

T.A. BARRON

DISCUSSION GUIDE

The Ancient One

One of the *Adventures of Kate*

ISBN: 978-1-10-199702-4

About the Book

“When Kate travels to Oregon for a quiet week at Aunt Melanie’s cottage, her plans are dashed by the discovery of a grove of giant redwood trees in nearby Lost Crater. Caught up in the struggle to help protect the redwood forest from loggers, Kate is thrown back in time five hundred years and finds herself facing the evil creature Gashra, who is bent on destroying the very same forest.”

Reviews

“Once in a great while a book comes along that is so powerful and so wise that you want to shout about it.”

— *Madeleine L’Engle*

“Barron fuses concerns over the natural world with fantasy lit.”

— *The Huffington Post*, “The 9 Best Trees in Literature”

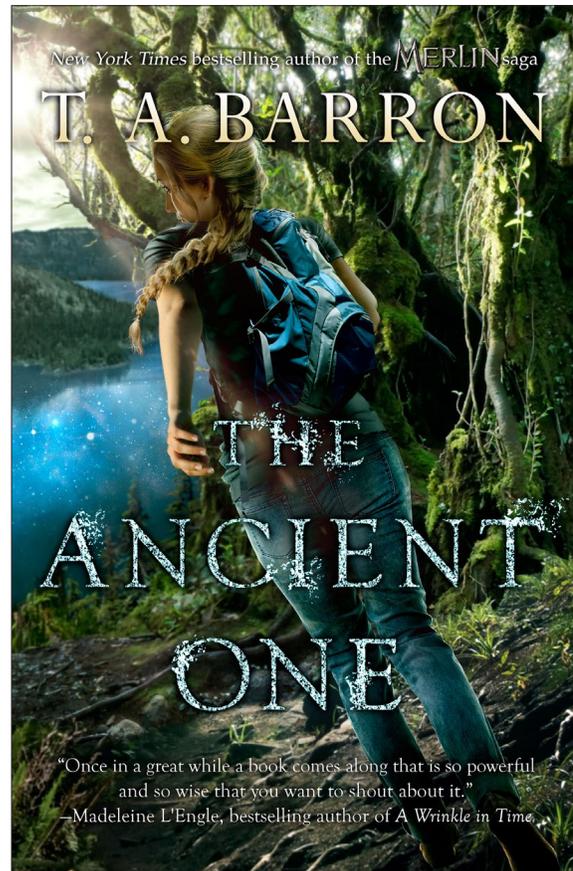
“Fantasy mavens will find plenty here to enthrall them.”

— *The New York Times Book Review*

Discuss

All page and chapter references used in this guide are from the 2016 Puffin edition of *The Ancient One*.

1. Prior to reading *The Ancient One*, discuss with students the many different kinds of gaps that can separate people. Have students arrange the following kinds of gaps in order of least to most difficult to bridge: Gaps in age, knowledge, language, culture, background, political beliefs, religious beliefs, power, species, location in space, location in time. Let students defend their ratings. Then, after finishing the book, let students review their lists. How would Kate arrange her list? Have them compare their lists to the one they think Kate would create. If there are differences, what causes them?
2. On page 200 (chapter 22), Jody defines courage when he says “The best part was when he had the guts to stand up there and say he was gonna try. To take a risk. In front of everybody. That took real courage.” In Jody’s mind, courage is the willingness to take a risk. Ask students if they agree. Is all risk-taking courageous? Have them give examples of when it is and isn’t.

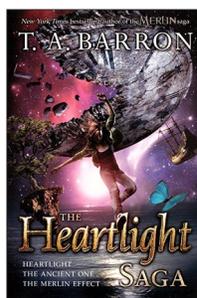


DISCUSSION GUIDE, CONTINUED

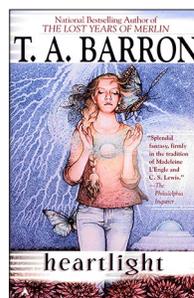
- Kate worries about Laioni's reaction when she learns that Kate sacrificed the Stick of Fire. Kate wonders if Laioni will resent her for valuing her life above everything else. Why might Laioni resent her? Would the resentment come from anger or guilt? What might Laioni feel guilty about? Did Kate make a wise choice?
- "Knowing she faced certain defeat somehow liberated her deepest reserve of courage" (page 236, chapter 26). Explain this thought of Kate's. What do some people do when faced with certain defeat? What does Kate's choice tell readers about Kate? How would other characters in this book react to certain defeat? Have students reflect on their own tendencies. What do they do when facing defeat?
- Kate faces multiple conflicts throughout the book. However, not all the conflicts involve person against person, such as Kate against the evil Gashra. There are also many examples of person against nature and, more importantly, person against him- or herself.

Have students identify where these other major conflicts take place in the book. Which conflicts are the most difficult for Kate? Does any one conflict represent a turning point for her? Which conflicts can be removed from the story and not change the story? Which ones cannot be removed? What is the purpose of conflict in any story?
- Tell students that this book is to be made into a two-part movie and they need to decide the following:
 - Which chapters should be turned into the movie scenes? In other words, which parts of the book must be kept for the story to make sense?
 - At what point would you end part one? Remember to provide a cliffhanger to end part one.
- Quest fantasies have the following types of characters: the protagonist who is trying to accomplish an impossible looking task; the antagonist who is trying to block the protagonist; the outside positive force who offers important assistance to the hero or heroine. Which characters play those roles in this book?
- "Wait long enough and fantasy becomes reality" (page 134, chapter 15). Though this book has elements that obviously won't become true, as with all good fantasy, it does contain truths. What are those elements of truth found in this book? Why does a fantasy need to have truth? How can fantasy become real for readers?
- Parts of this book could easily be written as articles for a newspaper. Have students identify the parts of the book that would make interesting editorials, letters to the editor, lead articles, human interest stories, want ads, weather news. Then have students rewrite those parts and create a newspaper that uses *The Ancient One* as the source of the news.
- Aunt Melanie believes in the preservation of forests. Have students write a persuasive speech that Aunt Melanie would present to a town meeting on this topic.

Other Adventures of Kate Books



Heartlight Saga
Combined
Edition



Heartlight



The Merlin
Effect