

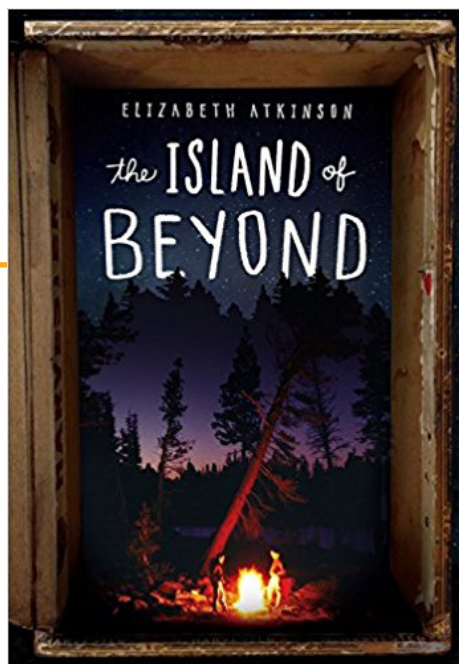
EXPLORE MORE BOOK GUIDE

Activities, tools & resources for learning with this book!

Meet the author



Elizabeth Atkinson's quirky, heartfelt middle grade novels include *From Alice to Zen; I, Emma Freke; The Sugar Mountain Snow Ball*; and her newest release, *The Island of Beyond*. Raised in Harvard, Massachusetts, Elizabeth received her BA at Hobart & William Smith Colleges, and her MA in Liberal Studies (with a concentration in Creative Writing) at Dartmouth College. She currently divides her time between the north shore of Massachusetts and western Maine. Her favorite part of writing novels for children is visiting with (in person and virtually) schools, libraries, book clubs, and offering fun, interactive writing workshops to middle grade students.



Read more from Elizabeth:



EXPLORE MORE BOOK GUIDE

LET'S BEGIN! BEFORE READING THE BOOK

Use the Visual Thinking Strategy (VTS) questions below to orient readers, and to help guide a group discussion. Begin by taking a quiet moment to look closely at the book jacket, allowing time for observation and contemplation of the images.

- *What is going on in this picture?*
- *What do you see that makes you say that? (provide evidence)*
- *What more can we find?*

Watch this [VIDEO](#) for a quick VTS demo

HAVE QUESTIONS?

Please contact Alison Johnson at Island Readers & Writers,
207-460-6828 or ajohnson@islandreadersandwriters.org.

ASK ELIZABETH!

Who are your heroes/heroines from children's books?

For me, the real heroes/heroines in children's books are the ordinary characters who find contentment within themselves. They manage to overcome the difficulties of life -- whether it's a broken family or abandonment or bullying -- and learn to embrace their potential and self worth all on their own... making them more empathetic and caring toward others. Some of my favorite, "most heroic" characters are found in books by Jack Gantos, Kimberly Willis Holt, and Kate DiCamillo.

Where are your top three places to be?

Maine, Ireland, and anywhere with my husband and children

What are your favorite things about Maine?

I love everything about Maine. However, the natural beauty -- from the western lakes and mountains to the jagged coastline -- is what draws me here. I find great inner peace when I'm in Maine. Even though I don't live here full-time, I think of Maine as my heart home...where I always long to be.

STANDARDS

Covered throughout this Explore More Book Guide:

SL.1. Prepare for and participate in conversations across a range of topics, types, and forums, building on others' ideas and expressing their own.

SL.2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

SL.3 Present information and supporting evidence appropriate to task, purpose, and audience so listeners can follow the line of reasoning and incorporate multimedia when appropriate.

R.4. Read various texts closely to determine what each text explicitly says and to make logical inferences; cite specific textual evidence to support conclusions drawn from the texts.

R.5 Provide an accurate summary of various texts; determine the central idea(s) or theme(s) and analyze its development throughout each text.

R.6. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

R.8 Analyze the structure of various texts, including how the features and components relate to each other and the whole.

R.9. Assess how perspective or purpose shapes the content and style of various texts.

LET'S TALK!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Martin has to face times of solitude sometimes by his own choosing (determined not to leave his room), and sometimes by circumstance (times when Solo took off). Do you think having time by oneself is important? Why or why not?

Why is Aunt Lenore pretending to have dementia? Do you think this is a good way to test Martin's father? Can you think of a better way to test someone's loyalty? What about all the others she is being tricky? How would you feel if you were fooled in this way?

At the beginning of the story, Martin doesn't want to go to Maine at all. His father thinks it'll be good for him. Martin asks his father, "What's the big deal about nature?...So what if kids don't do all that outdoors stuff anymore?" His father answers, "Because your mind goes soft...Everything turns to mush." Why do you think he says that?

Martin was uncomfortable in his Great Aunt Lenore's house, but he was also uncomfortable outside in the woods. What did Martin do to help himself adjust? Think back to a time when you felt uncomfortable. What did you do?

Imagine that Martin and Solo rowed the boat to the mainland and went to town for a day. Discuss with a partner, what you think they would do, see and who might they meet there?

Martin's mother seemingly plays a small role in this story. Why do you think that is? Think about what would happen if she visited the island. Would the story be different?

Solo gives everyone nicknames including himself. Do you have a nickname or know of anyone that does? Does your name give you a sense of identity or belonging? Do you think the characters in "*The Island of Beyond*" live up to their names?

LET'S CREATE! Book-Inspired Art

Choose a [MAINE ISLAND](#), research its geography and history, and create a profile of it. How many people live there, if any? What are its beaches like? What are its forests like? Does it have any other geographical features, like caves or marshes? What animals and insects live there, or stop there along their migration route?



-Bailey's Island

Martin built a village in the woods to help him feel more at home. Build your own village. What will you name it? What will you include in your village to make yourself feel more at home? After building a toy village, add people and name them by their occupation, i.e. Smith, Taylor, Cobbler.

Photo Project & Game: Do the descriptions in the book remind you of any place in your neighborhood or community? Take pictures of any spots that remind you of scenes in the book. Create a photo collage and compare them with other students' photos. Did any of you take photos of the same spot? Do you recognize spots from other students' photos?

Postcard Project: Pretend you are Martin and write postcards home to your parents or a friend starting with a postcard from the day after you arrive on Beyond and finishing with a postcard from the day before you're supposed to go back home. Try to write at least six postcards. What do these postcards demonstrate about Martin's experience over the course of the summer? **Take it further:** Find the Morse code alphabet in the back of the book. Using this as a resource write a postcard to a friend in code.

LET'S DIVE DEEPER! EXPLORE MORE

Ever wonder what a word, phrase, or entire message looks like and sounds like in Morse Code? Use the [MORSE CODE TRANSLATOR](#) to find out! Make up puzzles or messages and have another student try to solve them!



Aunt Lenore's house on Beyond is a 'classic nineteenth-century Victorian.' Research characteristics of Victorian architecture. Are there any Victorian era homes in your community? Draw a picture of one and/or imagine a story about who might live there.

Read this [ARTICLE](#) to learn the differences between a raven from a crow.

This book has many references to E.A. Poe's poem "The Raven." [LISTEN](#) to James Earl Jones (also known as Darth Vader) read Edgar Allen Poe's poem, "The Raven:" plus [TEACHING RESOURCES](#).

LET'S READ MORE! Text to Text Connections

