



# *The Tail of Emily Windsnap*

## *Liz Kessler*

*Dive into the amazing adventures of Emily Windsnap, half-girl, half-mermaid, and discover a whole new world under the sea.*

### *TEACHERS' NOTES*

*The Tail of Emily Windsnap* is the first in a series of books following the adventures of a spirited heroine who discovers she's a mermaid. These imaginative underwater adventures provide a perfect starting point for work in a range of subject areas for Key Stage 2 pupils. These lesson ideas focus on Literacy and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) but include suggestions for work in Science, Design and Technology and Physical Education.

The Emily Windsnap series works well as the main text to support the National Curriculum Year 4, Unit 2: Stories set in Imaginary Worlds. These lesson ideas combine Literacy with a Design and Technology project where children make an underwater diorama to inspire and help them plan their creative writing.

Friendship is a key theme of the novel. The different relationships Emily has with her friends offers plenty of scope for discussion. The PSHE ideas suggest ways of implementing the key SEAL themes: *Getting on and falling out* and *Relationships*, using the novel as a starting point.

### *SYNOPSIS*

Emily Windsnap has lived on a boat her whole life. But her mother, Mary Penelope, has seemed oddly anxious to keep her away from the water. When she is finally allowed to have swimming lessons, Emily makes a startling discovery.

As she learns more about herself, Emily explores the glorious world under the sea, where Neptune rules and mermaids go to school. And she finds out the truth about the father she has never met.



### MEET THE AUTHOR



Since studying English at university, Liz Kessler has worked as a teacher and a journalist but she has wanted to be a writer from the age of nine, when her first poem, 'Jinx's Shop', was printed in the local newspaper. *The Tail of Emily Windsnap* is her first book for children and it grew out of a poem she wrote about a mermaid. As well as writing, Liz works as an editorial consultant, offering advice to other children's writers.

When Liz started writing the Emily Windsnap books, she lived on a narrowboat on a canal. Last year, she took a year off to travel around Europe in a camper van with her best friend and her dog. She now lives in Cornwall.

Liz has always been fascinated by the sea and all the mysteries of the ocean and the idea that there is so much that we still don't know about. On the subject of mermaids, Liz says, 'To me, mermaids represent the possibilities of what might just exist, on the edges of our imaginations and our world'.

### LESSON IDEAS

#### What is fantasy?

- Discuss with the children what makes this a fantasy story.
- Identify places in the text where the story changes from real life into fantasy.
- In pairs children generate adjectives and adjectival phrases that describe Emily's underwater world.
- Children draw a picture (or start their plan) of an imaginary underwater world.
- They then create sentences about their imaginary world using adjectives and adjectival phrases.

#### Underwater world models (Resource Sheet I – Instructions)

- Over a series of DT sessions children design and make an imaginary underwater world diorama.
- Before the children start planning, explain the process and let them know the materials they will be using. Look at resource sheet I for instructions on making a diorama.

#### Making characters (Activity Sheet I)

- Choose a character from the novel and ask children to suggest adjectives which apply to the character.
- Ask children to choose another character from the story and by talking with partners, think of adjectives which apply to the characters.
- The children can then draw a picture of a character for their own underwater world and surround it with descriptive adjectives.
- Children then start to make their character puppets based on their pictures.

## *The Tail of Emily Windsnap – Teachers' Notes*



**Story structure (Activity Sheet 2 – Story Wave)** see attachment for story mountain guideline – the idea is exactly the same except with an image of a wave to tie in with the book's water theme.

- As a group identify the conflict and resolution from the novel.
- Model how an author might use a Story Wave to plan their ideas and use the main plot points of the novel as an example.
- Children make their own plan using the Story Wave to help structure their ideas.

### **Telling the story**

- In pairs children orally tell their story to a partner using the stick puppets and underwater models.
- Children begin writing their own underwater story.
- When finished children should share stories with the class.

### **Make a book**

- If time allows, children could make their story into a book. Ask them to write a blurb for the back cover and design an illustration for the front cover.

## *PSHE IDEAS: Getting on and falling out / Relationships*

### **Rounds**

- Sit in a circle and ask children to finish off the sentence in their own way.
- Allow children thinking time and the option to pass if they can't think of an answer.
- Choose one of the following examples: I like it when a friend ... When I make a friend I feel ... I keep my friends by ... When I fall out with a friend I make up by ...

### **Making up**

- During the novel it is revealed that Emily and Mandy were once friends.
- Identify the main reasons for the breakdown of their friendship.
- Discuss why Mandy is annoyed and look at the situation from her point of view.
- Ask children to consider the relationship between Emily and Julie.
- How might Julie feel about Emily not going to her house?
- Role-play what Emily could do to make up with Mandy and Julie?
- Script a 'make up' conversation between Emily and Mandy or Emily and Julie.
- Model how you would write a make up letter from Emily to Mandy.
- Children then write a make up letter from Emily to Julie.

## *The Tail of Emily Windsnap – Teachers' Notes*



### **The problem page**

- Ask children to write a letter from Emily to a magazine problem page explaining the situation at school and asking for advice.
- In groups children should imagine that they are the consultants for the magazine problem page.
- The children discuss advice they could give Emily to help solve the problem.
- They then write a response to Emily with their suggestions.

### **Difference – a barrier to friendship?**

- Ask children to think about the friendship between Shona and Emily and suggest reasons why they become friends. What are the possible barriers to their friendship and how do they overcome them?
- Ask the children to think about people they meet. What might be different about their lives, and what might they have in common?

### **Levels of friendship**

- Shona and Emily become best friends but not everyone has a best friend.
- Ask children to think about their own friends and discuss the following questions: Is it better to have a best friend or lots of friends? Do you like all your friends in the same way? Do you like doing the same thing with all of your friends? Do you tend to see some friends only in certain situations? Would you want to see all of your friends all the time?

## *PSHE IDEAS:* **Continue the underwater theme into the playground with these games.**

### **Sharks Vs Mermaids:**

- A variation of 'bull dog': choose two children to be the sharks who will try to catch the mermaids as they swim from one end of the playground (or swimming pool) to the other.
- When a mermaid is caught they become a shark. The game continues until there are no more mermaids.

### **Islands:**

- Rubber mats are placed around the hall to represent islands.
- Children are asked to move between the hoops in different ways. For example doing front crawl, backstroke, like mermaids, fish or crabs.
- When the teacher shouts 'Sharks!' the children have to get onto an island.
- Vary the game by shouting 'Sharks 2' or 'Sharks 3' to denote how many people should be on the island.
- Any left over children can miss a turn then join back in the game.



## **SCIENCE IDEAS: Materials and their properties / Living things and their environment**

- Perform experiments to examine if items float, sink or blow in the wind. Then discuss the effects of these materials on the marine environment.
- Collect a variety of possible marine debris.
- Children separate the materials into different piles (plastic, glass, rubber, metal, paper, wood and cloth).
- Children then predict if the item will float or sink?
- Test each of the items for buoyancy and record the results.
- Discuss the following questions: How do they think that this item ended up in the river or sea? What plants or animals could be affected by the presence of this item?
- Discuss which items they think will be blown around easily? Is there a group of items that behaves similarly (glass or metal, etc.)? How far do they think the item can travel?
- Brainstorm ideas about how people can help reduce the amount of debris in our rivers and oceans.

**Teacher Background:** Any object foreign to the marine ecosystem can be considered marine debris but the term is usually reserved for human-created rubbish. Debris that floats or is easily blown around is more likely to become marine debris. Plastics readily fly and float, and decompose very slowly. Not surprisingly, plastics are one of the most frequently collected types of marine debris.

### **Extensions:**

- Make arrangements for the class to visit a local beach and conduct a clean up.
- Visit a local marine centre to look at real marine life.
- Allow time to research marine plants and animals.

## The Tail of Emily Windsnap – Teachers' Notes



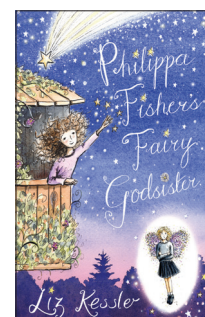
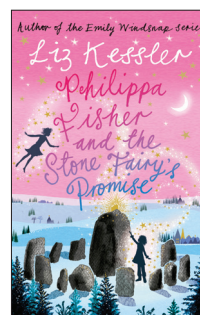
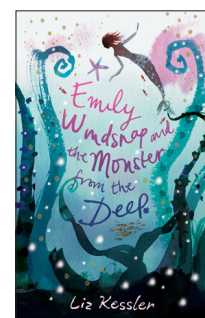
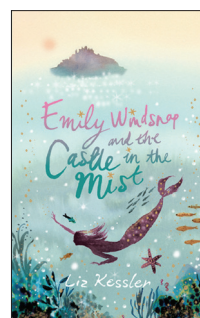
### USEFUL LINKS

Author website - [www.lizkessler.co.uk](http://www.lizkessler.co.uk)

<http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/publications/banda/seal>

### FURTHER READING

The Tail of Emily Windsnap	9781842551660
Emily Windsnap and the Monster from the Deep	9781842551417
Emily Windsnap and the Castle in the Mist	9781842555644
Emily Windsnap and the Siren's Secret	9781444000061
Emily Windsnap's Friendship Book	9781842556832



#### Also available in audio CD:

The Tail of Emily Windsnap	9780752872865
The Castle in the Mist	9780752876054
Monster from the Deep	9780752872933

#### Also available as eBooks:

The Tail of Emily Windsnap	9781444001358
Castle in the Mist	9781444001389
Monster from the Deep	9781444001365
Siren's Secret	9781444000115

#### Also by Liz Kessler

Philippa Fisher's Fairy Godmother	9781842556306
Philippa Fisher and the Dream Maker's Daughter	9781842557839
Philippa Fisher and the Stone Fairy's Promise	9781842559963

#### Also available as eBooks:

Philippa Fisher's Fairy Godmother	9781444001372
Philippa Fisher and the Dream Maker's Daughter	9781444001396
Philippa Fisher and the Stone Fairy's Promise	9781444000108