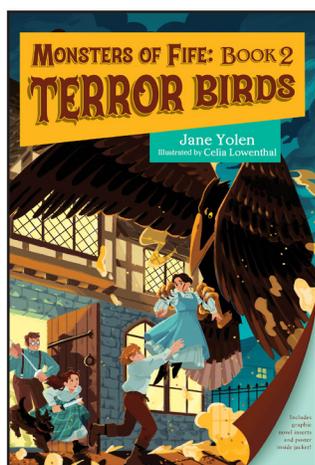


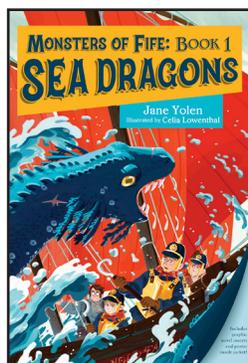
# MONSTERS OF FIFE: BOOK 2 TERROR BIRDS

## READER'S GROUP GUIDE



978-1-62354-476-8 HC

### Also Available:



978-1-62354-473-7 HC

### About the Book

It's been a quiet seven months since their encounter with the fearsome sea dragons, and Cat's Royal & Ancient monster hunting team are nearing the end of the school term. Then Cat finds a dog collar on the beach, and that night she dreams of a huge, howling Black Dog—a warning of a new threat to the village of Anstruther. The hunt for the terror birds is on, and Cat, Jamie, Calum, and Mr. Harris must figure out what's going on before the next attack.

Join Cat and her friends as they adventure through a fantastical 1880s Scotland in this second installment of the Monsters of Fife series. Graphic novel panels are interspersed throughout the novel for gripping moments of action.

### About the Author

Jane Yolen is the award-winning author of over 400 books for children and adults, including *Owl Moon*, *The Devil's Arithmetic*, and *How Do Dinosaurs Say Good Night?* Her work has earned her the Caldecott Medal, two Nebula Awards, three World Fantasy Awards, the Science Fiction Writers of America's Grand Master Award, and the World Fantasy Lifetime Achievement Award, among many others. Known for her poetry, fantasy, and storytelling, she has received six honorary doctorates and is a beloved voice in children's literature.

### About the Illustrator

Celia Lowenthal is a New York-based fantasy illustrator and comics writer/artist. She graduated summa cum laude from Maryland Institute College of Art in 2016 with a BFA in illustration and a minor in literary studies. She was the 2015 recipient of the Will Eisner Scholarship Award from the Society of Illustrators.



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1. This book is set in June 1891. How long ago from the present day is this date? What was happening in the world at this time? Why do you think the author chose to set this book as a historical fantasy rather than a modern fantasy?
2. Chapter One begins with a decrease in monster activity in Fife. Why do you think the monsters have become scarce?
3. How does Cat learn what a Black Dog is? Are you surprised to learn about Nan's monster-hunting past? Why do you think Cat didn't know her nan was a monster hunter?
4. What does Nan mean when she says Cat should greet the dog "master to minion"? What is a minion? Does Soot act as a minion to Cat during this story?
5. What are some of the stories and names surrounding the Black Dog legend? Is it possible for all of them to be true? Can you think of other legendary creatures or people with multiple conflicting stories or descriptions?
6. Why do Cat and Mr. Harris quote from *Alice in Wonderland*? Do you have a favorite quote from a story or movie that you sometimes use in real life?
7. What is a war cry? When do Cat and her friends use their war cry, "Up the Royal & Ancient!"?
8. Cat describes the story of the Bass Rock as "partly a history lesson, a warning, a ghost story, and a tale of nature claiming back her own" (page 37). Can you identify each of these elements in the story that follows? What makes the story of the Bass Rock so complicated? Is there a place near you that, like the Bass Rock, has a complicated history or legend?
9. What scientific skills do Cat and her team use in their R&A work? Why is it important for them to try to understand monsters scientifically?
10. How does the town council react to news of the giant bird? Why do you think they don't believe the claims of the R&A team?
11. What is a terror bird? How long ago did they live? What other ancient animals lived at the same time as terror birds? What connection does Cat's team find between the giant birds on Bass Rock and the terror birds?
12. According to the captain of the *Saltire*, "We in the Royal Navy are no longer allowed to impress sailors, nor can we just grab them from the streets as in the good old days." What did it mean to "impress" a sailor? Have you heard the term "press-gang" before?
13. Who are Anne Bonny and Mary Read? Why does Cat invoke their names when told that girls can't be enlisted in the British Navy?
14. What does the R&A team learn by inspecting the dead bird aboard the *Saltire*? If you were trying to learn about a new species by inspecting a specimen, what would you look for?

15. What does Cat learn about Mary Anning? What does she suspect about Mr. Harris's motives in giving her this particular book to read? Why does Cat think that pterosaurs and their modern terror birds are connected?
16. How does the schoolhouse respond to the risk of a terror bird attack? If your town had a sudden terror bird infestation, how do you think schools, workplaces, and other institutions would respond? Do you think Mr. Harris, Janet, and the other people responsible for running the town and school should have done anything differently?
17. Cat uses a quote from a Robert Burns poem to remind the children to be as quiet as mice. What do the words in this quote mean? Read the full poem, "[To a Mouse](#)," and discuss: What inspired the poet to write this poem? What does this poem say about the relationship between humans and animals? In the last stanza, why does the poet say the mouse is "blest, compar'd wi' me"?
18. This book contains many allusions to the tense relationship between Scotland and England. What do you know about the history between Scotland and England? At the time this book is set, what is the political relationship between Scotland and England? Is it different than the political relationship between these countries today?
19. Who comes along with the R&A on their hunting voyage to the Bass Rock? How did they know to come along? Is it a benefit or a hindrance to have these others along?
20. What plan does Cat suggest for dealing with the terror birds? If you were at this R&A meeting, would you be for or against Cat's plan? What are some of the pros and cons? How does the town prepare to execute Cat's plan?
21. What does parthenogenesis mean?
22. Read the author's note at the end about the Edinburgh Zoo. Would it have been operational during Cat's lifetime? Look up your nearest zoo's history and find out when it was founded. Is this zoo older or younger than the Edinburgh Zoo?