

merrow

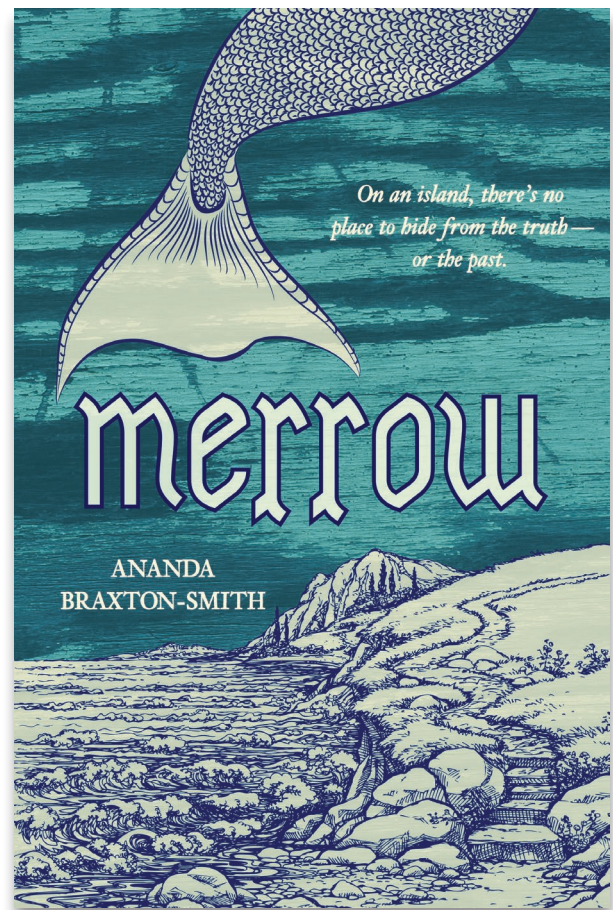
by ANANDA BRAXTON-SMITH

ABOUT THE BOOK

The people of Carrick Island have been whispering behind Neen's back ever since her father drowned and her mother disappeared. The townspeople say her mother was a merrow and has returned to the ocean. Neen, caught in her hazy new in-between self—not a child, but not quite grown up—can't help but wonder if the villagers are right. But if her mother was a merrow, then what does that make Neen?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ANANDA BRAXTON-SMITH is a journalist and author. *Merrow* is her first book with Candlewick Press. She lives in Australia.



HC: 978-0-7636-7924-8
Also available as an e-book


CANDLEWICK PRESS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is it so important to know who you are and where you came from?
2. Do you think Neen will ever tell Auntie Ushag what she's realized about the bones they found?
3. Neen comes to the conclusion that her mother was never a merrow, and that merrows might not even exist. What does she think about Ma Slevin's other stories about the kraken or the changeling that took Scully's place?
4. All kinds of things wash up on the shores of Marrey Cove. If you were Neen, what would you hope to find as you combed the beach?
5. Why would we sometimes rather believe in otherworldly explanations than the truth?
6. At the start of the book, Neen is a dreamer and Ushag is very no-nonsense. But by the end, their roles have switched somewhat: Ushag is the one with the fanciful dreams and Neen has come to accept a practical reality. What do you think of this shift? Is it for the better?
7. When Neen listens to Ma Slevin's stories, she feels like all sorts of magical things are possible. Has there ever been a story that made you feel this way? What was it?
8. The tales that the villagers whisper about Neen and her parents are sometimes harmless, sometimes hurtful. Why can it be dangerous to assume you know someone's story and decide for yourself what's true?
9. Ushag is a complex character. Were you as surprised as Neen was when you learned about her childhood and watched her change?
10. How do you think Ulf's arrival effected the changes that occurred over the summer? What do you think might have happened if he had never appeared?
11. Do you think Neen's acceptance of what happened to her mother is a sign that she is growing up?



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