

Ice Wolves: Elementals, Book 1

By Amie Kaufman

Book Summary:

"WILL KEEP YOU READING LATE INTO THE NIGHT."

-- Marie Lu, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Young Elites*

Everyone in Vallen knows that ice wolves and scorch dragons are sworn enemies who live deeply separate lives.

So when twelve-year-old orphan Anders takes one elemental form and his twin sister, Rayna, takes another, he wonders whether they are even related. Still, whether or not they're family, Rayna is Anders's only true friend. She's nothing like the brutal, cruel dragons who claimed her as one of their own and stole her away.

In order to rescue her, Anders must enlist at the foreboding Ulfar Academy, a school for young wolves that values loyalty to the pack above all else. But for Anders, loyalty is more complicated than obedience, and friendship is the most powerful shapeshifting force of all.

New York Times bestselling author Amie Kaufman delivers heart-pounding adventure and breathtaking magical inventions in this unforgettable story about finding one's place in a sharply divided world.

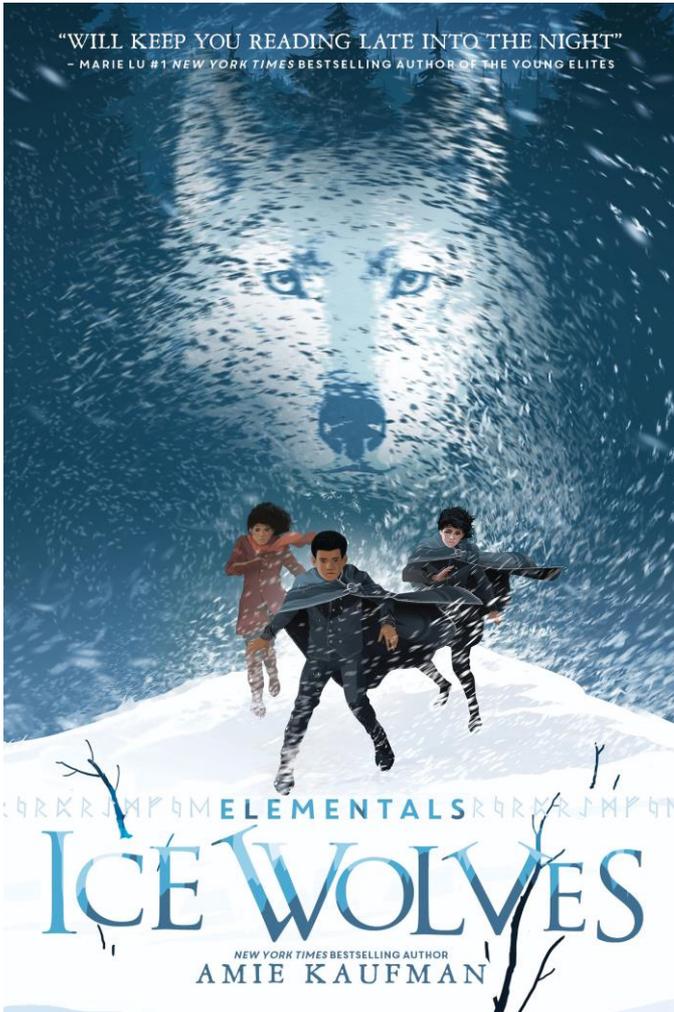
Key Learning Outcomes

English

Themes

Identity, conflict, creativity, family

Recommended Ages: 8-12



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Notes by: Beck Kavanagh

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Book Summary:

- Twelve-year-old Anders can remember the last time the Scorch Dragons came. He remembers the flames, and the screams. The Ice Wolves saved the city then, but now the artifacts that protect the city are failing, and fewer and fewer children are transforming into Ice Wolves each year.
- Anders is the opposite of his twin sister, Rayna, who is quick-witted, sure of herself, almost cocky. He relies on her to navigate the streets. But, on the day of the Trial, when Rayna turns into a Scorch Dragon, Anders finds himself alone, terrified and unsure of how to save her. Anders is stunned when Rayna transforms, but even more so when he transforms as well — and not into a Scorch Dragon, but an Ice Wolf! The city needs him; he is duty-bound to take his place as a student of Ulfar Academy where he will learn how to protect the city. But all Anders wants to learn is how to save his sister.
- Isolated and uncertain, Anders must learn all he can of the magic that fuels the city, and the decades old partnership that forged it. And he needs to do it fast, before Rayna is gone for good.

Curriculum Areas and Key Learning Outcomes:

These notes are primarily for students in Year 5-6, although the book will appeal to readers beyond this range. This is a good text to practice reading aloud, either in the classroom or at home, and will also work well for independent reading time.

Learning Areas: English

Cross Curriculum Priorities: ACELA1501, ACELA1502, ACELA1504, ACELA1505, ACELA1506, ACELA1507, ACELA1508, ACELA1512, ACELA1513, ACELY1701, ACELA1829, ACELT1610, ACELT1612, ACELA1516, ACELA1523, ACELA1524, ACELA1830, ACELT1613, ACELT1615, ACELY1711, ACELY1801,

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About the author

Amie Kaufman is a New York Times and internationally bestselling author of young adult and middle grade fiction, including *Unearthed* and the *Starbound* trilogy with Meagan Spooner and the *Illuminae Files* with Jay Kristoff. *Ice Wolves* is her first solo novel, and her favourite part of the writing process was taking howling lessons from a wolf expert. Her multi-award-winning work has been described as 'a game-changer' (Shelf Awareness) and 'out-of-this-world awesome' (Kirkus Reviews). Amie lives in Melbourne, Australia with her husband, their rescue dog, and an extremely large personal library.

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Classroom discussion topics:

- What kind of book is *Ice Wolves*? Is it a book that offers a new understanding of something you know, or a book that encourages you to imagine something new? Why is imagination important? How have you used your imagination today?
- The people of Vallen use artifacts to protect them and for many other purposes. What are some of the ways artifacts are used by characters in the book? What can you think of in your own life that is used in a similar way? Do we have artifacts that help us live?
- What similarities can you find between this story and the reality of contemporary Australia? How do these similarities shape your understanding of the book?
- Who does the story following in *Ice Wolves*? How does this affect who you feel most connected to, and how you respond to the events in the story? How might your perception change if the story followed another character (Rayna, for example, or even one of the minor characters)? Why do you think the author has chosen to tell the story this way?

Themes — identity, conflict, creativity, family:

Identity:

With a sinking feeling, he crossed over, then leaned out to take a look. He was pretty sure he knew where this was heading. There was a little window down there, half open. “Rayna, no way,” he tried.

“Pffft, your legs are long enough,” she said. “And just think what might be inside.”

“A person!” he said. “A person might be inside!”

She waved a hand in dismissal. “A window that small, no way does it lead to a main room. It’ll be the bathroom, or the pantry. Nobody’ll see you.”

There were a dozen more arguments about why this was a bad idea, but Anders didn’t bother making them. He knew how it would end, no matter what he said. So instead, sighing, he handed his coat to her, then lowered himself off the edge of the roof. (P10-11)

- What do we learn about Anders from this scene?
- How is Rayna described that shows us how different she and Anders are?
- How much of Anders’ identity in this scene is based on his relationship with Rayna?
- Continue reading the book and, as you do, make a list of the scenes where we are shown Anders’ identity. When you’ve finished, discuss these scenes in class and talk about how his identity changes throughout the story, and what happens in each of these scenes that changes him. Who is there? What do they do? How does he react? How and why does he change? Is it for the better? Compare Anders’ journey to

Think of a moment that has changed who you are (it might have changed the way you see the world, the way you see or treat other people, or the way you see or treat yourself). Imagining that you are a writer telling a story, try to write this moment as a scene in a book — think about who was there, what they did, what you did, and how the moment changed you. How did the moment end?

Rayna's. If you were making a map of the ways each of them change, how would you describe the transformations? How are their journeys similar? How are they different? Do Anders' and Rayna's identity depend on each other?

Conflict:

Lisabet stared at the Fyrstulf for a long moment, and when she spoke, her voice was very quiet, but her gaze was direct. "Power," she said.

"Power?" Sigrid repeated, her voice going dangerously hard.

"The mayor doesn't run Holbard," Lisabet said, soft and even. She knew she was getting into trouble, Anders could tell, but she kept talking anyway. "The parliament barely runs Vallen. We do. And all because they're afraid of dragons and they need us to protect them."

"And we will," Sigrid snapped, raising a hand to point at the door, baring her teeth like an angry wolf. "Because we know best. Get out of my classroom. We will discuss this later."

(P132-133)

- How can you tell that there is conflict in the scene? How does the writer use language to show the conflict between the two characters?
- Who is the conflict between? What are they arguing about? Who has the power in the scene?
- What other conflicts are there in the book? Make a list of the conflicts, noting who is involved, what the conflict is about, and how it is resolved (if it is).
- When can conflict be a good thing? When can it be a bad thing?
- When have you experienced conflict? How did it make you feel? How did it get resolved? Were you happy with the resolution?

- Look at the following website on conflict resolution (<http://www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetailsKids.aspx?p=335&np=287&id=1521>)
- What four things do you need to do to resolve a conflict? Choose one of the scenes from the book where there is conflict and see if you can apply these steps to the scene. Would it change the outcome? Why is conflict necessary in a story?

Creativity:

It was as if somebody had suddenly switched on a light, and a map was laid out in front of him.

He reared up, slamming his front paws against the stone floor of the great hall.

He made ice.

He made fire.

He saw it all, and he commanded it. (P324)

- What does Anders do in this scene that is unusual?
- Why does it happen?
- What changes following this scene?

Creativity allows us to imagine solutions to problems. It allows us to see the world in a different way. It allows us to experiment, to play, to work things out.

- What does creativity mean to you?
- Why is it important?
- How do you use creativity in your life?

Activity:

Think of a problem you've had recently (big or small). Write a short scene describing what the problem was, how it made you feel, how you resolved it (if you did) and who was involved. Now use your imagination to rewrite the problem to see if you can come up with a creative solution. Your solution can be as far fetched as you like – this is fiction! You can write, draw, even record your new story. Let your imagination go wild. Just try to imagine something happening that makes the scene different. Compare your imaginary scene to your original problem. Is there anything you notice about the original story? Can you see a new solution now that you've looked at it in a different way? Share your experiences with the class.

Family:

"But we're twins," she insisted, dumping her own thermos to one side and leaning sideways to catch his eye. "Don't look at me like that, you know we are. It's right there in our faces."

And it was...but it wasn't. They really didn't look that similar, but if you knew where to look, there were small things. They both had exactly the same dimple in their right cheek, the same strong brows, the same long eyelashes. They both folded their arms across their chests when they were uncomfortable, and they both tilted their heads exactly the same way when they were thinking. (P71-72)

- Why does Anders have doubts about his relationship to Rayna?
- Does it matter if they're not twins? Are they still family?
- What does family mean to you?

- Create a family tree, making connections between yourself and the people you are related to. Now make another tree, with the people that are important to you who are not related to you. Draw lines to show how you're connected to these people and write a short sentence about why they're important to your life.
- Make a list in class about the qualities that crossover between your lists. What matters to you in your relationships – family and otherwise?

Worldbuilding:

Worldbuilding is the process of constructing an imaginary world, sometimes associated with a whole fictional universe. Developing an imaginary setting with coherent qualities such as a history, geography, and ecology is a key task for many science fiction or fantasy writers. Worldbuilding often involves the creation of maps, a backstory, and people for the world. (Wikipedia)

- What are the similarities between the imaginary world in *Ice Wolves* and our own world? What are the differences? What things are familiar and unfamiliar at the same time? Can you think of any real-world examples that the author may have used as inspiration for this story?

Worldbuilding is an important creative technique for fantasy writers, but understanding the way fictional worlds are created can help us better understand the real world as well. The following activities and discussions are designed to help students think about fantasy worlds in the context of the real world, and also to ignite their creativity to allow them to build their own fictional worlds.

Using the map at the beginning of the book, mark the location of the important events that take place in the story. Using one colour for Anders, and another colour for Rayna, mark out the paths of their journeys on the map.

- How does a map help you understand the story?
- What impact does the location of the story have on the characters in the book? (i.e. why do the people from Vallen feel safe inside the city but not beyond it?)

Activity:

Create a map of a place that you know well. This place can be entirely real, entirely imagined, or a mix of both. Think about how you might describe this place. Make a list of things you can see there, things you can touch, things you can smell, and things you can taste. Think about what might happen in this place. Who might live there? Have you ever thought that something strange, or magical or fantastical could happen in this place? On your map, use symbols and details to illustrate the parts of this place that matter to you – think about what details you need to include to allow someone unfamiliar with this place to navigate themselves in it. Illustrate and colour your map and bring it to class to share.

In class, talk about how we create fictional worlds (these might be fictional places in the real world, or entirely imagined worlds as Vallen is).

For each item on the list below, give an example of how and when it is used to help build the world that *Ice Wolves* takes place in. Tell us what the item is, when it is used in a way that builds the world, and how it contributes to shaping the fictional world.

The first one is done for you as an example.

- **Character**

(eg. Anders is an Ice Wolf and a street kid. On page 58, when he is first wearing the unfamiliar white-trimmed, gray wolf uniform, he signals Jerro, another orphan, for assistance. This scene sets up the power structure of the world, it shows us the rules of the street, and it shows that we are in a world which is familiar (the streets) and unfamiliar (the magic of the Ice Wolves) at the same time).

- Place
- Object
- Language

ACTIVITY

Using the map you created earlier, start building your own fictional world. Try to build on the other narrative elements you've explored (characters, place, objects and language) to create a world that is made up. Your fictional world can be entirely or partly imagined, but should draw inspiration from the things you know. When you know what this world looks like — using your map and thinking about who might live there, how they speak, what they do/wear/use — write a scene. Think about who is important to your story, and what is going to be interesting for your reader to discover. Share your stories in class and discuss the ways you've each created your imagined worlds.

References:

- Conflict Resolution — <http://www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetailsKids.aspx?p=335&np=287&id=1521>
- Worldbuilding — <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Worldbuilding>