



# Walker Books Classroom Ideas



## Nevertell

Katharine Orton  
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\*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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## Outline:

*A world of magic is only a whisper away...*

Born in a Soviet prison camp, Lina has never seen the world outside until the night she escapes with her best friend, Bogdan. As the pair journey across a snowy wilderness, they are pursued by a vengeful sorceress and her pack of shadow wolves. The children will need every ounce of courage – and a whisper of magic – if they are to survive...

A gorgeous, snowy adventure, set in the wilds of Siberia, full of magic and wonder, for junior readers.

## Author Information:

After gaining an English degree and an MA in creative writing, Katharine Orton worked for Barefoot Books in Bath before leaving to focus on her writing and her young family. She signed with her agent after taking part in the brilliant WoMentoring Scheme. *Nevertell* is Katharine's first novel. She currently lives in Bristol.

## How to Use These Notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

### These notes are for:

- Primary years 4-6
- Ages 9+

### Key Learning Areas:

- English

### Example of:

- Novel

### Themes/Ideas:

- Friendship
- Resilience
- Kindness
- Adventure



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## Discussion Questions and Activities:

### Before Reading

Before reading *Nevertell*, view the cover of the book.

Identify the following:

- The title of the book
- The author
- The tagline
- The publisher
- The blurb

Based on the cover, what do you think this story is about? How do you think it will begin/end? Revisit your answer after reading the book – how close were your predictions to the actual novel?

### Exploring the Story

What time and place is this story set? Find the locations mentioned on a map or globe. Use clues in the text to figure out a range of dates this story could be set during (hint: research Joseph Stalin's active years as a key figure in the Soviet Union).

Discuss the necklace that Lina wears around her neck. How is it a significant part of the story? What unusual properties does it have? Where did it come from?

Write a paragraph on how *Nevertell* explores each of the following themes:

- Resilience (how do the prisoners of the labour camp carry on? How do Lina and Bogdan stay strong during their ordeals?)
- Imprisonment/captivity (both the prisoners of the labour camp and Svetlana's shadow prisoners)
- Conflicting emotions (Lina is happy to be out of the camp, but struggles with the idea of her mother still being a prisoner)
- The kindness of strangers (Tuyaara's family taking care of Lina and Bogdan)

What is "juxtaposition"? Discuss how the author juxtaposes the real-world horrors of the Siberian labour camp with the fantastical elements of Svetlana and her powers. What effect does this have on the story? How might it have been different if the whole story was set in a fantastical world?

How does Lina change throughout the course of the novel? Take into consideration her relationships with key characters (Bogdan, Svetlana, Natalya), her discovery and development of her powers and her emotional reaction to the danger she faces throughout the novel.

Discuss the character of Natalya. What are her needs and wants? Why does she help and travel with Lina and Bogdan? Why does she whisper "Nevertell" to Lina? How is her storyline resolved?

Keep a "Vocab Journal" while reading the novel. Make a note of any words you come across that are unfamiliar and look up their meaning. Also keep track of any words or phrases that you particularly like and write a note next to each explaining why you like that word/phrase.

### Creative Responses to the Text

Design your own cover for the book with new imagery and a new tagline that will persuade and interest people in reading the book.

A novel will describe the setting and action in words, allowing the reader to visualise using their imagination. A comic strip or graphic novel uses illustrations to show the reader the setting, action and character's emotions. Create a comic strip of a key scene from *Nevertell*.

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Classroom ideas available



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