

## The Secret of the Purple Lake

**Yaba Badoe**

**Gbolahan Adams, Illustrator**

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Starting with the adventure of a little girl who must find and retrieve her father's bones from the bottom of the ocean, *The Secret of the Purple Lake* is a series of five compelling stories by Yaba Badoe. Each story has the rhythm and style of a folktale from long ago and far away. Each is entertaining, with magic and dangerous quests, and characters who are not entirely in control of their own destinies. Each also offers a moral lesson about how those who do not fit within the norms of society can find joy.

The stories take place in very different geographical locations, including Ghana, Orkney, Norway, Spain, and Thailand, and yet they are all interconnected, with the minor characters in one story becoming the central characters of another. In this way, Badoe offers an enjoyable and thoroughly satisfying opportunity to explore the fates of some interesting creations, such as a gentle Viking who is turned into a walrus in one story, and who seeks out and finds true love in another.

The stories have clear, easy-to-follow narratives. There is a notable gap in the second story, which concerns the king of Orkney and his desire for sons: From one page to the next, a fourth daughter is born and the queen disappears—but this gap is explained in a later narrative that features the queen as its protagonist.

Lovely, evocative descriptions—"Flying within the clouds is like dancing on vapour and gliding above them feels like kissing the sun"—fill the text. A series of black-and-white illustrations by Gbolahan Adams complement the stories and provide visual interest.

*The Secret of the Purple Lake* is a pleasure to read. Each highly original story takes place in a world of magic and wonder with a cast of fascinating characters who find unexpected paths to their destinies.

CATHERINE THURESON (May/June 2018)

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