seas islands are large, and some are small, but they all have their own rich history and their own stories ... there are hundreds of islands in the nine seas. And there are thousands more stories to tell.* Invent an island of your own that might be found in the world of the nine seas, and write a short fantasy adventure story describing the island and what is there. You can create your own character to be the protagonist of your story, or you might want to use one that you have met in one of Emily Rodda's books already. Remember to use your imagination, because there is a lot of opportunity for adventure and wonder in a world where magic is real!

Further Reading

If you liked *Star of Deltora*, then there are several other fantasy books by Emily Rodda that you can read. You might enjoy the Rowan of Rin, Deltora Quest, or Three Doors series which are all set in the world of the nine seas, or you could try the Rondo series and read about a fantasy world that is connected to our own everyday one as well.