



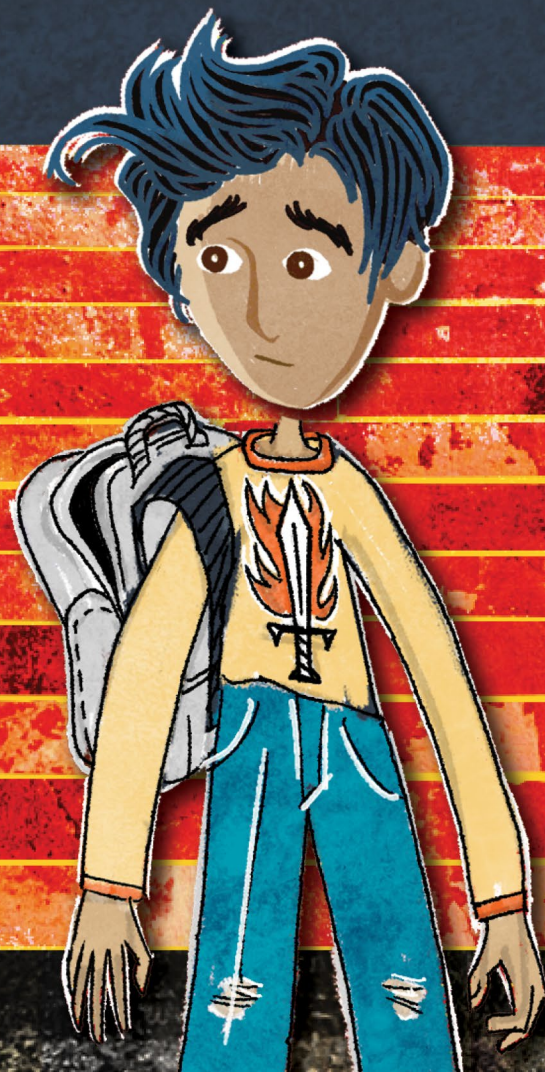
OSCAR

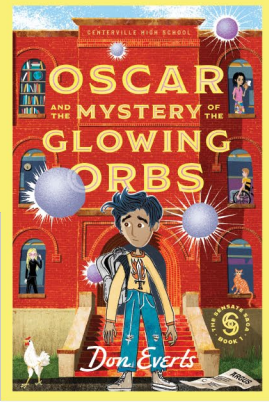
AND THE MYSTERY OF THE

GLOWING

ORBS

Reader's Companion





OSCAR AND THE MYSTERY OF THE GLOWING ORBS

by Don Everts

ABOUT THE BOOK

WHAT IF YOU COULD SEE THINGS NO ONE ELSE COULD?

Just as Oscar has decided to shuffle his way through freshman year and settle for eating lunch alone, something extraordinary happens—he begins to see glowing orbs that no one else sees. Oscar soon finds himself in the middle of an eclectic group of kids with unique powers who are eager to solve the mystery that is disrupting life at Centerville High.

Packed with mystery and heartfelt themes of friendship and faith, *Oscar and the Mystery of the Glowing Orbs* is a perfect coming-of-age story for middle-grade readers who love detective adventures and stories that inspire curiosity about the unseen marvels in everyday life.

PRAISE FOR OSCAR

“This cozy story weaves Christian themes of faith and friendship into a slow-burn mystery with spots of humor and drama. Everts develops the large, racially diverse cast of characters through strong dialogue that propels the plot.” – **KIRKUS REVIEWS**

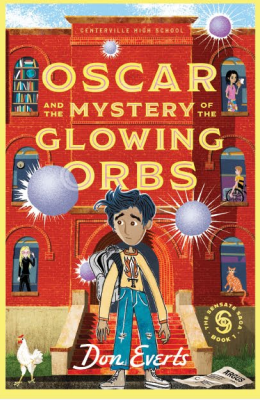
“This earnest caper by Everts imagines a world in which adolescent hormones trigger not just emotional overdrive but empathic superpowers....Everts demonstrates how people can grow emotionally and spiritually through hardship and delves into the affirming power of friendship and belonging.” – **PUBLISHERS WEEKLY**

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Whether you're reading independently, with a book club, or in a classroom, this guide is for you! You'll find discussion questions to deepen your understanding, hands-on activities to bring the story to life, and recommendations for your next great read. Teachers and parents can use this guide to facilitate engaging discussions, while young readers can explore it on their own to connect more deeply with the characters and themes.



InterVarsity Press



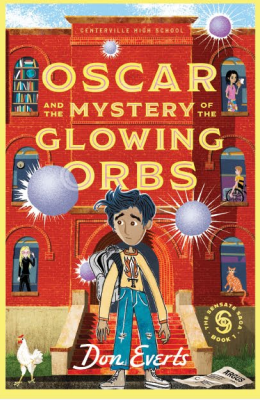
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REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. There are over 30 characters named in this book. Who was your favorite character? Who was your least favorite character? Which character reminded you of yourself and why?
2. Each day Oscar had to navigate 7 classes, a lunch period, and the halls that got him from one place to another. What were some of the highs and lows Oscar experienced during the school day? What were the different strategies Oscar used to “get through” his day at school? Which of Oscar’s highs, lows, or strategies did you most relate to?
3. Oscar is very self-conscious about the difficulty he has walking. How does his thinking about this change throughout the book? Do you think most people have something about themselves that they are self-conscious about? What about you? Are there things about yourself that you feel embarrassed about or are hesitant to talk to others about? How might sharing those thoughts and feelings with others help?
4. The Sensates can see “realities that are beyond the mere physical,” like deep thoughts, relational connections, guilt, anger, honesty, and anxiety. How do these abilities help Oscar as he tries to adjust to his new school and help Annie investigate? If you were a Sensate, what would you want the ability to sense and what would your Sensate nickname be?
5. Oscar observes a lot about the people around him in class and in the halls. How would you describe the ways he thinks about them? Do you see a difference in his thinking from the beginning of the story to the end? How would you describe the way you observe and think about people in your own school?
6. Oscar has read lots of fantasy books and watched lots of movies. In what ways does this affect how he thinks about himself and the world around him? How do Oscar’s phone habits help him during the story? How do they hurt him? How has your own experience of “scrolling like a zombie” on your phone been similar to or different than Oscar’s?
7. Oscar can literally see the difference between deeper thinking and everyday thinking. What are lessons Oscar learns through the story about his own thinking? Are there any environments or habits that help you get lost in deeper thoughts?
8. Oscar grows up in a racially blended family. How has this shaped him as a person and how does it influence his response to the racist vandalism? How would you compare and contrast the racial dynamics in Oscar’s previous city/school and his new city/school? How would you describe the racial dynamics in your own city/school?
9. Oscar prays at various points in the story. How does his praying change and grow during the story? How believable or realistic did you find the moments when Oscar felt nudged or encouraged by God during prayer? Have you ever felt nudged by God to do something? How was your experience similar or different than Oscar’s?





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ACTIVITIES

MUSIC - CREATING A PLAYLIST

Choose 3 songs for your playlist that represent Oscar's challenges at the beginning of the book. For each song, list the title, artist, what the song represents to you, and why you chose it for Oscar.

Choose 3 songs for the playlist you would want to inspire The Sensates as a whole. For each song, list the title, artist, why you find the song inspiring, and why you chose it for The Sensates.

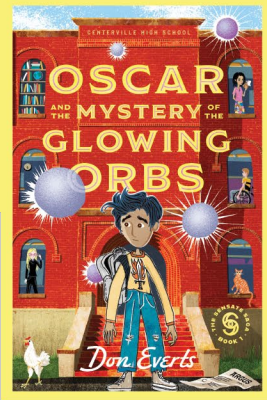
Choose 3 songs for the playlist that represent the growth you've seen in Oscar by the end of the book. For each song, list the title, artist, and how the song connects to Oscar's area of growth.

CREATIVE WRITING - YOU ARE A SENSATE!

One day at school, you are called into a secret meeting and told you are a Sensate! Write a narrative essay describing that meeting and your discovery of your Sensate power. Make sure your story has a catchy beginning and satisfying ending and be sure to include vivid sensory details and dialogue.

ART - BUBBLE PAINTING

In honor of Oscar's nickname, let's do some bubble art! You will need white paper, a straw, bubble solution (water + dish soap will work), and food coloring. To create bubble paintings, mix bubble solution with several squirts of liquid food coloring in a bowl and stir well with your straw. You will need separate bowls for each color. Blow bubbles through the straw until a mound forms above the bowl's rim, then carefully lower a piece of paper onto the bubbles, keeping it flat and taut so it doesn't sag into the liquid below. You can repeat this process with different colors on various parts of your paper if you want, then flip it over and let it dry—the colors will appear brighter once the moisture evaporates, and if your first attempt is too faint, just add more food coloring and try again.



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ACTIVITIES

COOKING - ABUELA'S ARROZ CON POLLO

Feeling adventurous? Team up with your favorite adult and try your hand at Oscar's Abuela's Arroz con Pollo!

Preheat the oven to 350 serves 6-8 9x13 pan

2 T	vegetable oil	2 C.	white rice
1 lb.	boneless chicken, cut into 1-inch cubes	1/2 T	ground cumin
1/4 C	onion, diced	1 T	chicken bouillon
1	red pepper, seeded and diced	4 C	water
2	medium tomatoes, diced	1/2 t	salt
1/8 C.	vegetable oil	8 oz.	block of queso fresco cheese, crumbled

Heat 2 T vegetable oil in a sauté pan on medium heat. Sauté onions, peppers, and tomato until onions are translucent. With a slotted spoon, leave reserve oil in the pan, remove vegetables, and set aside.

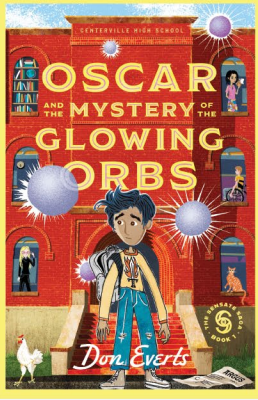
Add chicken to oil and sauté until browned. With a slotted spoon, leave reserve oil in the pan, remove chicken and set aside.

Add 1/8 C more vegetable oil to the same hot pan. Add rice, bouillon, and cumin, stirring and scraping the bottom of the pan to get any brown bits until rice is coated in oil and starts to turn opaque. Add vegetables and chicken back in with the rice, stirring to combine.

Pour chicken and rice into a 9x13 casserole dish. Mix together the salt and water until salt is dissolved. Pour water over rice, chicken and vegetables and stir to combine. Cover tightly with foil and bake for 30 minutes. Remove from oven, crumble queso fresco over top and cover again and bake for another 10 minutes.

Serves 6-8





OSCAR AND THE MYSTERY OF THE GLOWING ORBS

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OSCAR'S LIST OF AWESOME BOOKS

Looking for a good book to curl up with? We asked Oscar Owens to tell us a little more about the books referred to during *Oscar & the Mystery of the Glowing Orbs*. Here's the list (and comments) he came up with:

The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien

Let's face it: I'm a lot like Bilbo Baggins. He was happily holed up in his comfy underground home at Bag End, but then Gandalf showed up and pushed him out the door and onto an adventure. Bilbo's journey among dwarves, giants, and dragons changed him for the better, and the same happened to me when I read this classic fantasy book!

The Lord of the Rings by J.R.R. Tolkien

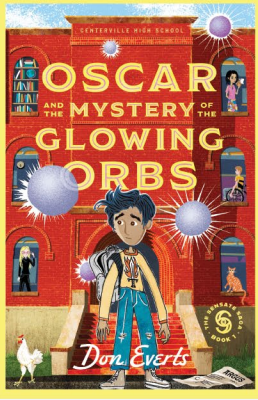
If you loved *The Hobbit* and want to return to Middle-earth for more time with Gandalf, hobbits, and all the rest - you're in good luck! Tolkien wrote a trilogy that follows Bilbo's cousin, Frodo, on a perilous journey to dark Mordor. This trilogy of fantasy books isn't a fast read, but I honestly didn't want it to be. I loved these books so much I named my cat after one of the characters!

The Chronicles of Narnia by C.S. Lewis

If you've only seen the movies based on this fantasy series, you owe yourself the favor of dipping into the books themselves. Don't worry, the 7 novels are pretty quick reads, but they are super exciting and the deep themes will stick with you long after you've read them. Also, you gotta love a story that begins with kids going through a magic portal!

The Wingfeather Saga by Andrew Peterson

When the Igiby family is pursued by the Fangs of Dang, it's the three kids (of course!) who must use their Maker-given gifts and courage to save the day. This creative tale involves all sorts of memorable characters, fun creatures, and silly names. I laughed lots (and maybe cried a little) while reading this super fun 4-book series.



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Coraline by Neil Gaiman

I can totally relate with Coraline moving to a new (old) house with her parents. This short book made my spine tingle a few times, but I love it when kids have to save the day (and their parents). Again, any book with a portal to another world has my attention!

The Harry Potter Series by J.K. Rowling

Young Harry Potter was struggling through life until he received a letter inviting him to attend Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. At that point his life (and struggles!) got much more epic and memorable. I love how this super fun fantasy series helps me ask super deep questions about life and friendship and sacrifice and love.

Dune by Frank Herbert

While I tend to prefer fantasy over sci-fi, I loved traveling to Arrakis with young Paul Atreides. If a desert planet sounds boring to you, just wait til you encounter one of the enormous sandworms or learn about how a stillsuit works. I read the book just for fun, but found myself learning a lot about leadership and influence. Once the moisture evaporates, and if your first attempt is too faint, just add more food coloring and try again.