

★ **Artemis Sparke and the Sound Seekers Brigade: Brave Girls Collection**

Kimberly Behre Kenna

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A budding ecologist finds her voice in Kimberly Behre Kenna's delightful novel *Artemis Sparke and the Sound Seekers Brigade*.

When twelve-year-old nature-loving Artemis finds BB pellets in her beloved salt marsh, she is determined to discover the who, how, and why of the nature preserve's apparent decline. As the marsh's bird population diminishes and her activism grows, Artemis's friendships wither, but she refuses to give up on speaking up for nature, even if it means having to overcome her anxiety-induced stutter. Soon, the ghosts of dead ecologists arise from the antiquated hotel in which Artemis lives, and their inspiring words empower Artemis to take control of her fears and dreams. As Artemis remains brave in spite of persecution, standing up for what's right to address the ravages of climate change, she transforms from a nervous, reticent girl into an astute environmental activist.

Artemis is a courageous, passionate, and observant heroine who is vivified by her emotional complexity. She beats herself up when her anger gets the best of her, and she fights the urge to make demands of her friends and family members: she knows their wants and feelings matter, too. Her best friend Warren and quirky neighbor Mrs. Moonchaser bolster the narrative, offering Artemis support but also challenging her: she and Warren argue about their priorities, and Mrs. Moonchaser faces blame for Artemis's secretive rebellions. Artemis villainizes her mother and the hotel's owner before learning that even grown-ups get wrapped up in their own truths, growing blind to context.

Handling mature issues (including divorce, parental alcoholism, and near-death experiences) with tact, *Artemis Sparke and the Sound Seekers Brigade* is a commanding novel with a powerful environmental message.

AIMEE JODOIN (January / February 2023)

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