

A Teacher's Guide to
The Search for WondLa

by Tony DiTerlizzi

Discussion Questions

1. What is a family? What elements make a family? Does color, size, or shape make a difference in what a family consists of? Is it possible for a robot to be a family member?
2. Was Muthr a good mother to Eva? Was she able to teach Eva life lessons? Did she have a loving spirit? How does a robot show love?
3. Muthr believed computer technology was omniscient. Was Muthr correct in her beliefs? Give examples from the book to verify your answers.
4. Muthr had a list of six basic survival skills for humans: 1. Trust technology 2. Signal others 3. Find shelter 4. Create fire 5. Procure food and water 6. Know first aid. How did these skills help or hinder Eva's survival in the "real world"? Given her experience, did Eva find the list was in correct order for survival? Explain your answer.
5. Lewis and Clark, John Audubon and Charles Darwin, are all greatly admired people who captured "new" creatures, observed them, killed them, and dissected them all in an attempt to understand them. Are Zin, Besteel, Queen Ojo and the taxidermist any different from them?
6. As Eva begins her journey, she meets a cerulean named Rovender. Is there any significance to his name? As an adult, Rovender views his relationship to Eva very differently than Eva views their relationship. How do they view their relationship to each other? As the book progresses, does their relationship change? If so how does it change?
7. In Roman mythology, who or what does Orbona represent? Is there any significance to Eva?
8. While attempting to escape from Besteel, Eva was saved by the Wandering Forest. Rovender tells Eva he has never seen a forest respond as it did. Why did the forest come to Eva's aid? In your opinion, what does it mean?
9. When Eva is visiting Lacus Besteel attacks her. Even though Eva is surrounded by villagers, no one responds to her cry for help. Have there been times in your life when you may have felt isolated and alone even though there were people all around you? Give an example.
10. As Eva walks through the village of Lacus, she takes out her omnipod to take pictures. Rovender is upset and tells her several times to put it away. What is wrong with taking pictures? How can taking pictures be harmful?

11. The author has said he was inspired by classic stories, fairy tales, and movies while writing this book. Eva's WondLa belongs to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Can you see any similarities from other stories in this book? If so, which ones?

12. Would you describe Eva as a resourceful person who uses her skills and wit to solve her problems? Give reasons to support your answer.

Activities

1. Have the students imagine being placed in a new surrounding where everything they see and touch is unfamiliar. They have no idea what is good or bad. There is no one who understands them to ask for help. Discuss as a class how they would survive this situation. After discussing this, ask the students to write an essay on what they would do. Have them be realistic in their reaction. This does not have to be a science fiction assignment. Many times in our lives we are placed in unfamiliar situations and must learn how to live with the circumstances that now surround us.

2. Either use a webcam or visit www.TheSearchforWondLa.com to view the 3D map of Eva Nine's journey. Viewing this augmented reality allows one to follow the sights and sounds of Eva's journey. Does this help bring the story alive? Is there anything on the map that is different from what students envisioned while reading the book? Compare the map of Orbona in the book with the computer map on the website. What is similar and what is different?

3. "Artificial Intelligence" is making computers more life like. In the book, Muthr shows signs of humanity through her hesitation to new circumstances and emotions. Muthr, because she is a robot, believes that technology is to be trusted completely. She becomes vulnerable when her data is incomplete. How does this relate to "real life" where one can become vulnerable when placed in new and unusual situations?

4. Eva was able to communicate with Otto through telepathy. Go to the library or search online for articles on telepathy. Discuss with the class their findings. Is there such a thing? Is it possible for certain species to understand each other without using "normal" forms of communication?

5. In the back of the book Tony DiTerlizzi has placed a copy of the Orbonian alphabet. Have students use this alphabet to interpret the writing on Hostia and Fiscian Haveport's wall. Examine other illustrations in the book and look for more examples of the alphabet in the illustrations which would add to the students' understanding of the book.

6. Have the students write letters to each other in the classroom using the Orbonian alphabet. Have the students exchange their letters and see if they are able to decipher them.

7. Take a trip to a museum or do a virtual museum tour online. What kinds of items are there in the museum? Are all the items inanimate or are there live exhibits? Do any of the exhibits have any taxidermy specimens? What is the purpose of museums?

8. Research friendship bracelets. What is the purpose of them? Where did they originate? What is the significance of the friendship bracelet Eva Nine gives to Rovender? Did Rovender act like a friend when Eva presented him with one? Discuss the importance of the bracelet from both Eva and Rovender's point of view. Have the students make friendship bracelets.

9. When Eva was visiting the Halcyonus village, Fiscian taught Eva a traditional song based on the Halcyonus culture. Review the traditional fishing song in *The Search for WondLa*. Discuss with the students other traditional songs from their childhood. Have the students write their own song based upon a tradition in their family. Discuss why traditions are important.

10. Ask your students to compare Eva Nine to a comic super hero. How are they similar and how are they different? Does Eva Nine have any super powers? If she does, what are they? If she doesn't how does she manage to survive in her dangerous environment?

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