

8. Odder by Katherine Applegate

A touching and lyrical tale about a remarkable sea otter.

Her mother called her “Odder”

from the moment

she was born.

Something about the way

the little pup never settled,

something about the way

her eyes were always full of questions.

Odder spends her days off the coast of central California, practicing her underwater acrobatics and spinning the quirky stories for which she’s known. She’s a fearless daredevil, curious to a fault. But when Odder comes face-to-face with a hungry great white shark, her life takes a dramatic turn, one that will challenge everything she believes about herself—and about the humans who hope to save her.

Inspired by the true story of a Monterey Bay Aquarium program that pairs orphaned otter pups with surrogate mothers, this poignant and humorous tale told of most beloved and charming animals.

Discussion, revision & competition-like questions for this book are below.

Reading Rivalry Is Not a test!

Note the Reading Rivalry questions are tools used to discuss the book(s) and topics the students read.

The intent of RR is to foster a love of reading, introduce the students to books they may not otherwise choose, provide opportunities to work as a team and have fun!

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1. What type of creature is Odder?

A sea otter / a southern sea otter / a member of the weasel family.

2. Where is the book set?

In Monterey Bay, in California.

3. What does Odder use her favorite rock for?

Opening clams and mussels.

4. What number is Odder also known as?

156

5. What color is Odder?

Odder has a deep brown coat and caramel-colored head.

6. How do otters communicate?

Otters whistle, whine, snarl, hiss, blow, snort, nudges, licks, head butts and gentle bites.

7. What do otters eat?

Abalones, sea urchins, octopuses, sea stars, mussels, crabs, and clams.

8. What do the otters call the aquarium perched above the edge of the bay?

Highwater.

9. What advice did Odder's mother give her?

Stay away from sharks, humans, and all that you don't understand.

10. How long can a sea otter stay under water?

For six or seven minutes.

11. After the shark bit Kairi's tail, what did Odder do?

Odder distracts the shark by hurling herself at the shark.

12. What is "hailed out"?

When the sea-otter hauls or pulls itself out of water onto land.

13. What are the staff in Highwater called?

Aquarists.

14. Name one thing that can go wrong for sea otters in the ocean.

(i) Run-ins with boats, (ii) illness from pollution, (iii) oil spill exposure, (iv) entanglement in fishing lines, (v) ingested plastic trash, (vi) diseases (vi) shark bites.

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15. As Odder recovers from surgery, what does she think about?

Her life as a pup.

16. How did Odder get to Highwater the first time?

Ondine tied Odder to the kelp while she searched for food, but the kelp came undone in the storm and Odder was washed ashore. Then she was rescued and taken to Highwater.

17. Why was it important for the aquarists to teach the otter pup # 156 survival skills as quickly as possible?

The longer Odder stayed with them she would become attached to them and unable to return to the wild.

18. Is it better for an otter to be a number or a name in the aquarium?

A number means the otter will be returned to the ocean; you get a name in the aquarium if you stay there for good.

19. Who told Odder that the animals are called humans?

Holly, one of the older otters, told Odder that the animals are called humans.

20. As Odder recovers from her operation after the shark bite, what memories fill her long days?

Memories of her time in the wild.

21. Who discovers that the humans have named Odder and what did they name her?

Gracie, one of the older otters, discovered that the humans have named Odder. They named her Jazz.

22. Odder thought Kairi was holding a toy, but what was it?

A tiny pup, # 217.

23. What does Kairi help Odder realize he must do for the pup?

Teach the pup how to be an otter, how to play.

24. When does Odder finally help the pup #209?

When it got stuck in the kelp. Odder (Jazz) will be the pup's otter teacher.

Discussion questions

1. What is your favorite thing about the book?
2. Should healthy animals be kept captive?
3. How can we help our oceans, lakes, ponds, rivers, and waterways?
4. What is a parent / guardian's job?
5. Did you ever help mind a person, animal, or thing?