

# Jennifer L. Holm - The Fourteenth Goldfish

**Ellie, an 11-year-old girl, is having difficulty finding her passion, especially after her only friend Brianna started distancing herself. But things change when Ellie's mother brings home Melvin, a quirky and grumpy 13-year-old boy.**

Genre: scifi, fantasy, science

Themes: Coming of age, friendships, diverse families, science vs arts

Age: 8-9 years old

Activities:

1. In groups, get your learners to create a presentation about the scientists mentioned (Jonas Salk, Robert Oppenheimer, Galileo Galilei, Marie Curie, Louis Pasteur, Isaac Newton). They could include information about: what did they discover? What impact did they have on the world? Did they face any obstacles? What period were they in? (CC links: science, history, ICT)
2. Split your class into two and debate the pros and cons of being able to reverse the aging process. Start by brainstorming the ways people can do it today (anti-wrinkle creams, health and exercise, surgery) and get learners to weigh up the argument for a 'fountain of youth' invention that could reverse aging.
3. Create a series of postcards that share Melvin's trip to see the country. The postcards could include landmarks, maps and descriptions of the places he's visited and the thoughts and feelings he had whilst there. (CC links: geography, ICT, English) **(See 'Postcard' resource)**
4. Time capsule challenge. Get your learners to imagine themselves in 10 years time and write a profile about what their life looks like. Where will they be? What will they be doing? Who will they be with? How did they get there (university, college etc.)? What do they enjoy doing? What foods/drinks do they like?
5. Ellie describes herself at the dance: "I'm a jellyfish glowing in the dark sea, bright and brilliant, just waiting to be discovered." Get learners to describe themselves as a sea creature.

Enjoyed this book? You might also enjoy...

- **Ross MacKenzie** - The Elsewhere Emporium
- **Kiran Millwood Hargrave** - The Girl of Ink & Stars
- **Sophie Anderson** - The Girl Who Speaks Bear

Postcard

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