

Where the Crawdads Sing

by Delia Owens

1. The North Carolina marsh where Kya lives has long been a sanctuary for outsiders. How does this setting shape the novel? How does growing up in this isolation affect Kya? In what ways does her status as an "outsider" change how others see her?
2. Why does Kya choose not to go back to school? Do you think she makes the wrong decision? How does Kya's lack of formal education shape her vision of the world? Would her character be different if she had gone to school?
3. After Jodie and Pa leave Kya alone, she becomes close to Jumpin' and Mabel. Why are these two adults drawn to Kya? What do they teach her about the world? Do you agree with Jumpin's decision to protect Kya from social services (p. 110) and to encourage her to live alone in the marsh? Why or why not?
4. Why do you think Kya's mother leaves in the beginning? Do you agree with her decision?
5. Kya often watches the other young people from town --- she even nicknames them "Tallskinnyblonde, Ponytailfreckleface, Shortblackhair, Alwayswearspearls, and Roundchubbycheeks" (p. 80). What does Kya learn from observing these girls? Why do you think she keeps her watching secret? Do you agree with Kya's secrecy?
6. How is womanhood explored throughout the novel? What does being a woman mean to Kya? How does she relate to the other women in Barkley Cove?

7. Discuss Kya's relationship with Tate. How does Tate's understanding of Kya change over time? Is Tate a good partner for Kya? Why or why not?

8. Tate's father tells him that poems are important because "they make ya feel something" (p. 48). What does poetry mean to Tate? What does it mean to Kya? How does poetry help Kya throughout the novel?

9. On page 142, Kya watches the fireflies near her shack, and notices that the females can change their flashes to signal different things. What does this realization mean to Kya? What does it teach her about relationships? How does this lesson influence Kya's decisions in the second half of the novel?

10. Discuss how Kya's observations of nature shape her vision of the world. Do you think these lessons adequately prepare her for life in Barkley Cove? Do you think human society follows the same rules as the natural world? Should it? Why or why not?

11. Is Chase a different kind of man than Tate? How are they different? Is one man better? Do you think that their differences are biological or learned? How does Kya see each man?

12. By the end of the novel, Kya thinks, "Most of what she knew, she'd learned from the wild. Nature had nurtured, tutored, and protected her when no one else would. If consequences resulted from her behaving differently, then they too were functions of life's fundamental core" (p. 363). What does she mean? Do you agree with her philosophy? What do you think it means to be a good person? Do you think Kya is a good person? Why or why not?

13. Were you surprised by the verdict in the Chase's murder trial? What about by the ending of the novel? Do you agree with Tate's final decision? Why or why not?

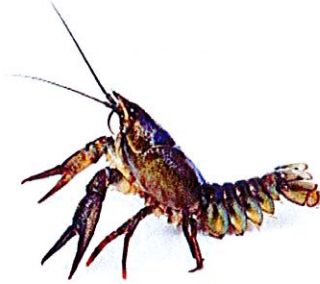
Delia Owens

Delia Owens is the co-author of three internationally bestselling nonfiction books about her life as a wildlife scientist in Africa

--- CRY OF THE KALAHARI, THE EYE OF THE ELEPHANT and SECRETS OF THE SAVANNA.

She has won the John Burroughs Award for Nature Writing and has been published in *Nature*, *The African Journal of Ecology* and *International Wildlife*, among many others. She currently lives in Idaho, where she continues her support for the people and wildlife of Zambia. **WHERE THE CRAWDADS SING** is her first novel.

Where the Crawdads Sing-Menu



Carolina Fried Shrimp Ingredients:

- 1-2 pounds shrimp
- ¼ cup cornstarch
- 2 egg whites
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon lemon pepper
- 1 tablespoon Lawry's seasoned salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon salt
- Enough oil for frying (I'll be doing all my frying in the same oil so I'll fry the shrimp last to not add a seafood flavor to the other food)

DIRECTIONS – Fried Shrimp:

- Peel and de-vein shrimp, combine flour and spices.
- Place corn starch, egg whites and flour in three separate small bowls
- Lightly coat shrimp in corn starch mixture and shake off excess, then coat in egg whites, then in flour mixture (dry, wet, dry) and then place on cookie sheet to side while oil pre-heats to 375 degrees.

- Only add 5-6 shrimp at a time and cook for 1 minute each – remove immediately after 1 minute or you will overcook! Sprinkle with salt and let rest while you finish the rest of the shrimp.

Fried Okra Ingredients:

- 1 (ish) pound fresh okra, sliced ½ inch thick
- ½ cup cornmeal
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons Lawry's seasoned salt
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ½ cup buttermilk

Fried Green Tomatoes Ingredients:

- 1 large egg lightly beaten
- ½ cup buttermilk
- ½ cup all-purpose flour, divided
- ½ cup cornmeal
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 3 medium sized green tomatoes, cut into 1/3 inch slices
- Salt to taste

DIRECTIONS – Fried Green Tomatoes:

- Combine egg and buttermilk – set to side.
- Combine ¼ cup flour, cornmeal salt and pepper in shallow bowl.

- Dredge tomato slices in remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup flour, dip in egg mixture then dredge in cornmeal (dry, wet, dry)
- The ideal for fried green tomatoes is to use a cast iron skillet and only fill with $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch oil and fry at 375 for 2 minutes on each side. I drained off a bit of the oil from the okra and shrimp into a cast iron skillet and fried the tomatoes while I fried the shrimp in the remaining oil.

DIRECTIONS – Fried Okra:

- In medium sized bowl, combine cornmeal, flour, season salt and cayenne. Dip okra in buttermilk and then dredge in the cornmeal-flour mixture and coat well. Add okra to hot oil (350-375) until golden brown. Be sure you don't crowd the pan – repeat if necessary until all okra is cooked.
- Remove to paper towel lined plate and sprinkle with salt.

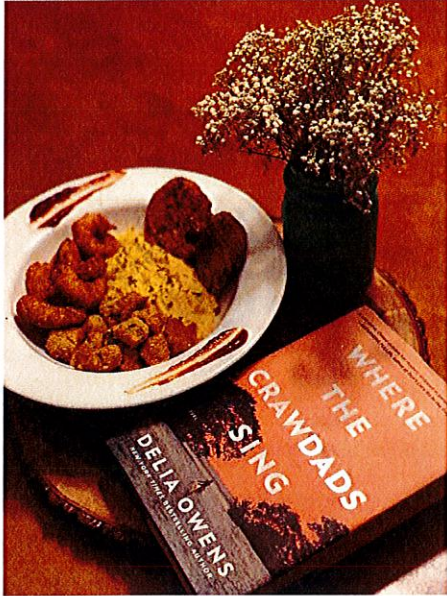
Cheese Grits Ingredients:

- 2 cups whole milk
- 2 cups water
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup coarse ground cornmeal
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon pepper
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 4 ounces sharp Cheddar, shredded

DIRECTIONS- Cheese Grits:

- Pour milk, water and salt into a heavy-bottomed pot over medium-high heat and bring to a boil. **Breaking a cream sauce is super easy, I bring cream to room temperature and you want to go low and slow*
- Once milk mixture comes to a boil, gradually add cornmeal while continually whisking. Once all the cornmeal has been incorporated, decrease the heat to low and cover.
- Remove lid and whisk frequently, every 3-4 minutes to prevent grits from sticking or forming lumps – make sure to get the corners of the pot when whisking.
- Cook for 20-25 minutes or until mixture is creamy.
- Remove from heat, add pepper and butter and stir to combine. Once butter is melted gradually add in cheese and serve immediately.





Quote: Pa motioned for her to sit at a small table overlooking the wharf. She couldn't read the menu, but he told her most of it, and she ordered fried chicken, mashed potatoes, white acre peas and biscuits fluffy as fresh-picked cotton. He had fried shrimp, cheese grits, fried "okree", and fried green tomatoes.

Music Mood: Miracle by Temper Trap

Lyrics

A little shade will grow into a tree
Leaving us in wonder as it sleeps
Who on Earth can fathom, who on Earth can know?
You are but a thought in your maker's eyes
And I may not always believe
But you're nothing short of a miracle

Feeble, tiny hands bound for greatness
You will rise and fall like the rest of us
Love will keep you up, and always be the crutch
That will see you through to the very last

And I may not always believe
But you're nothing short of a miracle
Clever minds will second guess
But to me, you're a living miracle

Something else comes over me
Grace has come to set me free
In your hands, you hold a new forever

We may not always believe
Past which side we really see
Pride and lust is our disease
And the cure is you, little miracle