

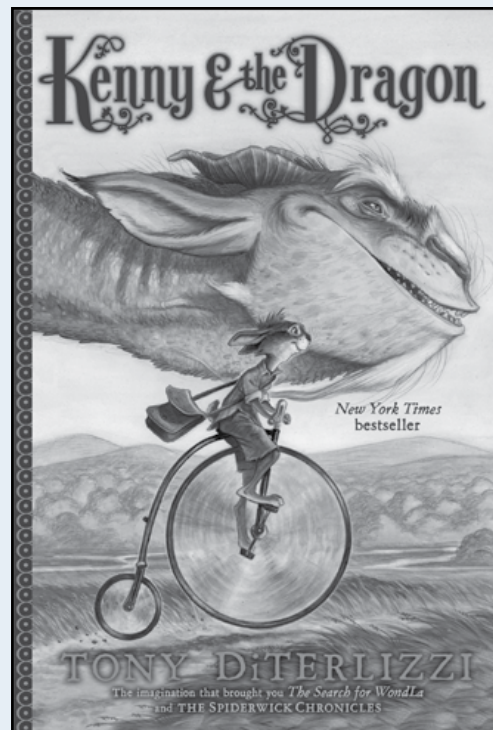
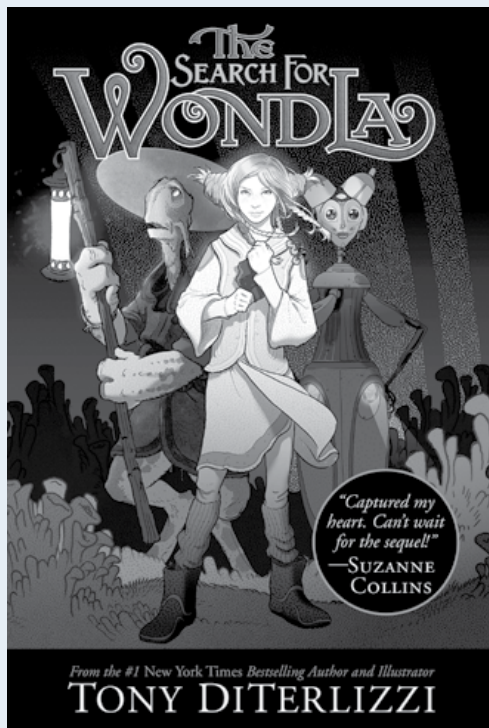
A Teacher's Guide to

# The SEARCH FOR WONDLa

and

# Kenny & the Dragon

by Tony DiTerlizzi



# A Teacher's Guide to The SEARCH FOR WONDLa





## About the Book

When a marauder destroys the underground sanctuary where Eva Nine was raised in by the robot Muthr, the twelve-year-old girl is forced to flee aboveground. Eva Nine is searching for anyone else like her, for she knows that other humans exist because of an item she treasures—a scrap of cardboard that depicts a young girl, an adult, and a robot, with the strange word, “WondLa.” Tony DiTerlizzi honors traditional children’s literature in this original space-age adventure: one that is as complex as an alien planet but as simple as a child’s wish for a place to belong.

Visit [WONDLa.com](http://WONDLa.com) to experience WondLa-vision and more!



## Discussion Questions

1. What elements make up a family? Does color, size, or shape make a difference in these elements? Is it possible for a robot to be a family member?
2. Was Muthr a good mother to Eva? Was she able to teach Eva life lessons? Did she have a loving spirit? How does a robot show love?
3. Muthr believed computer technology was omniscient. Was Muthr correct in her beliefs or not? Give examples from the book to support your answers.
4. Muthr had a list of six basic survival skills for humans: 1. Trust technology. 2. Signal others. 3. Find shelter. 4. Create fire. 5. Procure food and water. 6. Know first aid. How did these skills help or hinder Eva’s survival in the real world? Given her experience, did Eva find the list was in correct order for survival? Explain your answer.
5. Lewis and Clark, John Audubon, and Charles Darwin are all greatly admired people who captured “new” creatures, observed them, killed them, and dissected them all in an attempt to understand them. Are Zin, Besteel, Queen Ojo, and the taxidermist any different from these men?

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6. As Eva begins her journey, she meets a cerulean named Rovender. Is there any significance to his name? As an adult, Rovender views his relationship to Eva very differently than Eva sees it. How do they view their relationship to each other? As the book progresses, does their relationship change? If so, how does it change?
  7. In Roman mythology, who or what does Orbona represent? Is there any significance to Eva's story?
  8. While attempting to escape from Besteel, Eva was saved by the Wandering Forest. Rovender tells Eva he has never seen a forest respond as it did. Why did the forest come to Eva's aid? In your opinion, what does it mean?
  9. When Eva is visiting Lacus, Besteel attacks her. Even though Eva is surrounded by villagers, no one responds to her cry for help. Have there been times in your life when you have felt isolated and alone even though there were people all around you? Give an example.
  10. As Eva walks through the village of Lacus, she takes out her omnipod to take pictures. Rovender is upset and tells her several times to put it away. What is wrong with taking pictures? How can taking pictures be harmful?
  11. The author has said he was inspired by classic stories, fairy tales, and movies while writing this book. Eva's WondLa belongs to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Can you see any similarities from other stories in this book? If so, which ones?
  12. Would you describe Eva as a resourceful person who uses her skills and wit to solve her problems? Give reasons to support your answer.

## Activities

1. Have the students imagine being placed in a new surrounding where everything they see and touch is unfamiliar. They have no idea what is good or bad. There is no one to ask for help who can understand them. Discuss as a class how they would survive this situation. After discussing this, ask the students to write an essay on what they would do. Have them be realistic in their reactions. This does not have to be a science fiction assignment. Many times in our lives we are placed in unfamiliar situations and must learn how to live with the circumstances that now surround us.
2. Either use a webcam or visit [WondLa.com](http://WondLa.com) to view the 3-D map of Eva Nine's journey. Viewing this augmented reality allows one to follow the sights and sounds of Eva's journey. Does this help bring the story alive? Is there anything on the map that is different

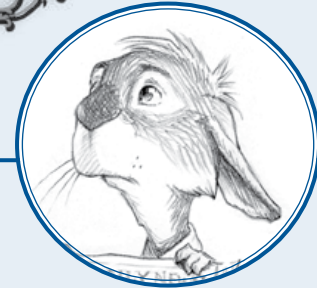


from what students envisioned while reading the book? Compare the map of Orbona in the book with the computer map on the website. What is similar and what is different?

3. Artificial Intelligence is making computers more lifelike. In the book, Muthr shows signs of humanity through her hesitation about new circumstances and emotions. Muthr, because she is a robot, believes that technology is to be trusted completely. She becomes vulnerable when her data is incomplete. How does this relate to real life where one can become vulnerable when placed in new and unusual situations?
4. Eva was able to communicate with Otto through telepathy. Go to the library or search online for articles on telepathy. Discuss with the class their findings. Is there such a thing? Is it possible for certain species to understand each other without using normal forms of communication?
5. In the back of the book Tony DiTerlizzi has placed a copy of the Orbonian alphabet. Have students use this alphabet to interpret the writing on Hostia and Fiscian Haveport's wall. Examine other illustrations in the book and look for more examples of the alphabet in the illustrations that would add to the students' understanding of the book.
6. Have the students write letters to one another in the classroom using the Orbonian alphabet. Have the students exchange their letters and see if they are able to decipher them.
7. Take a trip to a museum or do a virtual museum tour online. What kinds of items are there in the museum? Are all the items inanimate or are there live exhibits? Do any of the exhibits have any taxidermy specimens? What is the purpose of museums?
8. Research friendship bracelets. What is their purpose? Where did they originate? What is the significance of the friendship bracelet Eva Nine gave to Rovender? Did Rovender act like a friend when Eva presented him with one? Discuss the importance of the bracelet from both Eva's and Rovender's point of view. Have the students make friendship bracelets.
9. When Eva was visiting the Halcyonus village, Fiscian taught Eva a traditional song based on the Halcyonus culture. Review the traditional fishing song in *The Search for WondLa*. Discuss with the students other traditional songs from their childhood. Have the students write their own song based upon a tradition in their family. Discuss why traditions are important.
10. Ask your students to compare Eva Nine to a comic superhero. How are they similar and how are they different? Does Eva Nine have any superpowers? If she does, what are they? If she doesn't, how does she manage to survive in her dangerous environment?

# Kenny & the Dragon

## Discussion Guide



### About the Book

**W**hat do you do when your new best buddy has been designated a scourge in the community and marked for imminent extermination? Just ask Kenny Rabbit. When the simple folks in the sleepy little village of Roundbrook catch wind that there's a dragon running loose in the countryside, they get the wrong idea, and the stage is set for a fight to the death. So it's up to Kenny to give his neighbors front-row seats to one of the best known battles in history—the legendary showdown between St. George and the Dragon—without losing a friend in the fray. *New York Times* bestselling author Tony DiTerlizzi puts a fun-filled, theatrical spin on Kenneth Grahame's classic tale of subterfuge and showmanship with this lighthearted romp.

Visit [DiTerlizzi.com](http://DiTerlizzi.com)  
to hear a chapter from  
*Kenny & the Dragon*,  
get wallpapers, and more!



# Kenny & the Dragon

## Discussion Questions



1. Are we meant to think that Kenny's solution to the battle between George and Grahame is deceptive and tricky or a clever and courageous act to save his friends?
2. Is Kenny's "book smart" knowledge better than his father's "street smarts"?
3. Does Grahame's love of the theater have any influence on Kenny's plan to save his friends?
4. Does the king know in advance that the battle is an act?
5. How does the game of chess mimic life?
6. How can Grahame be so sure "there will be no exterminations—imminent or otherwise"?
7. How was Kenny inspired by his friends to solve the problem of fighting to the death?
8. Are we meant to think Grahame is a coward for refusing to fight George?
9. Grahame described his fellow dragons as being "earnest." What does this mean? How did that apply to his life?
10. Does Kenny or any of his friends show any growth in their characters by the end of the book?



# Kenny & the Dragon

## Word Scramble



**F**IRST, unscramble each word below. To make it a little easier, all of the answers can be found in the word bank to the right. Once you've found all of the answers, write the letters in the circles in the blank spaces at the bottom of the page to answer the question.

### WORD BANK

bane	earnest	insolent
bantling	exploit	oblivious
carnage	libation	sprightly
chide	imminent	reciprocate
codger	impudent	urchin

a g r a n c e	__○__	n a b e	___○
d i c e h	___○	t o n e s i l n	_____○
t i n g l a n b	○_____	r i c h u n	___○__
t e m p i d u n	___○__	t i m m i n e n	_____○
t a b i l i o n	○_____	p i e c r a t e o r c	○_____
t r e e n a s	___○__		
d o g r c e	___○__		
o x l e p t i	_____○		
o o v s i l i u b	○_____		
l i p s y h r t g	___○__		

What do Kenny and Grahame enjoy doing together?

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reading together  
libation  
sprightly  
reciprocate  
impudent  
oblivious  
imminent  
urchin  
bantling  
exploit  
codger  
insolent  
bane  
earnest  
carnage





# Kenny & the Dragon

## Literary Strands



These literary strands fall within the guidelines of the IRA/NCTE National Standards.

1. *Kenny & the Dragon* is based upon the story *The Reluctant Dragon* written by Kenneth Grahame. Using a chart, compare Kenny to the Boy, Grahame to the Dragon, and George to St. George. How closely do the characters compare? What differences are there? If there are any differences, why do you think those differences were made?
2. What's in a name? The author pays homage to *The Reluctant Dragon* through the use of names. Discuss why the author uses the names Kenny, Grahame, and George.
3. *Kenny & the Dragon* is set in the time of knights, dragons, and armor. Go to the library and research the different types of armor worn by knights. Research the coats of arms that knights had inscribed on their shields. What did the coat of arms mean? In battle, how did knights recognize their enemies from their fellow knights? Have the students make up their own coat of arms.
4. Discuss the various themes from the book including friendship, tolerating differences, responsibility, honesty, pacifism, and knowledge.
  - a. Kenny believes in being honest by correcting *The King's Royal Bestiary*, yet he is willing to deceive the townspeople to save his best friends. Is it possible to be honest all the time? Are there times when it is appropriate to tell lies?
  - b. The idea of responsibility occurs several times in the story. What exactly is responsibility? How does one become responsible? An example of teaching responsibility is Kenny's parents' insistence that he do his homework and wash the dishes before investigating the dragon. Grahame refuses to try to stop the fight and insists that Kenny handle the details of stopping the conflict. Is Grahame neglecting his responsibilities? Father was prepared to drag his family from their home due to the dragon's presence, yet he allows Kenny to investigate the dragon by himself. What is the parents' responsibility in caring for their children?
  - c. Preconceived differences can influence people's behavior. Kenny and his classmates have different opinions on school. How does this difference of opinion affect the way his classmates treat Kenny? Have the students discuss ways Kenny could be accepted by his classmates.



Both George and Grahame have preconceived ideas about each other. How do these impressions cause conflicts in the story? How do they resolve their disagreements?

What was the townspeople's preconceived impression of Grahame? Examine why the people felt Grahame was a danger to the town.

Discuss how one is able to change the impression of others. Consider how difficult it may be to stand up for one's beliefs, especially when it is the opposite of what the majority believes.

d. Define pacifism. Explain Grahame's resistance to fighting to someone who is a conscientious objector.

e. Explore different types of knowledge. Kenny is book smart: he loves academia yet learns that there are different kinds of knowledge. At the end of the story Kenny finds out that his unschooled father is actually very wise. His father is able to "read" the people, discover the leader of a crowd, and is able to "herd" them to do what he wants them to do. Does Kenny learn how to use this technique? If yes, then how? If no, then how could he have used this knowledge to his advantage?

f. Friendship is a strong theme in this story. Kenny is drawn into a dramatic conflict between his two best friends. Is it possible to stay friends with someone if you have different beliefs on some topics, or must friends always think alike?

5. Explore the titles mentioned in the book, including *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *King Lear* by Shakespeare, *Grimm's Fairy Tales* by the Brothers Grimm, and stories by Hans Christian Andersen. What elements found in these stories make them classics?

6. Have the students write an adaptation of *Kenny & the Dragon* as a play, then have them edit and rewrite it. Have the students design and make scenery, gather costumes and props, and arrange for sound effects for their play. Make a videotape of the play ahead of the performance so students may critique their play and make changes if necessary. Perform the play for an audience.

7. Introduce new vocabulary words in context to see if the students are able to determine their meaning.

8. Grahame the dragon loves poetry. Have the students write a poem describing the dragon.

9. Discuss ballads and their importance in history. Have the students write a ballad describing the battle between George and Grahame.



10. Have the students read passages out loud from the story, making sure they pronounce words correctly and use appropriate expression.
11. Discuss different cultural beliefs concerning dragons. For instance, in China the dragon is revered, while in England dragons are considered dangerous, evil, and pestilent. Consider different cultural beliefs, then discuss if dragons exist.
12. Write a composition from Kenny's point of view describing what it feels like to know that one or both of his best friends could be seriously injured or killed if the fight between St. George and Grahame is allowed to happen.
13. Discuss the different character traits of Kenny, Grahame, and George. Chart the different traits for each character. Write the results of the discussion and have the students provide proof from the story to back up their claims.
14. Chess plays an important part in the story, as shown by the chessboard in George's bookshop. Research the history of chess. Understand the necessity of planning, organizing, and checking for problems, variables, and possibilities, then preparing for them; then discuss how Kenny's plan to save his friends used some of the same techniques as chess.
15. Try writing an introduction to the story that doesn't start at the beginning of the story. This is a technique for learning to organize events in sequential order.
16. Retell the story from the point of view of Porky's dad. Does the story change because of the person telling the story?
17. Take one of the illustrations in the story. Closely observe the illustration for one minute. Remove the illustration and try to recall as many details as possible. Share what is remembered with the class. Look again at the illustration for another minute, then write a description of the illustration including as many details as possible.
18. To help the students understand point of view, have two students read out loud a section of the book that has a conversation. After they read, have the students describe the voice of the person they were reading. For example, was the person speaking in a happy, scared, confused, frustrated, or calm voice?
19. Ask the students to come up with solutions to the problem of a dragon who has taken up residence near their town. Choose two students to debate what should be done about the dragon. Make sure they take opposing sides and can substantiate their reasons for their argument.



## About the Author



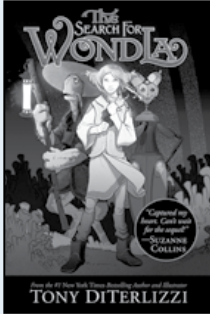
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**T**ONY DITERLIZZI is the author of *The Search for WondLa* and *A Hero for WondLa*. He is also the co-creator and illustrator of the bestselling *Spiderwick Chronicles*, and the author and illustrator of *Jimmy Zangwow's Out-of-this-World MoonPie Adventure*, as well as the Zena Sutherland Award-winning *Ted*. His brilliantly cinematic version of Mary Howitt's classic *The Spider and The Fly* earned Tony his second Zena Sutherland Award and received a Caldecott Honor. Tony's art has graced the covers of such well-known fantasy writers as Peter S. Beagle, J. R. R. Tolkien, Anne McCaffrey, and Greg Bear. He has also made significant contributions to *Dungeons & Dragons* and *Wizards of the Coast's Magic: The Gathering*. His first chapter book, *Kenny & the Dragon*, debuted as a *New York Times* bestseller. He lives with his wife, Angela, and their daughter in western Massachusetts and Jupiter, FL. Visit Tony on the web at [www.diterlizzi.com](http://www.diterlizzi.com).



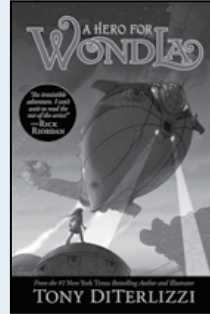
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Guide ISBN 9781442449022 (packs of 10)