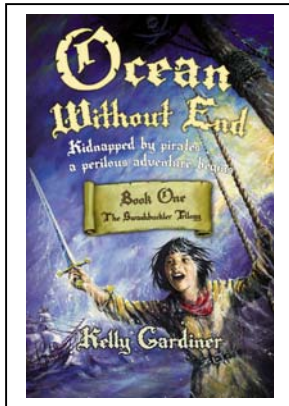




HarperCollins Publishers
Australia

www.harpercollins.com.au



Ocean Without End

Swashbuckler
by Kelly Gardiner

Teaching Guide

Written by Kelly Gardiner, *Ocean Without End* can best be described as a rollicking and fast-paced yarn which will captivate readers in the 9-12-year-old age group. *Ocean Without End* is the first book in a new historical trilogy set in the times of the Napoleonic Wars when the French Navy held sway over the waters of the Mediterranean Sea. This, historically, was also the final act in the 'golden age' of piracy, giving an adventurous and swashbuckling edge to the story. Having a 12-year-old girl as the heroine of the story immediately ensures that the book will appeal to girls, and the pirate setting is always very popular with boys. Colourful characters abound and are introduced on the popular good versus evil level. As the adventure develops, readers will get many surprises as the characters are fleshed out in-depth and themes such as belonging, family and friendship are explored.

Story synopsis

Lily Swann, a 12-year-old girl, lives on the island of Santa Lucia along with her brother Lucas and her mother, Frances. Lily only has vague recollections of her father, a fisherman who disappeared mysteriously many years ago – some say he was taken by pirates, who are notorious in the region. One morning Lily and Lucas notice a large sailing ship, with cannon ports open, slip silently into the harbour and open fire on the harbour causing panic. Even though Lily and Lucas are taken to hide in hill caves by their mother, Lily's curiosity gets the better of her and she is captured by the pirates and forced to work as a galley slave on the ship *Gisella*, captained by the tyrannical and very frightening El Capitan de Diablo. Lily is stunned by the violence and death when they attack another ship but is driven to action to defend a young man (Carlos) who is also a captive on the ship. Using previously learned fencing skills she wounds the assailant and saves Carlos' life. This builds the pirates' respect for Lily.

Lily is forced to work as part of a skeleton crew of the captured ship *Mermaid* and respect for her continues to grow as she puts the sailing skills her father taught her to good use (she is the only one able to read a navigation chart). Lily gains respect for the pirate crew as she too finds out that they are not all bad – many

are just poor and desperate sailors who have no other way of earning a living. Her skills and cool head make the crew more and more reliant upon her as she helps them survive some difficult negotiating and sailing situations in the Mediterranean Sea. A mysterious Turk, Hussein, who speaks like an Englishman, boards the Mermaid with his crew but instead of capturing the ship he declares that they are now independent of Diablo who owes him a favour and failed to deliver on his promise. This part of the trilogy ends with Lily and the crew sighting Napoleon's French fleet bearing down on Malta – and the Mermaid firing all her cannon to warn the people that 'their destiny is on the horizon'.

Setting the scene

- Ask students to brainstorm and list their favourite adventure books. Can they say what is an adventure? What does the dictionary tell us about adventures? Tell students that *Ocean Without End* is known as an historical adventure. Is this different to an adventure? In what ways are they the same?
- Tell students that the time in history of this adventure is about 1798 when the general – Napoleon – conquered the island of Malta to sell off its treasures to help pay for a war against Egypt. Use atlases to locate Malta, the Mediterranean Sea, and Egypt.
- Tell students that this story is set in the 'great age of piracy', about 1600–1800. What do they know about pirates?

Post-reading activities

- Develop the idea that every occupation has its own jargon – words that are special to that occupation. Work through the glossary of seafaring words at the end of the book. Which words appeal? Why? What do they mean?
- Have groups prepare and run a multi-choice answer quiz based on this glossary of seafaring words.
- Can the students locate and read out incidents in the story that made the pirates respect Lily more? Discuss and list any special skills that Lily had that helped her gain this respect.
- Have groups prepare and present exciting incidents in the story such as: - a scripted or informal drama - a newspaper report - a radio play
- Keep a brief daily diary as 'written by Lily' from the time when the Mermaid lost contact with the Gisella.
- Use descriptions of the storms at sea or the boarding scenes as motivation for paintings.
- Prepare pro and anti posters to advertise for 'pirates wanted', making it out to be either a glamorous or a very unpleasant occupation.
- Read out loud and discuss the letter (final page) that Lily writes to her mother. In what ways has she changed her mind about the type of people pirates can be?