

The Water Castle

Written by Megan Frazer Blakemore

Megan Frazer Blakemore is an author for children and young adults. Her middle grade novels include *The Firefly Code*, *The Daybreak Bond*, *The Friendship Riddle*, *The Spy Catchers of Maple Hill*, and *The Water Castle*, the latter of which was named a Kirkus Best Children's Book of 2013, a Bank Street College Best Book 2014, a Junior Library Guild Selection, and has been included on numerous state lists.



Megan has over ten years experience as a librarian, including two as a children's librarian and nine as a school librarian. As a librarian, she focuses on raising reading achievement and giving voice to students through such programming as Coffee Houses, a Film Festival, maker spaces, and various reading programs. Megan lives in Maine with her husband and two children as well as a cat and (sometimes) a hive of bees. -from her website, www.meganfrazer.com

A comprehensive Teacher's Guide to *The Water Castle* is available here: http://www.meganfrazer.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/WaterCastle_guide.pdf

It includes: specific applications of Common Core Anchor Standards for Reading and Writing; chapter questions and activities to check for understanding; discussion questions; activities; and resources for further reading and investigating.

Ask Megan!

Your favorite place in Maine?

Chebeague Island, Rangeley State Park, the beaches in Kennebunk, downtown Portland, and Sunday River.

What first spawned your Water Castle idea?

I had been thinking about this idea of a town where everyone was smarter, stronger, and faster, but I couldn't figure out why they had these gifts. Then I went to the museum on the Poland Springs campus. I read about how the water was supposed to have magical qualities to heal people. They also used science to try to explain why the water was superior. That blurring of magic and science was really interesting to me, and I thought to myself, "What if there is something in the water in this town?" That got me thinking about the Fountain of Youth. Maybe it was real, and maybe it was magical, but maybe it was a scientific phenomenon that we just didn't understand yet. The story took off from there.

A book you couldn't live without?

Liar & Spy by Rebecca Stead. I learn so much from her writing every time I read it.

Check this out!

IRW's book trailer for *The Water Castle*, created by Summer 2017 interns Alicia and Tilly: <https://youtu.be/3ovK824b1R8>

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Let's Talk! [CCSS: SL.1]

1. How did Will's father's perceptions of the Appledore family influence Will before he met Ephraim?
2. Nora says "Every journey starts with a chance." What do you think she means?
3. "I shall find a way or make one," was Peary's motto. Who are some people - from history, in the news, in your community or family - that have made a way where none was before?
4. Orlando Appledore said, "It is important to remember not only the what but the why of what you are seeking." What did that mean for their search for the Fountain of Youth? How does his idea apply to other things?
5. What most surprised you about the story?



Let's Create!

1. Peary's motto was *Invenio Viam Aut Facium*, or "I shall find a way or make one." His motto was in Latin, that - along with Greek - continues to be one of the universal scientific languages. Create your own motto, and for a little something extra, use an online translator to translate it into Latin. Illustrate the motto so it becomes your own personal flag. (Language Connection) <https://translate.yandex.com>
2. Write a story that uses a major time jump flashback (such as the Nora sections in *The Water Castle*). (History Connection)
3. Make a conductivity meter: (Science Connection) <https://www.exploratorium.edu/snacks/conductivity-meter>
4. Based on the author's descriptions in the book, and coupled with your own imagination, draw the exterior of the Water Castle, and a blueprint of the interior.
5. Write a pitch for *The Water Castle's* sequel. What happens next?



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Let's Read More! [CCSS: RL.10]

Megan's other books: *The Friendship Riddle*, *The Firefly Code*, *The Spycatchers of Maple Hill*, and more

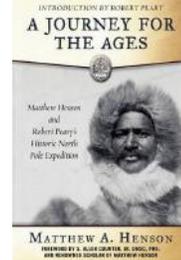
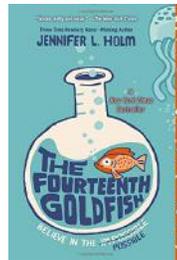
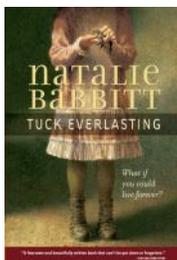
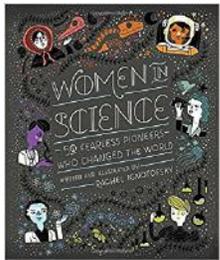
Women in Science: 50 Fearless Pioneers Who Changed The World, by Rachel Ignotofsky.

The Accelerati Trilogy, Book One: Tesla's Attic, by Neal Shusterman and Eric Elfman. What if you had access to Tesla's last inventions?

Tuck Everlasting, by Natalie Babbitt. What if drinking from the Fountain of Youth made you live forever? Would that be a blessing or a curse?

The Fourteenth Goldfish, by Jennifer L. Holm. Did Ellie's grandfather discover a fountain of youth? Is he the pimply boy standing in front of her now?

A Journey for the Ages: Matthew Henson and Robert Peary's Historical North Pole Expedition, by Henson and Peary



Let's Learn More!

Library Scavenger Hunt using *The Water Castle*: includes detailed instructions and timeframes, and free printables: http://www.curiouscitydpw.com/curiouscitydpw/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/water_castle_scavenger_hunt2.pdf

Infographic challenge: Conduct an internet search for 'water infographics' and choose the "best" infographic that combines sourced, quality information and visuals that are stimulating and aid in understanding. Does the class agree on which of the infographics is 'the best?' If not, host a debate!

A current water issue in Maine - water corporations? <http://mainepublic.org/post/water-sales-outpace-soda-poland-spring-looks-expand#stream/0>

Where we get our fresh water: <https://ed.ted.com/lessons/where-we-get-our-fresh-water-christiana-z-peppard#watch>

The Clean Water Act was sponsored by Maine senator Edmund Muskie in 1972, a great accomplishment for environmental protection. <https://www.mainememory.net/sitebuilder/site/330/page/601/display>
<https://www.epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-clean-water-act>

The Legacy of Arctic Explorer Matthew Henson: <http://adventureblog.nationalgeographic.com/2014/02/28/the-legacy-of-arctic-explorer-matthew-henson/>

Matthew Henson Discovers the North Pole: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X5cuQjP3keU>

