

# Educator Guide

## About *Daybreak on Raven Island*

From the critically acclaimed author of *Midnight at the Barclay Hotel* comes a thrilling new middle grade mystery novel inspired by Alcatraz Prison.

Tori, Marvin, and Noah would rather be anywhere else than on the seventh-grade class field trip to Raven Island prison. Tori would rather be on the soccer field, but her bad grades have benched her until further notice; Marvin would rather be at the first day of a film festival with his best friend, Kevin; and Noah isn't looking forward to having to make small talk with his classmates at this new school.

But when the three of them stumble upon a dead body in the woods, miss the last ferry back home, and then have to spend the night on Raven Island, they find that they need each other now more than ever. They must work together to uncover a killer, outrun a motley ghost-hunting crew, and expose the age-old secrets of the island all before daybreak.

The questions and activities are structured to meet Common Core Standards. Some questions may be harder for the lower grades, so consider answering the more complex questions together as a class.

**Have fun, and thanks for reading!**

# A Note from the Author

Thank you for choosing to read *Daybreak on Raven Island* with your class! I had so much fun researching and writing the book; I hope that translates as you're reading.

*Daybreak on Raven Island* started with setting, as most of my books do. I was looking for a new (mysterious) place to spark my imagination, and quickly thought of Alcatraz. The island has a such a scary vibe, and as I was doing my research, I also found that there are a lot of unsolved mysteries surrounding the island. Including a prison break in 1962...

Three inmates escaped Alcatraz, and no one ever knew if they drowned or made it to shore. I decided to take this real-life story and create my own mystery. I gave Tori, Marvin and Noah the task to solve the case of the prison break from Raven Island, and I added a present-day murder case, plus few ghosts to make things more complicated. Plus, I added a mystery to Raven Island—you'll have to read the book to find out what that is.

As I learned more of the terrible conditions of Alcatraz and how things are still not always fair today, I tried to shed some light on this through Tori's character. I learned that one in 28 kids in America has had an incarcerated parent, which is something kids often keep a secret. And that must be really, really hard. I hope *Daybreak on Raven Island* sparks some thought or conversation, so those kids don't feel alone in carrying this burden.

If your class has questions, or if you just want to talk books, Alcatraz and mystery (and ghosts!), contact me for a (virtual) visit via my website: [www.ftbradley.com](http://www.ftbradley.com)

All best in reading,

Fleur





# Pre-Reading Activities

## 1. What is a mystery?

*Daybreak on Raven Island* is a mystery: the kid characters in the book are trying to solve the mystery of the Raven Island prison break, and later in the book, find the killer.

### Activities:

1. What do you know about mysteries? What ingredients does a mystery story usually have? Write down what you know.
2. Are there any words you would expect to find? Try brainstorming some of the terms you know as a class. Make a vocabulary list.

**\*\*Correlates to Common Core Standards Reading Literature: Craft and Structure RL. 5.4, 6.4; Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use L. 5.4, 6.4**

## 2. Ghost stories

*Daybreak on Raven Island* is also a scary book: there are ghostly elements as part of the story, and the ghost hunting crew keeps looking for ghosts.

### Activities:

1. Can you identify what ghostly elements might be in the book from looking at the cover, or the map of Raven Island? Write down what clues you see.
2. What makes something scary? A dark room, strange noises? Discuss as a class what you think is scary, and what you think could be in the book.

**\*\*Correlates to Common Core Standards Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details RL 5.1, 5.3, 6.1, 6.3; Writing: Text Types and Purposes W. 5.3a, 5.3b, 6.3a, 6.3b; Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas SL. 5.4, 6.4**

# During Reading



## 1. Character study

*Daybreak on Raven Island* opens with the class field trip, and we meet Tori, Marvin and Noah. Each of the kids is very different. They're not friends at the start of the book. Each has a problem or secret they're struggling with.

### Activities:

1. Choose one of the three main characters in the book and create a character introduction. Add their name, physical description (as you can draw from the text), and character traits.
2. During your next classroom session, each student should introduce themselves to the teacher and class without mentioning the character's name. Can you guess who is speaking?

**\*\*Correlates to Common Core Standards Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details RL 5.1, 5.3, 6.1, 6.3; Writing: Text Types and Purposes W. 5.3a, 5.3b, 6.3a, 6.3b; Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas SL. 5.4, 6.4**

## 2. Making A Character Cube

*Daybreak on Raven Island* brings together three kid main characters: Marvin, Noah, and Tori. Each are introduced in the first few chapters of the book.

### Activities:

1. Choose one of the kids as your character to make a character cube. Write down five characteristics of your chosen character. Where did you find these in the text? Reference the book and write the page number and passage next to each of your five characteristics.





2. Create a character cube by writing each of the characteristics on a side and draw an illustration on the last side. You can use this link: [Cube Creator | Read Write Think](#)

**\*\*Correlates to Common Core Standards Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details RL. 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 6.1, 6.3**

### **3. Secrets**

Everyone is hiding something (even the three kids) or have a secret. By the end, all secrets are revealed, and the killer is caught in Marvin's movie.

#### **Activities:**

1. Write down each of the kids' names as you read. Can you find their secret mentioned in the text? Reference the page number and where you found the secret.
2. When were their secrets revealed? Reference the text again.

3. Discuss with the class: is it okay to tell a lie or keep a secret? Can you say why, or why not? What do you think?

Tori keeps a big secret, one that makes her act out in anger. Can keeping a secret be harmful?

**\*\*Correlates to Common Core Standards Reading Literature: Craft and Structure RL. 5.6, 6.6; Key Ideas and Details RL. 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 6.1, 6.3; Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas SL. 5.4, 6.4**

#### **4. Do you think Marvin, Tori and Noah missed any clues?**

Discuss with the class who could have committed the crime, and why. Talk about your prime suspect, and why you think that character is guilty.

**\*\*Correlates to Common Core Standards Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details RL. 5.1, 6.1; Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas SL. 5.4, 6.4**

#### **5. How is it all going to end?**

By the start of Part VI, Marvin, Tori and Noah are planning their movie, and inviting all the suspects to join them at the cemetery.

#### **Activities:**

1. How do you think the story will unfold? Based on your prediction of the killer, how will things play out?
2. Are there parts early in the story that make you come to your conclusions about the ending? Find references in the text and write them down.
3. Discuss with the class what you each think will happen next, and why.
4. Once the class is done reading *Daybreak on Raven Island*, look back at these thoughts. Did anyone predict the ending, or who is guilty of the crime?

**\*\*Correlates to Common Core Standards: Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details RL. 5.1; Craft and Structure RL. 6.5; Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas SL. 5.4, 6.4**



# After Reading



## 1. Character Changes

By the end of *Daybreak on Raven Island*, Marvin, Noah, and Tori have all changed. Each has learned something from their night on Raven Island, and each had a secret that was revealed.

### Activities:

1. Write down each of the three kids' names, and what they were like before the story began. Look back in the book and reference the text.
2. How did their secret get revealed? Reference the text.
3. How have Tori, Noah and Marvin changed individually? Could they have shared what was bothering them sooner? How would that have made the story different?

**\*\*Correlates to Common Core Standards Reading Literature: Craft and Structure RL. 5.6, 6.6; Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas SL. 5.4, 6.4**



## 2. Letter to the Author

Did your class like *Daybreak on Raven Island*? You can write a letter to the author! These activities are a great practice to write a standard letter and address an envelope.

### Activities:

1. Write a letter, including an introduction in paragraph one (where you tell the author about yourself and your class), any questions you may have, and comments about the book—what did you like? Was there anything you didn't like? Close with your name.

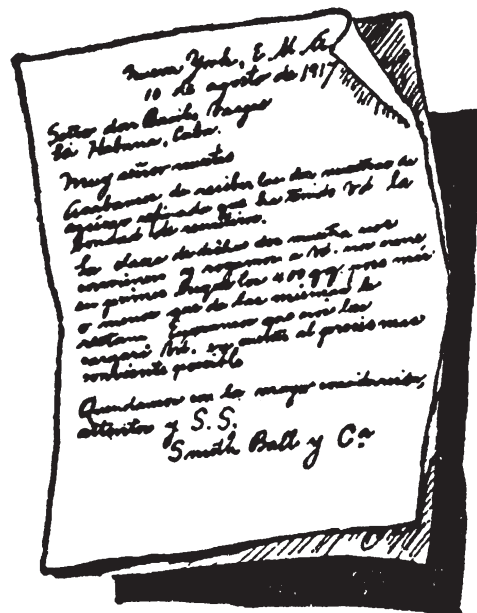
2. Share your letter with a fellow student, and revise where you think it's needed.

3. Print out the letters and prepare to mail.

Contact Fleur at [fleurbradley25@gmail.com](mailto:fleurbradley25@gmail.com) for an address.

Show students how to address an envelope.

\*\*Correlates to Common Core Standards Writing: Text Types and Purposes W. 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2; Writing: Production and Distribution of Writing W. 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6



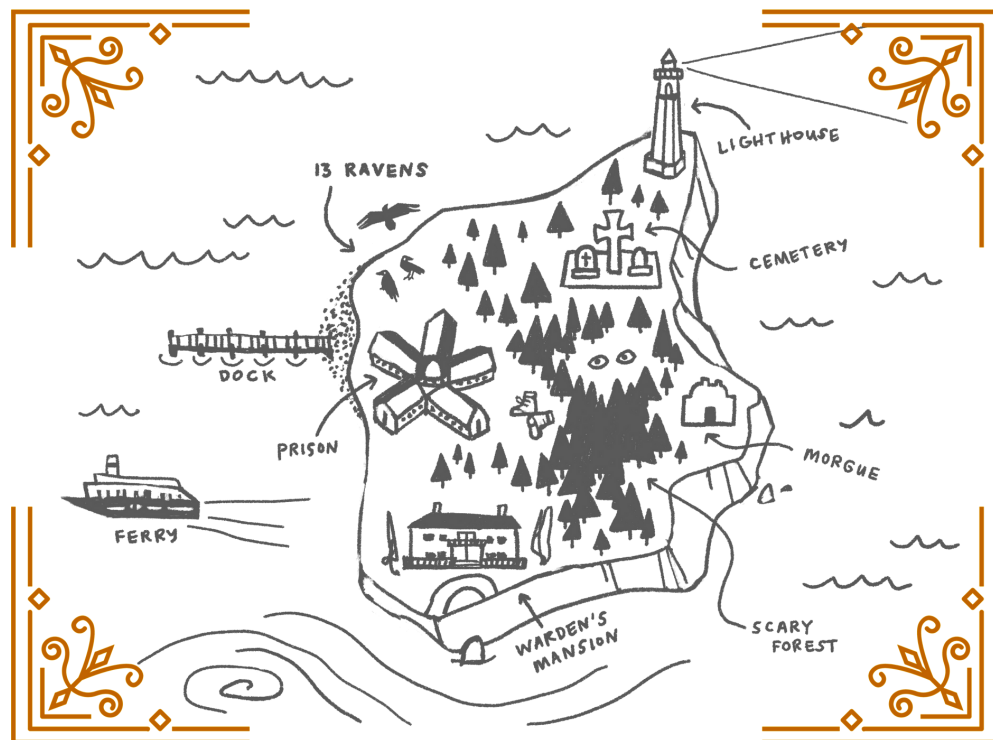
### 3. Raven Island Map

As you can tell from the story, Raven Island can be a confusing place. It's easy to get lost without a map...

#### Activities:

1. If you were to imagine an island, what scary stuff would you put on the map? Make a list and add drawings. Tip: check the Raven Island page on Fleur Bradley's website for an activity sheet.
2. Build your own island! Make a map, and add drawings like in the book where possible.
3. Who would visit your island? Can you imagine the stories that could take place?

\*\*Correlates to Common Core Standards Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details  
RL 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3.



map by Amanda Smith



#### **4. Raven Island Travel Brochure**

Raven Island is a scary, haunted place, but can you imagine how it could be an interesting place to visit, like the real-life Alcatraz is today?

##### **Activities:**

1. Make a list of places that are possible on the island.
2. Create a tourist brochure, using the information you gathered from the book. How would you entice people to visit Raven Island?

You can go to: <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/travel-brochures-highlighting-setting-961.html>

**\*\*Correlates to Common Core Standards Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details RL. 5.3; Craft and Structure RL. 6.5; Writing: Text Types and Purposes.**



# Extra Activities

## Go on a Ghost Hunting Adventure!

1. Are there any supposedly haunted locations in your area? Make a list and look for historical facts about your location. Research the stories that are associated with the place.
2. Can you disprove the evidence of haunted activity? Oftentimes, what looks like a haunting is just a shadow, or a trick of the eye. You can use the scientific method to investigate.
3. Visit historically significant places with the class, either in person or online; often, there are a lot of stories and lore surrounding these locations. Discuss the difference between historical fact and stories that may have become tall tales over time.



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# About the Author

Fleur Bradley is the author of the (scary) middle-grade mystery *Daybreak on Raven Island*, and award-winning mystery *Midnight at the Barclay Hotel* (Viking/Penguin Random House).

Her story *The Perfect Alibi* appeared in Mystery Writers of America's middle-grade anthology *Super Puzzletastic Mysteries*, edited by Chris Grabenstein (HarperCollins). Fleur regularly does school and Skype visits, as well as librarian and educator conference talks on reaching reluctant readers. Originally from the Netherlands, she now lives in Colorado Springs with her husband and two daughters, and entirely too many cats.

Find out more about Fleur Bradley, and learn how you can invite her for a (virtual) author visit at [www.ftbradley.com](http://www.ftbradley.com)

Email Fleur: [fleurbradley25@gmail.com](mailto:fleurbradley25@gmail.com)

## Reviews of *Daybreak on Raven Island*:

"There is an overall tone of real and imagined horror throughout. The island itself, reluctant to release its secrets or people, is spookily personified: trees whisper to the three friends, plants attack them, and passage of time seems to shift. Horror devices and skillful pacing are employed to great effect.

**An enjoyable paranormal mystery imbued with social commentary."**

**–Kirkus Reviews**

