

A Curriculum Guide to

***Keeper of the Lost Cities #6: Nightfall***

by Shannon Messenger

**About the Book**

Sophie, who was raised among humans but now lives with the elves of the Lost Cities, faces one of her biggest challenges yet in this thrilling sixth book in the bestselling Keeper of the Lost Cities series. Sophie's enemies have kidnapped her human parents, despite the fact that their memories of her were magically removed years ago. Who has them, and how can Sophie save them? Her human sister, Amy, managed to hide from the kidnappers, but what will happen to her now? As always, Sophie relies on good friends among the elves, goblins, and other magical people as she fights evil forces that threaten her family—and the entire future of the Lost Cities.

**Discussion Questions**

The discussion questions below particularly address the following English Language Arts Common Core State Standards: (R.L.4-7.1) (R.L.4-7.2) (R.L.4-7.3) (R.L.4-7.4) (R.L.5-6.5)

1. After reading the preface, predict what might happen in the novel. Then, when you finish the novel, go back to the preface and discuss how it foreshadows some of the action and dilemmas.
2. Describe Amy and her personality, and compare her life so far to Sophie's. How do they interact in the novel? At the end, Amy makes an important choice about her own memory. What does she choose, and why does she make that choice?
3. Sophie and her friends learn something shocking and amazing about Mr. Forkle. What do they find out? Describe his unusual past and how it changes Sophie's understanding of him.
4. Sophie doesn't have romantic feelings for Dex, so why does she kiss him? What is his reaction? Describe the consequences of the kiss both in that moment and later on in the story.
5. Lady Cadence is trying to forge an alliance between Black Swan and the ogres. Why does she think that's important? Why are the elves willing to consider it? How could it benefit the ogres?
6. Sophie expects King Dimitar to challenge her, but he challenges Keefe instead. What is the challenge? Who wins, and how does he do so?
7. Who is Ro? How does she end up spending time with Keefe and his friends? Describe her appearance and her personality. Give examples of how she helps Keefe, Sophie, and their friends.
8. What is the relationship between Keefe's blood and Nightfall? Keefe's mother, Lady Gisela, refers to Keefe's legacy. What is she talking about? How does Keefe feel about his mother?

9. What are Lady Gisela's goals? Why does she forge alliances near the end of the story? Discuss why she says to Keefe and Sophie: "I must get both of you ready for everything ahead."
10. Who is Vespera, and where has she been until recently? Explain her history in Atlantis and with human beings. What does she want now? Why has she kidnapped Sophie's parents?
11. What is sopordine? How is it made, and what are its effects? Identify those in the book who are given the drug and what happens to each of them.
12. In the first chapter, Sophie thinks about her friends and how it will take "*all* of their abilities, all of their ideas—and a scary amount of luck—to get through" their challenges. What do each of her friends contribute when they have to fight Vespera in Nightfall?
13. In Nightfall, Vespera explains that Sophie remains trapped because she refuses "to accept that it takes ruthlessness to win in this world." What does she mean by ruthlessness? In what ways is Vespera ruthless? What does Sophie choose to be instead?
14. Vivid places appear throughout this series. Describe a few of the novel's settings, such as Brumevale, the first and second Nightfall, Atlantis, and so on. What words does the author use to make the different places easy to picture?
15. The author uses questions effectively throughout the novel. For example, she ends chapter seven with two questions. What effect do those questions have on the reader? Find other examples of questions and analyze their role in the narrative.
16. Several times throughout the story, Sophie finds herself worried about what-ifs. At one point, Mr. Forkle says to her, "No 'what-ifs.' Try to wait until we have *facts*." Explain what he means. Why does Sophie worry so much? Why do you think her "what-ifs" are negative instead of positive?
17. After Sophie describes her time in the Lost Cities to her sister, Amy wonders how Sophie has survived so much. Sophie's answer also explains how they'll face the future: "One day at a time. One problem at a time. Each tiny bit of progress slowly adds up to something big." Discuss this attitude and whether you think it's a good one. When does Sophie demonstrate this approach in the novel?
18. In talking to Sophie about Project Moonlark, Livvy describes the present time as a "turning point in history." In what ways is it a turning point in history? What occurs in the novel that might change the future for those living in the Lost Cities and elsewhere?

## **Activities**

### **Cast of Characters**

A large cast of characters appears in this novel. Have each student choose a character and create an avatar for him or her at a free site like <http://avatarmaker.com/>. The student should download the avatar and print it on a large piece of paper. Then have them add a written description of the character and his or her role in the novel. Post these on a wall and have students compare them.

### **Welcome to the Lost Cities**

Introduce or review the genre of travel writing with students, discussing its purpose and sharing examples. Each student should then choose a setting in the Lost Cities and describe it in a travel article, emphasizing aspects that might interest a tourist. Students can decorate their articles with drawings that they create or visuals from the internet.

### **Web of Friends**

Fitz, Keefe, Biana, Dex, Linh, and Tam, who all go to Brumevale with Sophie, are among her best friends. Have students create a web graphic organizer with Sophie's name in the center circle and lines that connect six outer circles to the inner one. Each outer circle should be labeled with one of the friends' names and a short description of that character. On the lines to Sophie's circle, have students briefly describe that character's relationship with Sophie.

### **What's Your Oath?**

In chapter two, Sophie reminds herself of the oath she swore: "I will do everything in my power to help my world." Have students write an essay about her oath and how well she upholds it in the novel. The essay should also address whether the student would adopt such an oath, or what other resolutions they might consider adopting themselves.

### **Ro!**

Ro is a vibrant new character in the series. Have students reread the first twenty pages about her, paying close attention to her way of speaking. Then they should write a monologue from Ro's point of view in which she talks about her assignment to guard Keefe and what she thinks of Keefe, Sophie, and their world. Have students perform their monologues in small groups.

*Guide written by Kathleen Odean, a former school librarian and Chair of the 2002 Newbery Award Committee. She gives professional development workshops on books for young people and is the author of Great Books for Girls and Great Books about Things Kids Love.*

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