



## Way of Water

*Lee Welles, Carol Coogan (Illustrator)*

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Winner of the 2008 NAUTILUS GOLD AWARD in the category of Young Adult Fiction/Fantasy Winner of the 2008 MOM'S CHOICE GOLD AWARD in the category of juvenile fiction (ages 9-12) Miho's backyard had always been the sea. The creatures within it were an endless source of fascination. But when the sea steals away her small family, she finds herself the ward of an uncle she has never met and submerged in a world she has never known: Japan. From the city of Nagoya to the seaside town of Goza, Miho struggles to fit in and navigate the language, the culture and her own grief. It is in Goza that she discovers her surprising family history and finds new teachers. She is befriended by an old man who becomes her Sensei and teaches her Sho-do, The Way of the Brush. And it is there she meets Gaia, the living entity of the Earth. Gaia grants her amazing powers to connect with the "minds in the water" and Miho is given access and understanding to all the world's oceans. Will she be able to use her powers to help balance the traditions of the past with the demands of the present? Can she overcome her outsider status to help others understand The Way of Water?

## Way of Water Details

Date : Published June 30th 2007 by Chelsea Green Publishing (first published 2007)

ISBN : 9781933609027

Author : Lee Welles , Carol Coogan (Illustrator)

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Genre : Fantasy, Young Adult, Fiction, Childrens, Middle Grade

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## From Reader Review Way of Water for online ebook

### Claire says

Fantastic second book in the Gaia Girls series, which will eventually be SEVEN books (though at this rate my daughter will outgrow them before they're all published!)

The story is full of adventure and magic and intrigue, while teaching the reader (both subtly and not-so-subtly) tips for taking care of our precious waters. As an added bonus in this book, you also get a nice collection of Japanese culture and vocabulary. There is urgency and conflict and disaster and tragedy - difficult subjects are not sugar-coated, but addressed with realism and honesty. This book is PERFECT for kids in the mid-to-higher elementary grades. Also great because the protagonist is a girl who discovers her power (personal AND supernatural) and learns from Gaia, who takes the form of an otter, that one individual CAN make a difference. She also learns about relationships, and how to interact with all kinds of people.

The book has fun learning activities in the back like word puzzles and scavenger hunts. Each illustration in the book has a secret letter hidden in it somewhere, and if you collect all the letters in order they spell out a message.

My daughter and I highly recommend this book!

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### Jennifer says

Interesting and very timely on environmental issues. However, there were many times I wanted to call Child Protective Services on her guardian and felt the negligence and lack of communication were unrealistic.

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### Amie Doughty says

This installment of the series was far better story-wise, though again the main character was a bit too good to be true (not to the same extreme as Elizabeth in the first book, but not far away). My larger concern with the novel is the appropriation of Japanese culture, which Welles shapes to fit her story line (most notably when she moves the dates of the dolphin slaughters). Many of the Japanese characteristics seem quite stereotypical, which detracts from the story for me. And as with Enter the Earth, Way of Water's sledge-hammer-like message is too much for me.

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### Brooke says

REALLY GOOD BOOK IT IS A MUST READ FOR OCEANLOVER AND TREEE HUGGERS

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### **Jacqueline says**

Gaia Girls: Way of Water was a huge improvement over the first book in the series, Enter the Earth. Although the story still didn't flow as I would have liked, the characters were more realistic and better developed, and the plot was much more interesting!

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### **Kelsi says**

I loved this book; it was interesting to me and informative too. The only concern I have is there was a very graphic part involving dolphins being killed. If I had been an 8-year-old rather than an adult it might have been too much. As it is, it reminded me of the movie The Cove and was hard to read. I loved the first book even more, but that might be because I see myself more on a organic farm than in Japan!

I plan to recommend this book and the series to my seventh grade students this fall. I've already recommended it to friends (with and without kids)!

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### **Lizzie says**

This is a new YA series from Chelsea Green, and they sent me the second book because I ordered the first one sight unseen. With all the series books written for kids, why not one that promotes Gaia-consciousness? It was engaging, interesting, a little melodramatic (but then most teen lit is). When her parents, scientists studying whale songs and migration, are lost at sea, ten-year-old Miho is sent to live with an uncle she has never met halfway around the world in Japan. Uncle is a chain-smoking, overworked bachelor, and Miho misses the ocean, her parents, and keeps having dreams of a sea otter that she chased after instead of joining her parents on their ill-fated final trip. Then Uncle announces they are going to the family home on the coast for a holiday, and Miho's life suddenly switches into high gear.

Totally believable. I think this book will be welcomed by any kid who has slogged through their fair share of books, wondering why so few of them push anything other than a manifest destiny/dominion over the earth mindset.

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### **Megan says**

With these crazy news cycles, I needed something to take my mind off what was going on. These books are a good escape. Gaia (Mother Earth) appears in the form of an otter to Elizabeth and Miho and gives them powers to protect the earth from the harmful ways of humans. Of the two, I enjoyed "The Way of Water" more. There are multiple layers to this book that involve identity and belonging. I'd recommend them to any 4-8 grader and adult looking for a fun read. You can't go wrong with these earth warriors!

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### **Hannah says**

This book I was SO excited about. A while before it came out, my friend showed me

[savethewhalesagain.com](http://savethewhalesagain.com). This website is about the dolphin slaughter in Japan and stopping it. There is also a sad video of Hayden Pantierre, the TV star, surfing out with a few other people and trying to get the people to stop it. They get arrested for interfearing though, and Hayden said "I saw a little baby out there wailing for its mom, and I know where its mom is and I know it won't see her again" or something like that.

Anyways, this book is GREAT!! I've already recommended it to my friend and its DEFINETLY one to read!

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### **Julie says**

This book annoyed me on several levels. I read Gaia Girls: Enter the Earth a while ago, so I figured that since it was a local author and the first book was decent, I would keep plugging away. Now I'm a little sorry (although, I will probably still borrow the forthing coming couple out of the library when they arrive).

- 1) PREACHY. Yeah, I knew that, but this one was possibly even moreso than the first - and not just about water stuff. If I read the line "stinky cigarettes" one more time... (and I don't like cigarette smoke either. But, come up with some other adjectives!)
- 2) OH FOR PETE'S SAKE. First off, "haishi?" I thought chopsticks were "hashi." And when she describes Oji-san's house, she says it has "a living room with a kitchen off of it, one bedroom, and a bathroom." Does that mean the toilet is in the same room as the bath? Because that would be really unusual in a Japanese house or apartment, wouldn't it? I can understand eliminating the "confusing silent u" in the Japanese words... I suppose. Maybe.
- 3) Serious proofreading errors. For one thing, they couldn't seem to make up their minds about whether or not to capitalize certain things (like Ishin Denshin?). Those kind of things make me crazy.
- 4) I guess I just didn't like Miho quite as much. She was ok but I got so mad at her for being so selfish sometimes... I suppose that was the lesson she had to learn, but even so it really riled me.

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### **Bre says**

Lee Welles does such an amazing job. I love how much I learned about Japanese culture. I'm very excited for the next book and I absolutely love the small foreshadowing of the next character that she created in the book. Absolutely brilliant writing.

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### **Paula McKinley says**

The second book in the Gaia girls series, it is an excellent read. Not only does this give kids a great perspective of the environment but as well as the culture in Japan. I love her writing style as it's simple, well crafted and poetic.

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### **Gaia4173 says**

How is it that the second book is as good as the first in the series (Enter the Earth)?

I love how Miho represents someone familiar yet foreign. I also appreciate how the book can stand alone, yet how Way of Water ties to Enter the Earth. I enjoyed learning about Japanese culture, especially shodo. It makes me sad and angry to know that the tragedies of the dolphins in this book are real. I enjoyed Miho's powers of water and communication, as well as the changing dynamic of her relationship with her uncle.

I've been checking Amazon.com for several years now in anticipation of the 3rd book, Air Apparent. I've heard this is supposed to be a seven book series. I am a educator, and I've shared these books with several of my students. I'd love for them to be able to continue the series. Lee, how's your progress? You have my #1 next read in your imagination! I miss Gaia Girls!

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### **Kari says**

Found this in a Carmel, CA bookstore - the cover and quick read said 'buy me' because I love the Ocean and Japanese culture. The second in the Gaia Girls series with water now the focus instead of the land. Gaia comes to Miho as an otter to show her the way of her powers with the ocean and sea creatures. As a 'half' she learns about her Japanese side as her parents die (of course) leaving her with a grumpy uncle in Japan. Excellent story for those young readers (and old) who enjoy learning about environmental dangers we put upon the earth without making you super-depressed but more motivated for change.

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### **MacKenzie says**

I read this book as part of a book buddies program, and was not expecting to like it all that much. After all, my 4th grade buddy picked it! I was proved wrong. I really, really enjoyed it. Beginning to end. It was very exciting and magical, while still managing to be educational and informative. I must go back and read the first one now!

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