



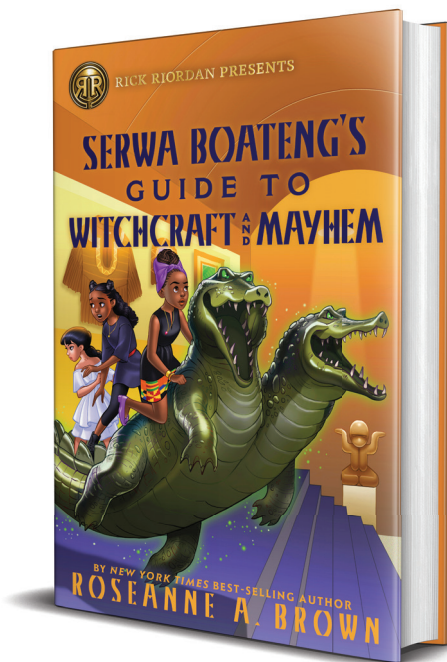
RICK RIORDAN PRESENTS



BY NEW YORK TIMES BEST-SELLING AUTHOR
ROSEANNE A. BROWN

ABOUT THE BOOKS

Serwa Boateng is a twelve-year-old with a talent for vampire slaying like both of her parents. That's because Serwa knows that some fireflies are really adze, shape-shifting vampires from the forests of southeastern Ghana. Adze prey on the blood of innocents, possessing their minds and turning them into hulking monsters, and for generations, slayers like Serwa's family have protected an unknowing public from their threats. But when an obayifo (witch) destroys her childhood home while searching for a drum, do Serwa's parents take her with them on their quest to defeat her? No. Instead, she is sent to her aunt's home in Rocky Gorge, Maryland. Amid the change, she must navigate the difficulties of middle school while longing for home. And just when Serwa thinks everything is normal in her new town, she discovers that an adze is in her middle school. She must fight, train others, and uncover a difficult truth to save the day.



IN THIS ACTION-PACKED SEQUEL, readers join twelve-year-old Serwa Boateng as she grapples with the truth of her family history. Serwa is so shocked by the new information that she attempts to run from her parents and the slayer organization, Abomofuo. The road leads her to an inspiring ally, Auntie Effie, who shares a new perspective. Her aunt's goal is to use magic to free Serwa's grandmother Nana Bekoe from the well-hidden Midnight Drum, which requires a complicated heist. To accomplish this mission, Serwa must navigate a new city, Washington, DC, hone her powers, and spend time with her rival nemesis. Will she accomplish her mission? Will she get the answer she seeks? Can she stand to spend a day with her nemesis, Declan Amankwah?

COMMON CORE ALIGNMENT

The novel *Serwa Boateng's Guide to Witchcraft and Mayhem* provides a great opportunity to apply complex literacy skills such as inferencing, deconstructing vocabulary, author's purpose, and textual connections. This discussion guide contains suggestions aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for Reading: Literature, Writing, and Speaking and Listening. Each activity in this guide includes a reference for the CCSS strand, domain, and standard that is addressed. During the activities and questions, encourage students to support their claims with textual evidence. To obtain additional information, visit the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) website www.corestandards.org.



ACTIVATING BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Explore Important Connections Before Reading

1. The prologue provides a recap of the first novel in the series, *Serwa Boateng's Guide to Vampire Hunting*. If you read the first novel, what information is included in the recap? What is missing? If you did not read the first novel, what do you wonder about the initial adventure? (*Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details, R.L. 5.1, 6.1*)
2. If you read the first novel, create your own two-page recap of the novel with details that might help someone new to the series. Can you do it in the same style as the author (refer to the Prologue), using Serwa's perspective or that of another character in the novel? How might each character's perspective influence how they describe events? What might the character include? What might the character omit? Cite textual evidence. (*Reading Literature: Craft and Structure: R.L., 5.6, 6.6*)
3. As you read, you will need to think about many sides of the same story, inequity, and marginalization. What does inequity mean? What does marginalization mean? How does each occur in our society? Can you think of another story that includes characters associated with a marginalized group or characters treated inequitably by society? Explain with examples. (*Reading Literature: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: R.L., 5.9, 6.9*)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Explore the questions individually and in small groups while reading

1. The quote at the beginning of the first chapter says, "A true warrior knows their enemy's stronghold even better than their own" (p. 1). How might this quote relate to the events in Chapter 1? Think about the text structure; why is it important to examine the quotes that follow each chapter title? How can this help you better understand each chapter? Cite textual evidence.
2. Describe the Luciole Hotel and creatures of black magic that Serwa encounters upon her arrival. What surprises Serwa about Auntie Effie's home? How is it different from her assumption about how Aunt Effie and others might live? What "Abomofuo propaganda" (p. 6) may have influenced her opinion? As you read, consider how the Abomofuo have formed Serwa's perceptions of the world in positive and negative ways.
3. In Chapter 1, Serwa states, "What's going to happen to me now that both my divine wisdom and black magic are active?" What is the difference between black magic and divine wisdom? How are they similar? Why might possessing both powers cause internal conflict? Be specific.
4. In Chapter 3, readers learn about Nana Bekoe's past. What events caused Nana Bekoe to start a war against the Abomofuo? How did people in Nana Bekoe's community treat her inequitably? In Chapter 17, what additional information do readers learn about the impact of inequitable treatment on the family? Provide textual evidence.
5. How does Serwa progress in her black magic training with Aunt Effie? What does Serwa need to



do to hone her black magic skills? Serwa says, “*My black magic may be a dog waiting to prove itself, but my divine wisdom is a wolf, evolved and honed to perfection*” (p. 23). Why does she feel this way about the two different types of magic? As you read, discuss the progression of Serwa’s black magic skills, divine wisdom skills, and combination of the two.

6. In Chapter 4, Serwa explores the National Museum of African Art. What does she learn from Funtunfunefu-Denkyemfunefu? Which people from her past is she surprised to encounter in the museum? Why is Declan Amankwah her “*eternal nemesis*” (p. 37)?
7. In Chapter 6, Serwa is compelled to help a creature of black magic. She says, “*The bonsam may be a nuisance, and one day when he’s fully grown he may hurt countless people, but I can’t leave him to suffer just because of what he might become*” (p. 46). How does this action show a shift in Serwa’s perspective? What events may have caused her perspective to change?
8. During several moments, Serwa makes a distinction between Auntie Effie and Boahinmaa. What is the difference between the two sides of her aunt? Provide examples. Based on the events in Chapters 7 and 8, what is Boahinmaa’s leadership style? What new information does Serwa learn about the hotel and those in the hotel? How does this information influence Serwa’s actions? Be specific.
9. Several parts of the story take place in the Museum of African Art. What types of Ghanaian artifacts are described in the museum? Why are some referred to as “*dubious and unethical*” (p. 56)? What does that mean? In your opinion, how can museums address past wrongs and/or avoid engaging in corrupt practice?
10. How does Serwa end up going on rounds with Declan? Where do they visit, and who do they encounter throughout the evening? What does Serwa discover about DC and the veil? What parts of the evening were expected? What was unexpected? What actions does Serwa take to conceal her secret? As you read, discuss how Serwa and Declan’s relationship changes and progresses throughout the novel.
11. What is the importance of the phrase “*Nkwa nit, bere nyinaa*” (p.114)? Be specific. How are Serwa’s actions aligned or different from the phrase? Cite textual examples.
12. In Chapter 13, why is Serwa so concerned about the possibility of an adze taking over Declan’s mind? What are the possible consequences for a slayer?
13. Later in Chapter 30, do you agree with the Abomofuo’s solution to a mind control issue? Why or why not?
14. In Chapter 13, is Serwa’s decision to drink the juice box surprising? Why or why not? How does she feel afterward? In the next chapter, she states, “*It felt good. Using my black magic to save Declan felt right in a way nothing else has in a long time*” (p. 132). In your opinion, is this a good step for Serwa? Why or why not? Cite textual evidence.
15. How are Declan’s and Serwa’s families similar and different? What might each envy in one another’s lives? How does their family background influence their goals and the way they each treat others around them? Be specific.



16. Throughout the novel, when does Serwa think about and miss her friends? For example, in Chapter 16, she says, *“I wish my friends were here”* (p.150). What does she miss most about her friends as she navigates Washington, DC? Be specific.
17. What is Serwa’s plan to obtain the Midnight Drum? Why is the mission important? What occurs during the heist attempt? What does the subsequent interaction between Serwa’s family and the Abomofuo leaders reveal about the organization? What issues exist within the organization? Be specific.
18. In Chapter 22, what does Serwa learn about her birth? Why did her parents make the decision to seal her black magic? Do you agree with her parents’ decision? Why or why not?
19. How does Dr. Amankwah treat Serwa after learning she is an obayifo? In your opinion, is his response acceptable? Why or why not? How are her friends’ responses to learning she is an obayifo different in Chapter 25? Can you think of a character in another story who has been treated negatively for revealing something new about themselves? Provide an example.
20. Are you surprised by Serwa’s actions at the end of Chapter 26? How is her action a significant change from her pledge at the beginning of the novel? Based upon textual evidence, what might have caused this shift? Explain.
21. In Chapter 1, Serwa states, *“Whoa, the god of death is the source of black magic? That’s news to me. But makes sense. If divine wisdom comes from Nyame and the other gods, I get why its opposite would come from Owuo, the god of death”* (p. 7). How might this impact Serwa and Owuo’s interaction in Chapter 27? What new information does Serwa learn about her family from Owuo? In your opinion, did she make a good deal? Why or why not?

POST-READING QUESTIONS

1. The novel ends with Serwa saying, *“With my unique combination of divine wisdom and black magic, there’s no force in the world that can stop me”* (p. 271). What do you think will happen in the next novel? Make a prediction: How will Serwa’s character traits continue to develop and change in the next novel? Be specific.
2. Novels have a central message or important theme for the reader to consider. What is the important lesson or theme that readers should think about during and after the novel? How does the theme in this second novel differ from the theme of the first novel in the series?
3. What were your favorite parts of Serwa’s adventure? Why? Which characters from the first novel were you glad to see return? Why? Which characters do you hope are in the next novel? Why?
4. Based upon the concluding Author’s Note, what aspects of the book are fictional? Which aspects mirror real-life events? Why is it important to discuss these painful truths and histories?

Standards Aligned to Discussion Questions

Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3
 Reading Literature: Craft and Structure: RL.5.4, 5.5, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6
 Reading Literature: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: RL.5.9



POST-READING ACTIVITIES

Creative Projects and Writing Extensions

1. **MUSEUM EXPLORATION:** In Chapter 4, Serwa says, “[A]lso, did you know there are multiple *Smithsonians* and it’s not just one big super museum? Because I didn’t” (p. 32). Research the different Smithsonian museums that someone can visit, like the Museum of African Art that is highlighted in the novel. Use your research to create a brochure with text and photographs for one Smithsonian museum that you are interested in visiting. Your brochure should include the address, important artifacts and displays in the museum, reasons why people should visit, and the sources used for your research. (*Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge. W.5.7, 6.7*)
2. **INCLUSIVE PRACTICES:** Serwa’s friend Mateo speaks with a stutter. During their conversation in the museum, she does not interrupt him or rush him to finish his sentences. If you are speaking with someone who has a stutter or any type of speech difficulties, what can you do to show them respect? What actions should you avoid? Be specific about your ideas as you engage in a small-group conversation. (*Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: SL.5.1, 6.1*)
3. **GHANAIAN LANGUAGES:** Throughout the novel, readers learn that there are many different Ghanaian languages, such as Ga and Twi. Create a map of Ghana that visually shows the different languages in each region. As you explore the regions, describe other aspects that make each area of Ghana different and similar (e.g., customs, food). Be specific.
4. **WITCHCRAFT PERSPECTIVES:** When Serwa thinks about witchcraft in the US, she states, “*To me, a pointy hat and broomstick are not a cute costume; they are a reminder that, for centuries, people were brutalized under the mere assumption they might be what we actually are*” (p. 161). With the assistance of an adult, research the history of witchcraft in the United States and other countries. Answer the following questions in 3–4 paragraphs that include an introduction, key findings, and concise conclusion:
 - a. How have women accused of witchcraft been treated throughout history?
 - b. In the past, who decided which women were labeled as witches?
 - c. Why are these historical practices shameful and problematic? Use online and text resources to engage in your research. The Author’s Note mentions a book that might be helpful for research, including *Witchcraft, Witches, and Violence in Ghana*. (*Reading Informational Text: Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity; R.L.5.10, 6.10; Writing: Research to Build and Present Ideas: W.5.8, 6.8*)



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Roseanne “Rosie” A. Brown was born in Kumasi, Ghana, and immigrated to the wild jungles of central Maryland as a child. Writing was her first love, and she knew from a young age that she wanted to use the power of writing to connect the different cultures she called home. She worked as an assistant teacher, journalist, and editorial intern before writing her first two young adult novels, *A Song of Wraiths and Ruin*, an instant *New York Times* best seller, and the sequel, *A Psalm of Storms and Silence*. Rosie currently lives outside Washington, DC, where she can usually be found explaining memes to her elderly relatives or thinking about Star Wars. She can neither confirm nor deny if she has ever been possessed by a vampire. Follow her on Twitter @RosieRambles.



Q&A with Roseanne Brown about *Serwa Boateng's Guide to Vampire Hunting*

Q: Why is it important to tell the stories of people from many different cultures in literature?

A: Because people from many different cultures exist! I think it's both that simple and that complex. By creating art of any kind, we are saying that this element of the world is worth preserving and sharing with one another. When you only ever tell stories from a handful of cultures, what you're saying is that only certain people and their way of being is worth celebrating or acknowledging. Everything I write is my shout against that. I believe that historically marginalized cultures are worth celebrating, and that by telling these stories, we are telling the world that we aren't going away and that we deserve to have the same prominence that we've historically been denied.

Q: In the Author's Note, you mention that this depiction of the folklore may be different from other versions. In your opinion, why is it important to recognize many different versions of the same story?

A: It's understood within the oral storytelling tradition of Ghana that no story is ever told the same way twice. Even if two storytellers used the exact same words to tell a tale, they'd end up completely different just from the differences in their performance styles. How then do you decide which version is true? Simple answer: you don't!

That's why I always recognize the tales I'm drawing from rarely have a single interpretation. I truly believe these myths and legends are made greater, not less, by the variations of them.

Q: What did you enjoy most about writing this novel? Why?

A: The best part was developing the GCC, Serwa's squad of friends, both as individuals and as a team unit. I'm a sucker for a ragtag group of misfits banding together to save the day. All five kids couldn't be more different from one another, but when they band together, they become more than the sum of their parts. Plus, it's so fun to take the usual school kid tropes ("the smart one," "the class clown," etc.) and flip them on their heads!





Q: At the end of the novel you stated, “*I wrote this book for anyone who relates to the feeling of straddling two worlds yet never fully belonging in either*” (p. 373). What advice would you give to others who have similar feelings?

A: My advice would be to find your people. That’s what Serwa does in this book, and it’s what I had to do as well. And oftentimes, those people might be in the last place you’d expect. On the surface, the school’s star athlete and the kid who always has their nose stuck in a book have nothing in common, but then they talk and realize they both know what it’s like to have people assume they know everything about you. It’s only by giving one another a chance we truly find ourselves.

Q: Serwa is a very dynamic character; what do you want readers to learn from Serwa? How do you see her evolving in future novels?

A: I want readers to learn that opening yourself up to new possibilities doesn’t mean losing yourself. Serwa takes a lot of pride in her Slayer heritage, which sometimes manifests as very black-and-white thinking. Her worldview changes and grows as her new friends and lifestyle challenge her beliefs, and while she later adapts to new information, she never stops being the confident hero we meet at the start of the book. It’s sometimes scary to embrace things that challenge what we were taught, but that doesn’t mean we’re losing anything.

As for future books, I think we’re going to see Serwa step from being a follower into more of a leader. And there will probably be explosions. Many, many explosions. It wouldn’t be a Serwa Boateng book without some chaos!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE GUIDE

Dawn Jacobs Martin has spent her career supporting students with disabilities through various roles as a practitioner, researcher, special education director, and currently an associate clinical professor at University of Maryland, College Park. She continues to improve the academic outcomes for students with disabilities through teacher development, instructional design, research in the areas of response to intervention, social support, and parent involvement.

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