

Author of *Wolf Hollow*

LAUREN WOLK

BEYOND  
*the*  
Bright Sea



*Beyond the Bright  
Sea*



By Lauren Wolk

Read by Mr Elphick-Smith  
&  
Jacob Sprake

# Introduction

## Biography

After graduating from Brown University in 1981 with a degree in English literature, Lauren Wolk spent a year as a writer with the Battered Women's Project of the St. Paul American Indian Centre, and then worked as both an editor and an English teacher. Since 2007, she has been the Associate Director of the Cultural Centre of Cape Cod. She is an award-winning poet and also a visual artist.

*Wolf Hollow*, her first book, is set in western Pennsylvania where her family roots run deep. Both of her parents were raised in that area, her mother on a farm and in a family that served as the inspiration for the novel.

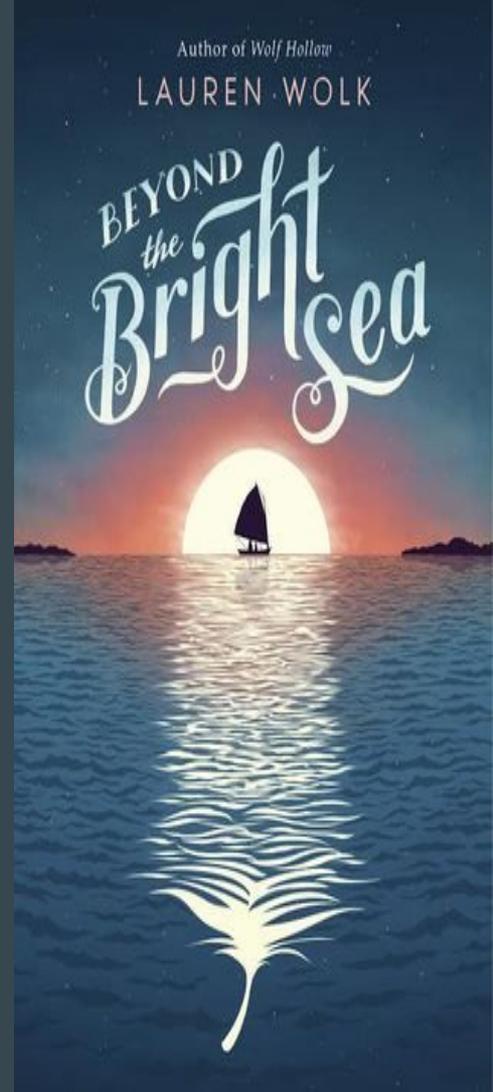




# A brief summary

*Lauren Wolk tells a story about a twelve year old girl, Crow, whose curiosity about who her parents were and where they came from is sparked by a bonfire on a nearby island. Crow was taken in by Osh, the only person living on a tiny island off the coast of Massachusetts, when she was only a few hours old. She and Osh work hard for the things they need, but they don't need much and have always been content together. But as she grows older and learns more about the world around her, Crow really wants to know more about herself, too. Her search takes her to an orphanage in the city, to a tiny graveyard on a nearby mysterious abandoned island, and across the path of a madman who'll stop at nothing to find a pirate's treasure.*

*Lauren Wolk's story echoes the drama of Mrs Barros who was one of the very first Leprosy patients sent to the Penikese Island in 1905, and who gave birth there to a baby daughter. The baby was immediately taken away and she never saw her again.*



# Main Characters

*Crow: 10-13 year old girl cast away when she was born*

*Osh: adoptive father of Crow*

*Miss Maggie: surrogate mother of Crow*

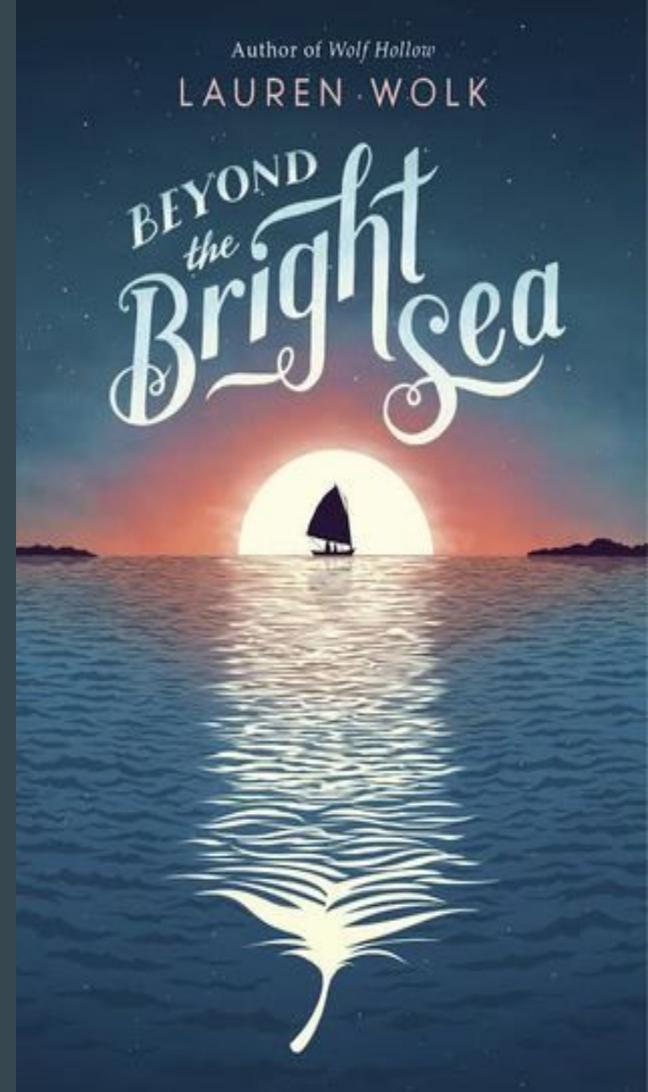
*Mouse: anthropomorphised cat*

*James Kendall: deranged madman*

*Jason: The biological brother of Crow*

*Dr Eastman: The doctor looking after the leprosy patients*

*Nurse Evelyn: The nurse who looked after the leprosy patients*



# Opinions

## *JACOB'S OPINION*

*IT IS HARD TO WRITE AN IMPARTIAL REVIEW ABOUT A BOOK THAT YOU CAN'T PUT DOWN OR STOP READING OVER AND OVER AGAIN. BEYOND THE BRIGHT SEA IS THE MOST MYSTERIOUS AND CAPTIVATING NOVEL I HAVE READ IN QUITE A WHILE. A NOVEL THAT REACHES DEEP INTO YOUR SOUL AND BRINGS EMOTIONS FROM THE BOTTOM OF YOUR HEART.*

*I RECOMMEND YOU KEEP A BOX OF TISSUES NEARBY AT THE START OF THE CLIMAX WHICH COULD RIP UP YOUR EMOTIONS IN SECONDS LIKE A NOR'EASTER.*

*THIS BOOK HAS MANY LESSONS AND MORALS IMBEDDED BETWEEN THE PAGES. PERSONALLY I THINK THE MAIN POINT IS REALISING THAT SOMETIMES YOUR FAMILY IS THE ONE YOU CREATE YOURSELF, NOT THE ONE YOU ARE BORN INTO.*

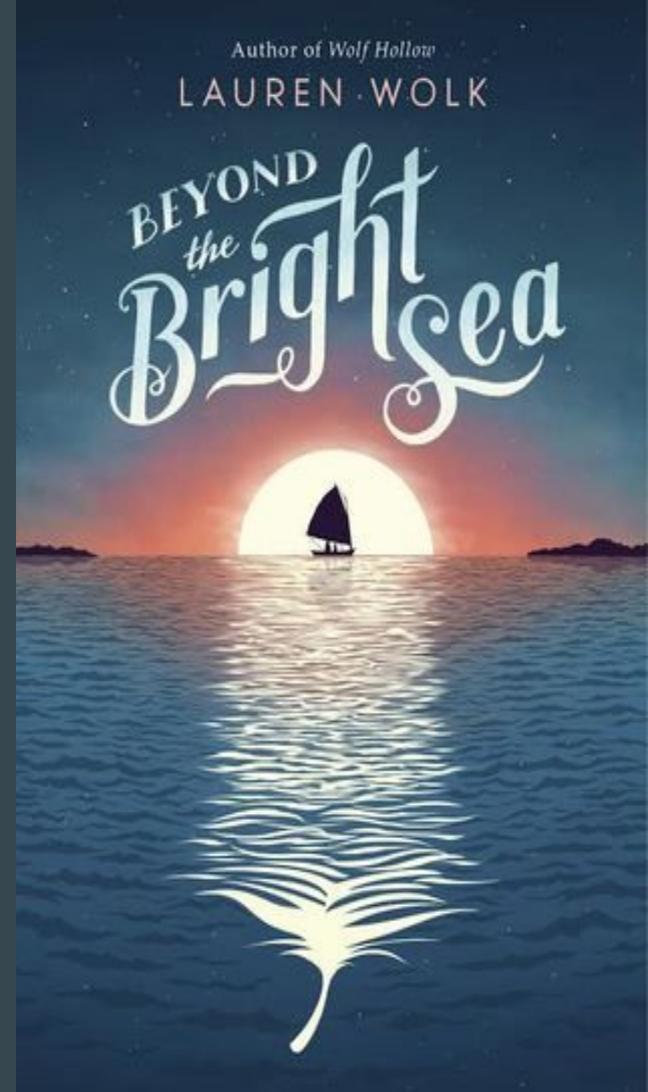
*THE ONLY CRITICISM WHICH I MUST MAKE ABOUT THE SECOND HALF IS HOW EASILY EACH PUZZLE WAS SOLVED AND HOW PREDICTABLE THE END WAS.*

## *MR ELPHICK-SMITH'S OPINION*

*JACOB HAS DESCRIBED THE GENRE OF THE BOOK WELL, AND I LOVE THE FUSION OF ELEMENTS IT OFFERS: THE ADVENTURE, THE MYSTERY, THE HISTORY AND THE DISCOVERY. THE SEARCH FOR IDENTITY IS ALWAYS AN INTRIGUING QUEST, JUST LIKE THE SEARCH FOR TREASURE IN THE BOOK. THE NOVEL IS KEEN INDEED TO LEAD US TO THE ROOT OF THINGS, WHETHER IT BE TO DISCOVER THE HISTORY BEHIND THE STORY AND ITS LOCATIONS OR TO COME TO AN ENLIGHTENED UNDERSTANDING OF FAMILY OR PEOPLE. IT HAS AN ELEMENTAL EVEN MYTHIC QUALITY, EMBODIED IN THE IDEA OF A CHILD SET ADRIFT LIKE MOSES OR IN THE INSPIRATION OF THE FIRE. THE STORY IS BOTH INSPIRING AND AFFECTING.*

## Title

WHEN I FIRST READ THE TITLE I THOUGHT ABOUT GOING BEYOND YOUR COMFORT ZONE INTO DANGER OR GOING ON AN ADVENTURE. NOW AFTER READING THE BOOK I THINK ABOUT A SEAFARING ADVENTURE, GOING ACROSS THE SEA INTO THE BEYOND. NOW BRIGHT SEA HAS MEANING: MORGAN MEANS BRIGHT SEA AND CROW'S REAL NAME IS MORGAN WHICH SHE IS YET TO FIND OUT. CROW AND OSH LIVE ON A LITTLE ISLAND SO THEY ARE SURROUNDED BY SEA.

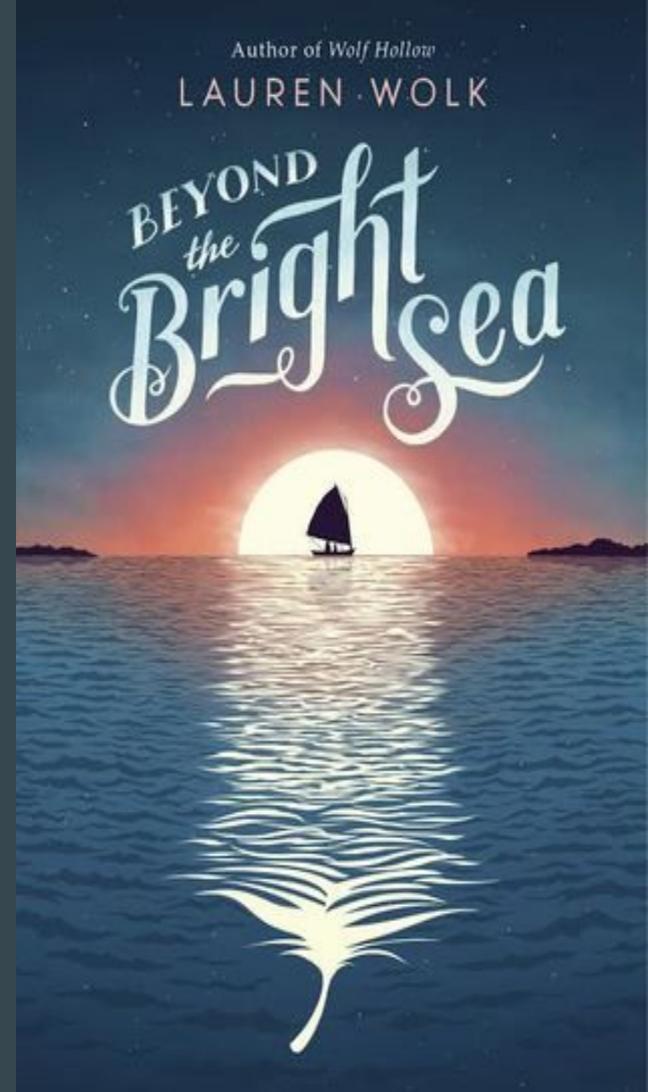


# What parents need to Know

Parents need to know that *Beyond the Bright Sea* is the second children's book by the author of *Wolf Hollow*. It's not as dark or emotionally intense, but there are themes of loss in the story of a stillborn child in the past and a 12-year-old adopted child's search for her birth parents. There's a scary bad guy and suspense, and blood's mentioned a few times but not described in detail. The book explores themes of family (especially adoption), identity, and belonging. Great messages about how the family you make isn't less real or important than family you're born into, and the main characters all are positive role models for love, loyalty, and unwavering support of one another.

Crow, 12, is a great role model for natural curiosity, observing the world around her, wanting people to be treated fairly, showing bravery, and solving problems by carefully thinking them through. Osh and Miss Maggie are great models of loving, patient guidance that still lets Crow work things out for herself as much as possible.

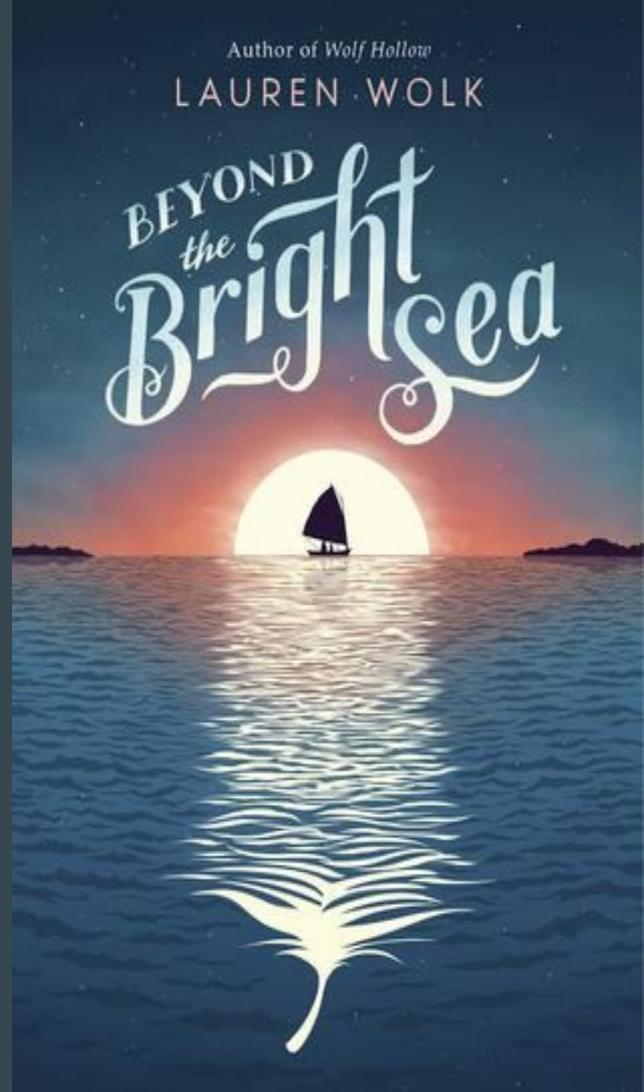
Family that you make is no less important or real than family you're born into. There are stronger bonds than blood. What you do shows who you are. Happiness is being where, and who, you want to be. Encourages empathy and compassion for people who have Hansen's disease (leprosy).



## Other Reviews

*"Author Lauren Wolk weaves a beautiful tapestry of pirate-treasure adventure, suspense, a search for family, and warm family bonds that'll keep the pages turning and the heartstrings tugging. Beyond the Bright Sea is not as dark and intense as Wolk's YA debut, Wolf Hollow, but the mystery, characters, and vivid sense of place make it hard to put down."*

*"Twins will relate to Crow as she explores how her family origins define, and don't define, who she is. The rhythmic writing and suspenseful chapter endings make it great for reading aloud, too. Everyone from big kids up to adults will be deeply moved by Crow's adventures and the lessons she learns about family and happiness. Keep a tissue nearby when you get to the end."*



# Historical & reality reference

Cuttyhunk: a place off Rhode Island

Time: early 1920s

Penikese island : Penikese Island is a 75-acre (300,000 m<sup>2</sup>) island off the coast of Massachusetts, United States, in Buzzards Bay. It is one of the Elizabeth Islands, which make up the town of Gosnold, Massachusetts. Penikese is located near the west end of the Elizabeth island chain. The Penikese Island Leper Hospital was a leprosy hospital located on Penikese Island, off the coast of Massachusetts, United States, from 1905 to 1921. It housed a small colony of people who suffered from leprosy over the years until it was closed in 1921 and patients were relocated to a federal hospital in Louisiana.

# Leper Hospital

In 1905, five leprosy patients arrived on Penikese Island in Buzzard's Bay, the site of the first and only leprosarium in Massachusetts. Over the next 16 years, 36 victims of leprosy, or Hansen's disease, lived on the isolated island, along with a handful of caregivers. Dr. Frank Parker and his wife, Marion, went to great lengths to make the patients comfortable, providing good food, fresh air, exercise, entertainment, and nursing, but it was nearly impossible to overcome the stigma and social ostracism associated with leprosy. Still, the island produced stories of great courage, kindness, and fortitude. The colony closed when the federal government opened a leprosy hospital in Louisiana.



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Leprosy, a contagious and incurable disease that causes lesions, deformities, and if untreated by modern drugs, death, has been known and feared since ancient times. For generations, patients suffered not only from physical debilitation, but from the misconception that the disease was caused by uncleanliness. Until the discovery of antibiotics, which effectively control the disease, it was public policy to remove people with leprosy from their homes and communities and send them to live out their lives in quarantined settings like the one on Penikese Island, located 12 miles off Cape Cod. Leprosy was practically unheard of in Massachusetts until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when increased immigration brought people from countries where the disease was more prevalent. Even then, the number of reported cases was low. Since 95% of the population is naturally immune to the disease, it spread slowly. Still, residents were terrified by the thought that there was even one leper in their midst. Officials deported any newcomers found to have the disease and confined other victims to poorhouse attics or quarantine centres in Boston. By 1904, when the number of reported cases reached double-digits, the state decided it had to create an isolated facility to care for people with leprosy.

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On November 18th, without ceremony, the first patients arrived: two Chinese men, two Cape Verdean men, and a Cape Verdean woman. Their number increased temporarily in March when the woman gave birth to a baby; 20 days later, the healthy infant was shipped to the mainland.

The first physician resigned after two years, when he could not tolerate living in such isolation. In his place came the remarkable Frank and Marion Parker. Dr. Parker had practised medicine in Malden for 22 years; his wife had been prominent in social and charitable circles there. Enthusiastic and devoted to their charges, they transformed daily life on the island. The couple realized that their patients were "prisoners in effect, but not criminals" and did their best to improve their lot. Dr. Parker went to extraordinary lengths to see that the patients had whatever they desired, from special foods to private gardens.

To build their self-esteem, he gave them paying jobs so they could purchase personal items from stores in New Bedford. To protect the patients' dignity, he prohibited visitors or those passing on ships from gawking or taking photographs. Marion equipped the leprosarium with radios, record players, books, and magazines and led religious services herself until she found a clergyman willing to come to the island.

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One of the better-known residents of Penikese was 16-year-old Archie Thomas, who arrived in 1912. Newspapers widely reported the story of his widowed but healthy mother who chose to go into isolation with her only child. A bright boy with an interest in physics and electricity, he received a two-way radio from the New Bedford Women's Society. By sharing news from the Marconi News Service and communicating with operators on other islands and on passing ships, Archie gave the Penikese residents their only contact with "ordinary people." When Archie died in 1915, the news was slow to reach the mainland — no one else knew how to use his radio.

Over the years, the average number of patients living on the island was 14; the inmate population peaked at 17 in the mid 1910s. By 1921, when the U.S. government established a national leprosarium in Louisiana, there were two women and 11 men remaining in the Massachusetts colony. They traveled by tugboat to New Bedford (where the local paper reported that "the morbidly curious . . . gathered around the hospital car while the lepers were making their way to it"), then by hospital train to Louisiana. The Parkers remained behind to disinfect the island and look for another situation. Hospitals were fearful of their long exposure to leprosy and would not employ them. They had no better luck rebuilding a private practice. After six months, they were forced to leave Massachusetts to live with their son in Montana.

The state put Penikese up for sale. But concern about contagion was so strong that no buyers were found. Finally in 1924, officials decided to raze the buildings and make the island into a bird sanctuary. More than 50 years later, the island became another sort of sanctuary — for troubled teenagers and most recently for people recovering from addiction.