

IMPOSSIBLE CREATURES THE NEVERFEAR KATHERINE RUNDELL

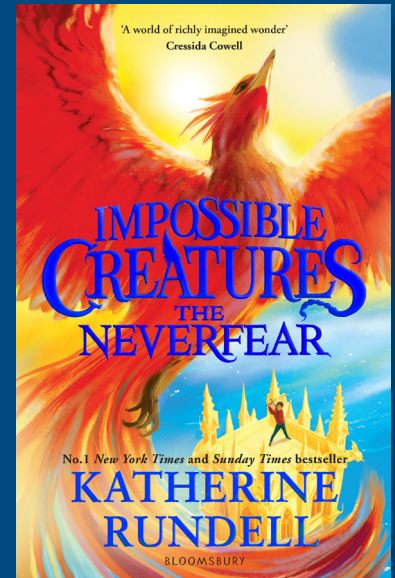


ABOUT THE BOOK

Return to the magic of the Glimouria Archipelago in *The Neverfear*, the third book in Katherine Rundell's Impossible Creatures series, loved by children around the world.

It's the Midsummer Feast on the Islet of Glimt and on this magical moonlit evening, the word on everyone's lips is bandits. Reports of masked men burning villages are spreading throughout the Archipelago, but worse is still to come: Christopher and Anya are ambushed and one of the people they love most is kidnapped.

The two children — alongside Ratwin the ratatoska and Jacques the Jaculus dragon — set sail on the Neverfear to recover three precious treasures. Together they must face fearsome giants, win a daring race, and outwit deadly enemies to save those they love most.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Katherine Rundell is a multi-million-bestselling author whose novels for children have won the Waterstones Children's Book Prize, the Blue Peter Book Award and the Costa Children's Book Award, among many others. *Impossible Creatures* was Waterstones Book of the Year 2023, and in 2024 Katherine was named the British Book Awards Author of the Year and *Impossible Creatures* won the Children's Fiction Book of the Year. She is a Quondam Fellow of All Souls College and a Fellow of St Catherine's College, Oxford, where she works on Renaissance literature. Her books for adults include *Super-Infinite*, winner of the Baillie Gifford Prize. Very occasionally she goes climbing across the rooftops of Oxford, late at night.

IMPOSSIBLE CREATURES THE NEVERFEAR KATHERINE RUNDELL



Teaching resources suitable for ages 9+ | UKS2

This resource pack has been designed to support classroom and library exploration of *Impossible Creatures: The Neverfear*. It provides a range of engaging, cross-curricular activities linked to key themes, settings and ideas in the text.

Subject Links

- ✓ English (Reading, Writing & Speaking and Listening)
- ✓ History (Ancient Greece and Greek Mythology)
- ✓ Geography
- ✓ Science (Living Things and Habitats)
- ✓ Art and Design
- ✓ PSHE

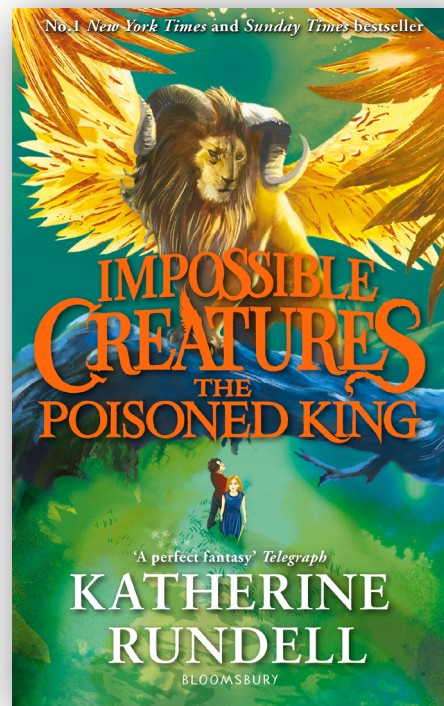
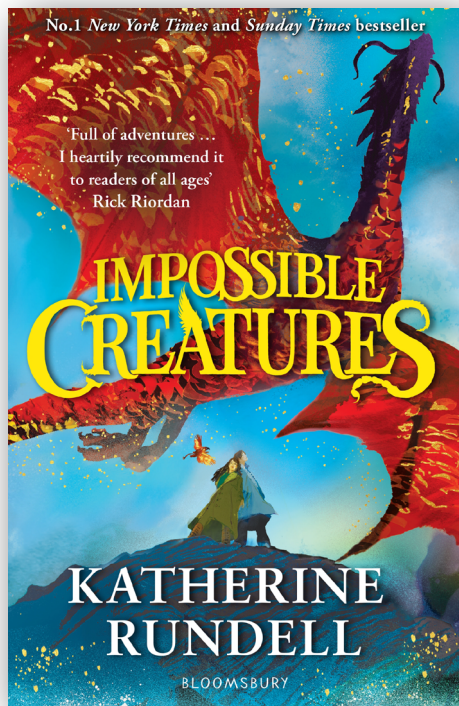
Explore Key Themes

- Nature, conservation and our connection with the natural world
- Mythical creatures and imaginative world-building
- Greek myths and their influence on modern storytelling
- Magic, identity and discovering your strengths
- Friendship, resilience, courage and responsibility
- Journeys, belonging and finding your anchor

IMPOSSIBLE CREATURES THE NEVERFEAR KATHERINE RUNDELL



1. Before Reading: Series Recap



Before you begin *The Neverfear*, take a moment to remember the adventures in the Impossible Creatures series so far.

1. What do you remember?

Test your memory by answering the questions below.

- **Name three important characters** from the series. What makes each of them memorable or important to the story?
- **Identify two key settings.** What happens there and why are these places significant?
- **Describe one major challenge or conflict** Christopher and his friends have faced in the previous books. How was it resolved, or is it still continuing?

Challenge: Can you answer without looking back at the earlier books?

IMPOSSIBLE CREATURES THE NEVERFEAR KATHERINE RUNDELL



2. Character Connections

Many familiar faces return in the opening chapters of *The Neverfear*.

Task

Create a relationship web with **Christopher Forrester** at the centre (see the template on p.7). Add the characters below around him, then draw lines to show how they are connected.

Use different coloured lines or symbols to represent:

- Friendships
- Family or close personal relationships
- Conflicts or rivalries
- Human and creature connections
- Royal or leadership links

Characters

Anya Argen

The fiercely independent princess of Dousha who longs for adventure and dislikes palace life.

Argus Argen

Anya's father, a gifted botanist and the rightful heir to the throne of Dousha.

Fidens Nighthand

Captain of the smuggling ship Berserker and a trusted ally.

Irian Guinne

A brilliant marine scientist with an expert knowledge of sea creatures.

IMPOSSIBLE CREATURES THE NEVERFEAR KATHERINE RUNDELL



Ratwin

A chatty ratatoska who seems to know everyone's secrets.

Jacques

A tiny jaculus dragon who warns Christopher whenever danger is near.

Gallia

A wise, elderly royal gagana who protects and mentors Anya.

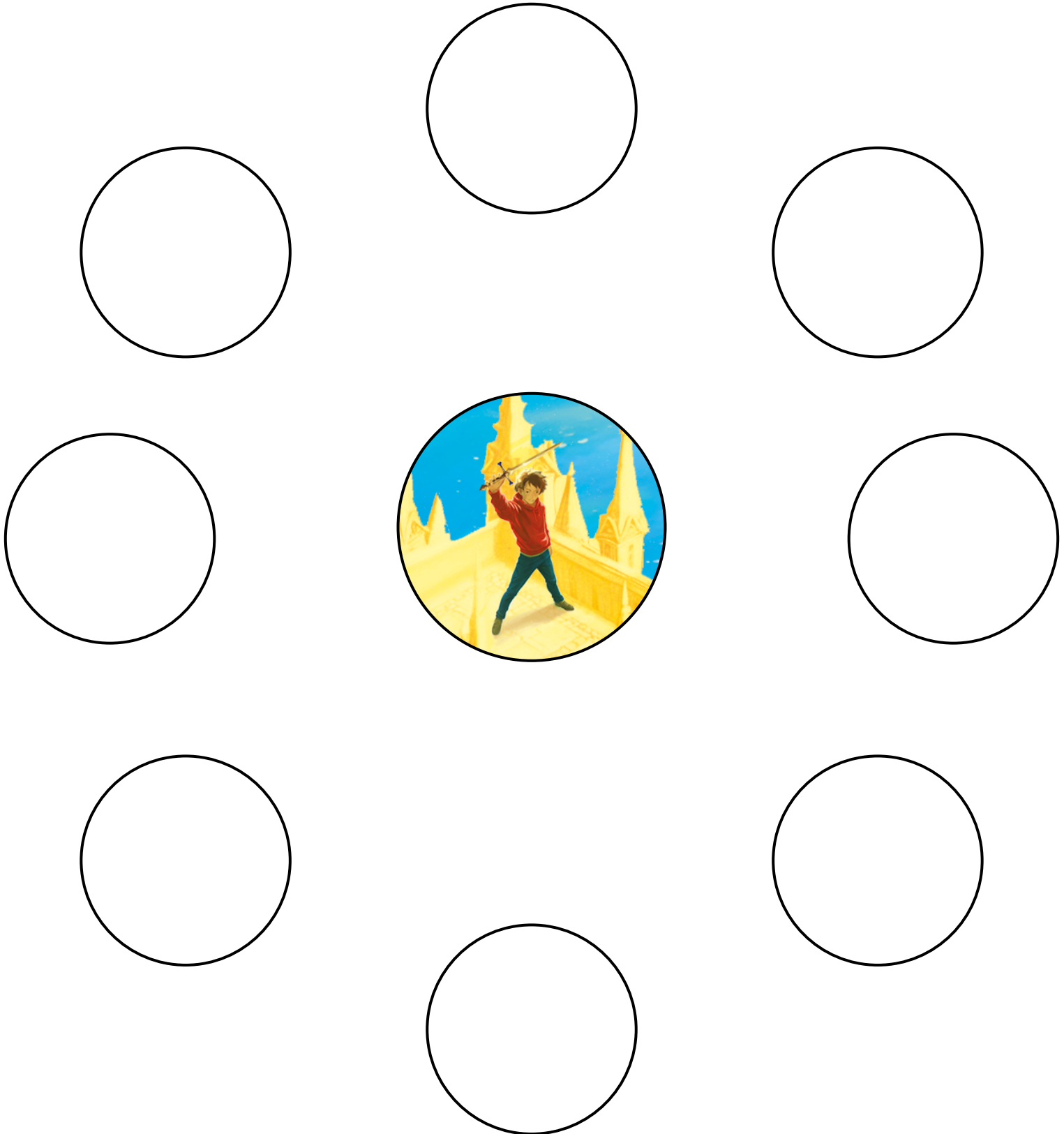
Extension Challenge

Add any other returning characters you remember from earlier books. Draw extra links and label each connection with a word or short phrase explaining the relationship (for example, protector, friend, enemy, travels with, father, rescued by, trusts, or disagrees with).

IMPOSSIBLE CREATURES

THE
NEVERFEAR

KATHERINE RUNDELL



IMPOSSIBLE CREATURES THE NEVERFEAR KATHERINE RUNDELL



2: During Reading: Mapping the Journey

Christopher's adventure takes him across the islands of the **Glimourie Archipelago**. As you read, use the map at the front of the book to trace the journey.

Before you begin, spend a few minutes studying the map.

Think about:

- Which places do you recognise from previous books?
- Which locations are completely new?
- Which places do you think Christopher and his companions might visit? Why?

Your Journey Log

Each time the travellers arrive somewhere new, record your observations.

For each location, note:

- **Describe the setting.** What makes this place unique?
- **What happens here?** Summarise the key events.
- **What are the characters searching for, or what do they discover?**
- **What do they learn?** Think about new information, important decisions or changes in the characters.



IMPOSSIBLE CREATURES

THE
NEVERFEAR

KATHERINE RUNDELL



Journey Log

1. Glimt
(beginning of the journey)

2. The City of Scholars
(Lithia)

3. Great Caruta
(the Island of Giants)

4. Freondell

5. Polytemus

6. The Islands of Ceren

7. Glimt (return)

IMPOSSIBLE CREATURES THE NEVERFEAR KATHERINE RUNDELL



3: Extract Focus: The Neverfear is never broken...

Read the extract on pages 199–200.

‘Let me tell you something. The Neverfear: it’s not the same boat as a year agoes.’

‘I know, but I don’t see—’

‘Hush! I am making a point. Every time, it smash-wrecks, and every time, Nighthand makes a new boat, with as much of the old boat as he is able to salvage. This Neverfear: it has the runners of the firsts, the mast of the seconds, some of the helm-up and gunwale of the fourths.’

‘What’s your point?’

‘My point is, you’re afraid.’

‘I do know that, actually.’ His shame was growing harder, into something pointed and icy.

‘My importation is, each time the Neverfear is broken, it is rebuilt. It is not built the same, but it is rebuilt. It is still the Neverfear.’ Ratwin dipped the stump of her horn to Christopher. ‘So rebuild yourself. You were shipwrecked, back there in the garden. It was a vastly-dark more frightening for you than Anya because you had to make the choices. Don’t expect to be the same as yesterday. You can’t be. You have to expect, before you are old, to be shipwrecked time and times over.’

‘But—’

‘But. Here’s the secret-true,’ and Ratwin leaned over, until her head was almost touching him. ‘This Neverfear is better than the last ones. Each time, Nighthand knows more about how to build-up a ship. Each time, the ship is better: tougher, bolder on the water. Each time it is defeated it grows faster. That’s you, Christopher.’

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why does Ratwin tell Christopher the story of the *Neverfear* instead of simply telling him to be brave?
2. What does Ratwin mean when she says, “It is still the *Neverfear*”?
3. What happened to Christopher that makes Ratwin compare him to a ship that has been rebuilt?
4. Why do you think Christopher finds it difficult to believe Ratwin at first?
5. Ratwin says, “*You have to expect... to be shipwrecked time and times over.*”
What do you think she means by being “shipwrecked” in life?
6. Do you think difficult experiences can change people for the better? Why or why not?
7. Ratwin believes that every time the *Neverfear* is rebuilt, it becomes stronger. Is this always true for people too?
Discuss your ideas.
8. Can you think of another character from a book you have read who has become stronger after facing challenges?
9. Have you ever learned something important after making a mistake or facing a difficult challenge?
10. If you could give Christopher one piece of advice after this conversation, what would it be?

IMPOSSIBLE CREATURES THE NEVERFEAR KATHERINE RUNDELL



Creative Activities

1. Design Your Own Neverfear

Imagine the Neverfear has been damaged again and needs rebuilding.

Draw and label the new version of the ship.

Think about:

- Which parts would you keep?
- What new features would you add?
- How would these changes make the ship stronger or better prepared for future adventures?

Challenge: Explain why each improvement has been made.

2. Rebuilding Ourselves

Ratwin says people can rebuild themselves just like the Neverfear.

Draw an outline of a person. Around it, write or draw things that help someone recover after a difficult experience, such as:

- courage
- friendship
- hope
- kindness
- determination
- learning from mistakes

Then choose the three qualities you think are most important and explain your choices.

IMPOSSIBLE CREATURES THE NEVERFEAR KATHERINE RUNDELL



4: After Reading: Cross-Curricular Activity Ideas

Activity 1: The Twelve Labours of Hercules

(English • History • Ancient Greece • Research Skills)

In *The Neverfear*, Christopher and his companions must complete several of the famous **Twelve Labours of Hercules** in order to collect the ingredients needed to grow the powerful **Fendthorn**.

Investigate the original myths.

Choose one (or more) of these labours:

- Capturing **Cerberus**, the three-headed guardian of the Underworld
- Winning the **Belt of Hippolyta**, Queen of the Amazons
- Collecting the **Golden Apples of the Hesperides**

For each labour, find out:

- What was Hercules asked to do?
- Why was the task so difficult?
- Which qualities helped him succeed?
- How do you think this myth might inspire an adventure in *The Neverfear*?

Challenge: Compare the original myth with the way Katherine Rundell reimagines it in the novel. Which parts stay the same? Which parts change?

IMPOSSIBLE CREATURES

THE
NEVERFEAR

KATHERINE RUNDELL



Activity 2: Create Your Own Creature Magic (A New Discovery for the Ferux Library)

(English • Art & Design • Science • Geography)

Christopher has a rare gift: he can sense, understand and connect with impossible creatures in a way that few humans can.

Throughout the **Impossible Creatures** series, nature is not simply a backdrop, it is something to be understood, respected and protected.

Imagine you had your own magical gift. Design a magical ability that connects you with the natural world.

Think about:

- Which creature (real or mythical) is your magic linked to?
- What can you do?
- How did you discover your gift?
- What are its strengths?
- What are its limits or weaknesses?
- How would your magic help protect creatures, habitats or the natural world?

Present your ideas as an illustrated page from a book found in **The Ferux Library**.

Include:

- an illustration of your creature
- a description of your magical gift
- how your magic works
- how it helps the natural world
- a warning or piece of advice for anyone who discovers your magic!

Challenge: Give your magical gift a memorable name and include a field guide symbol or emblem to represent it.

IMPOSSIBLE CREATURES THE NEVERFEAR KATHERINE RUNDELL



Activity 3: Finding Your Anchor

(PSHE • English • Art & Design)

Christopher learns that powerful magic only works when he discovers his **anchor**, the thing that keeps him grounded and reminds him who he is.

His anchor turns out not to be an object at all.

What is your anchor?

Draw yourself in the centre of a page. Around yourself, add words or pictures showing the people, places, memories and values that help you stay strong when life is difficult.

Your anchors might include:

- family
- friends
- pets
- kindness
- music
- favourite places
- books
- sport
- faith
- creativity

Join each one to the centre with a line and explain why it is important to you.

Reflection

Everyone's anchor is different. Why do you think Christopher's friends become his anchor? How can knowing your own anchor help you when you face challenges?

Cover illustrations © Daniel Egnéus; Guardian's Bestiary illustrations © Tomislav Tomić