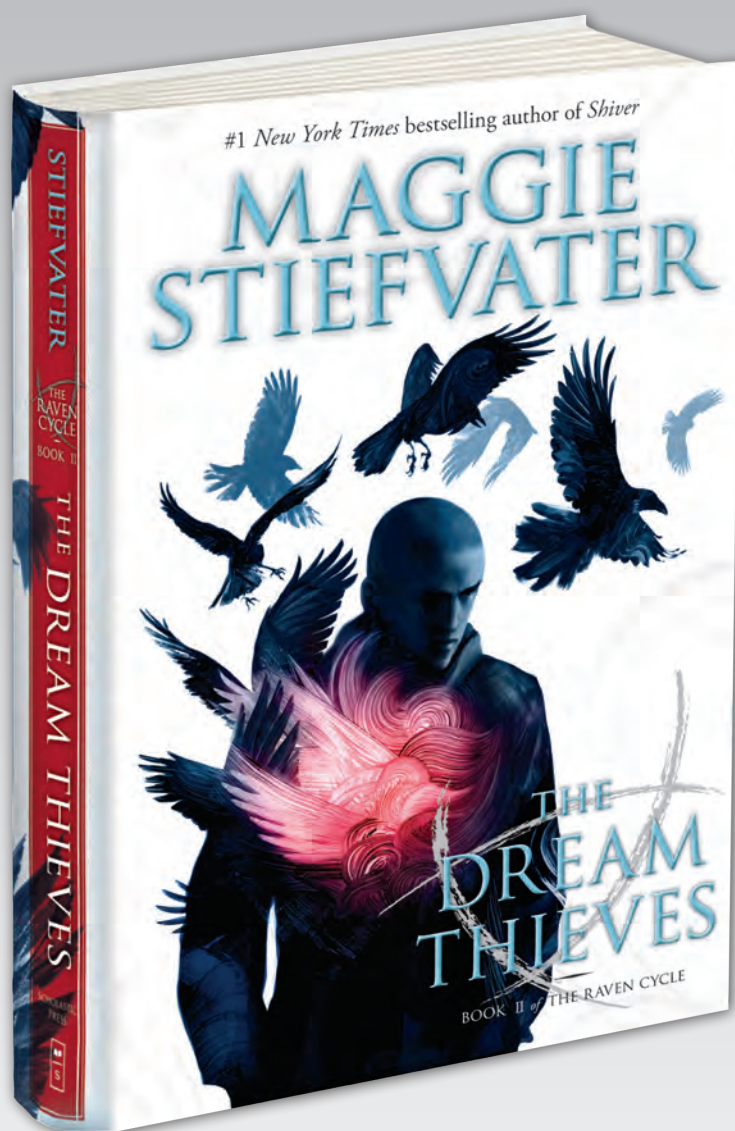
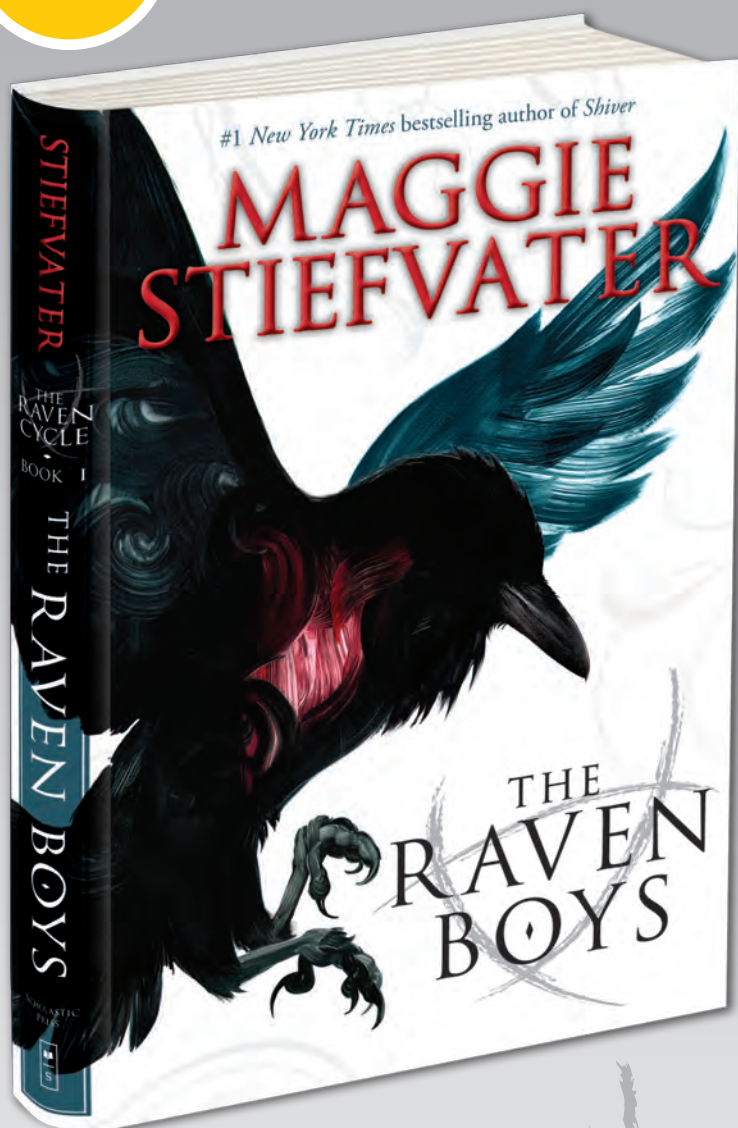


DISCUSSION GUIDE

Grades 7
and up

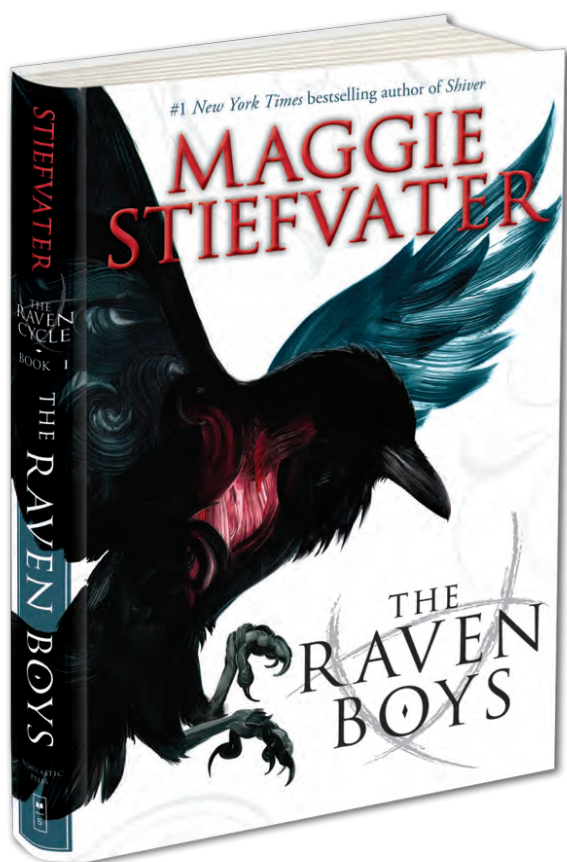


THE RAVEN CYCLE

by Maggie Stiefvater

Meets Common Core State Standards—SEE INSIDE

ABOUT THE RAVEN BOYS



A New York Times Bestseller

A USA Today Bestseller

A Publishers Weekly Best Book of the Year

ALA Top Ten Best Fiction for Young Adults

"Stiefvater is a master storyteller." —USA Today

★ *"One unexpected and wonderful surprise after another...a marvel of imagination."*

—Booklist, starred review

★ *"Simultaneously complex and simple, compulsively readable, marvelously wrought."*

—Kirkus Reviews, starred review

★ *"Haunting...a tour de force of characterization."*

—Publishers Weekly, starred review

★ *"Incredibly rich and unique...a supernatural thriller of a different flavor."*

—School Library Journal, starred review

It is freezing in the churchyard, even before the dead arrive. Every year, Blue Sargent stands next to her clairvoyant mother as the soon-to-be-dead walk past. Blue herself never sees them—not until this year, when a boy emerges from the dark and speaks directly to her. His name is Gansey, and Blue soon discovers that he is a rich student at Aglionby, the local private school.

Blue usually stays away from Aglionby boys. Known as Raven Boys, they can only mean trouble. But she is drawn to Gansey, in a way she can't entirely explain. He has it

all—family money, good looks, devoted friends—but he's looking for much more than that. He is on a quest to find Owen Glendower, the legendary sleeping Welsh king.

For as long as she can remember, Blue has been warned that if she ever kisses her true love, he will die. She never thought this would be a problem—until now, as her life becomes caught up in the strange and sinister world of the Raven Boys.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Reread the quotes in the prologue from Edgar Allan Poe and Oscar Wilde. Do they mean something different to you now that you've read *The Raven Boys*? What character or characters does each quote remind you of? Why?
2. The characters' clothes were referred to on many different occasions throughout the story. Adam's Aglionby uniform isn't as pristine as Ronan's or Gansey's, and Blue often creates new outfits from bits of older ones. What does each character's clothes say about him or her? Do each character's outfits truly reflect the image that he or she is trying to portray?
3. Blue is the only person in her family who is not a psychic. How do you think she feels about this? How does it shape her personality? Would you like to have psychic abilities to communicate with the spirit world? Why or why not? Is there something that members of your family excel at that you cannot do? How does this make you feel?
4. Blue spends every St. Mark's Eve on the ley line, helping her mother record the names of the people who will die the following year. How do you think this affects Blue? What would you do if you knew which people in your town would die in the next twelve months?
5. A ley line "is a perfectly straight, supernatural energy path that connected spiritual places." Do you think that something like ley lines exist in real life? If yes, explain what they are and where you believe you can find them.
6. Adam has trouble disconnecting from his upbringing and breaking free from his father's constant abuse. Even though he obviously doesn't want to live with his parents under the circumstances, he struggles with the decision to leave. Why is it so hard for Adam to leave?
- Do you think he should have left home and moved into Monmouth Manufacturing before he finally did? Why or why not?
7. Ronan and Declan can't stand each other, but every Sunday they put their feud aside to attend mass together—no matter what. Do you think you could put aside your unfavorable feelings for someone to keep up appearances and traditions?
8. Which character from *The Raven Boys* do you identify with the most? Why?
9. It seems like Gansey is always striving for more than he's already accomplished. Why is he so hard on himself? Have you ever felt like you put too much pressure on yourself to succeed at something? If so, how did you feel? What, if anything, made you feel better?
10. Adam, Blue, and Gansey had very different experiences inside the hollowed out tree in Cableswater. What did each one see? Do you think they saw their futures, nightmares, or dreams? Explain.
11. Legend says that the person who wakes Glendower is granted a wish. Explain what you think the following characters would wish for if they woke Glendower: Blue, Gansey, Adam, Ronan, Noah, Whelk, Neeve, and Maura.
12. Adam mused that: "Glendower was more than a historical figure to Gansey. He was everything Gansey wished he could be: wise and brave, sure of his path, touched by the supernatural, respected by all, survived by his legacy." Do you think that Adam's assessment is true? Why or why not?

13. Why would Gansey—someone who has the means to buy anything he could ever want or need—need a wish from Glendower?
14. Whelk's motivation to wake the ley line was ignited by the loss of his fortune and reputation. Do you think that he has any redeeming qualities, or is he completely consumed by greed?
15. Why was Czerny important to Whelk? Why did Whelk think that Czerny made the perfect sacrifice? Was he right? Why or why not?
16. On more than one occasion, Noah's friends describe him as "the smudgy one." What does this suggest about Noah before and after his friends make a discovery about his past? How does this make it more plausible that Noah's friends never suspected that he was a spirit?
17. Gansey stated many times that he doesn't believe in coincidences. Do you believe in coincidences? Why or why not? Describe an event in your own life when something that could have been a coincidence happened to you.
18. There are many similarities and differences between Whelk and Adam. Citing examples from the book, list three of each.
19. Why do you think that Gansey feels the need to take care of Ronan? What, if anything, does Gansey get out of this seemingly one-sided relationship?
20. Every character in *The Raven Boys* is on a quest for something. Explain what each of them is looking to find.
21. Blue cannot speak to the dead, but just by being near a psychic, she "makes things louder." How is this energy a gift? How is this energy a nuisance for Blue? Do you think that Blue was drawn to Gansey, Ronan, Adam, and Noah because of this energy, or do you think that they all would have met anyway? Why?
22. Neeve used her psychic powers for fame and money. Do you think that she has a right to use her gift for this? Why or why not? Do you think that she deserved what happened to her at the end of the story? Why?
23. The theme of "home" is prevalent throughout *The Raven Boys*. List one word that you think three of the characters most associate with the word "home." What does the word "home" mean to you?
24. Compare and contrast Gansey's quest for Glendower to the legend of Sir Arthur and his search for the Holy Grail.
25. What do you think happened to Blue's father? Do you think that the time Blue spent in Cakeswater made her want to meet him more? Why or why not?
26. Do you think that Henrietta became a magical place because a ley line is located there, or do you think that the ley line was there because Henrietta already possessed magic? Why? Cite specific examples from the book to support your answer.
27. For as long as she can remember, Blue has known that if she were to "kiss her true love, he would die." Do you think it was fair of Blue's family to tell her this prophecy? Why or why not? Would you want to know a prophecy about yourself that would drastically change your life? Why or why not?
28. Ravens—both physically and symbolically—are featured throughout *The Raven Boys*. List five examples of their presence. Why do you think the author chose this type of bird for the title of the book and for the incidences that you listed?

COMPARISONS

You can have interesting discussions comparing the themes in the following books to those in *The Raven Boys*.

Brennan, Sarah Rees

Unspoken: The Lynburn Legacy (Random House, 2012). A teen reaches out to a boy she's been hearing in her head since childhood, and she must work against town secrets and various dangerous events to help save the people she loves the most.

Cabot, Meg

Abandon (Point/Scholastic, 2011). Pierce is drawn to a dark stranger, in this enthralling paranormal romance based on the *Persephone* myth.

Underworld (Point/Scholastic, 2012). Pierce is being held in the Underworld, but is it for her own safety, or is she in greater danger?

Awakening (Point/Scholastic, 2013). If the balance between life and death isn't restored, both the Underworld and Pierce's home back on earth will be wiped away. There's only one solution: someone has to die.

Fitzpatrick, Becca

Hush, Hush (Simon & Schuster, 2009). In this forbidden love story, a human is drawn to a fallen angel.

Finale (Simon & Schuster, 2012). Destiny and fate intertwine inside a tumultuous relationship.

Garcia, Kami and Stohl, Margaret

Beautiful Redemption (Little, Brown, 2012). In this gothic supernatural romance, two love-struck teens must fight against their predetermined fate on an epic journey where they fight for their lives, and to stay together.

Harrington, Kim

Clarity (Point/Scholastic, 2011). Clarity "Clare" Fern sees things no one else can see, a useful gift when solving a murder.

Perception (Point/Scholastic, 2012). Clare receives sinister messages from a secret admirer, and has to find the truth.

James, Syree

Forbidden (HarperTeen, 2012). Claire and Alec find one another at an academy where neither of them fit in but the powers they possess and forces working against them make their relationship dangerous and forbidden.

Kagwa, Julie

The Iron Knight (Harlequin Teen, 2011). A young prince goes on a dangerous journey to honor a vow and on the way finds true love.

Morris, Paula

Ruined (Point/Scholastic, 2010). Rebecca uncovers startling truths about her own past when she befriends Lisette, a ghost in a New Orleans cemetery.

Unbroken (Point/Scholastic, 2011). Rebecca returns to New Orleans and meets a new ghost, and finds herself embroiled in another murder mystery.

Noël, Alyson

Fated (Soul Seekers) (Griffin/St. Martin's Press, 2012). Daire is sent away to learn to control her mystical powers. When she meets Dace, the boy from her dreams, she must decide if he's the one guy she's meant to be with...or if he's working with her enemies.

Oliver, Lauren

Delirium (HarperCollins, 2010). People are taught to fear and are cured of love in future America.

Taylor, Laini

Lips Touch: Three Times (Arthur A. Levine Books/Scholastic, 2009). Three tales of supernatural love show how kisses can have grave consequences.

Wood, Yvonne

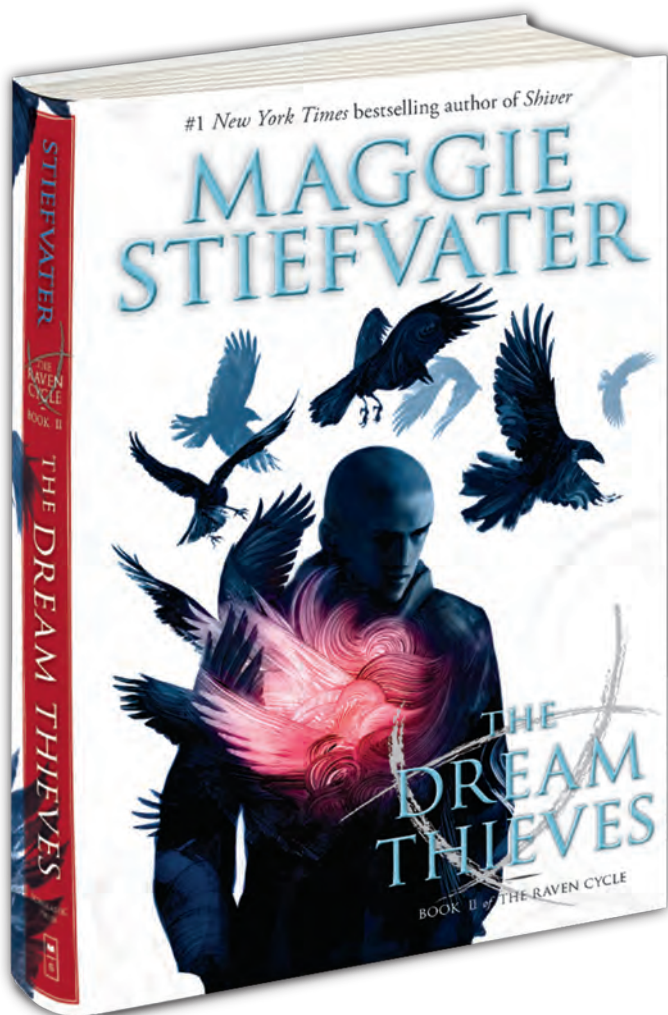
Dead Beautiful (Hyperion, 2010). A teen falls in love with a boy at an academy and finds out that the academy holds its own secrets dealing with the paranormal.

ABOUT THE DREAM THIEVES

★ “The second installment of Stiefvater’s Raven Cycle is as mind-blowingly spectacular as the first...astounds with its sensitivity and sophistication... an engrossing, believable whole.” —*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

★ “More tense and foreboding than its predecessor—and every bit as gripping.” —*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

★ “Richly written and filled with figurative language...this story of secrets and dreams, of brothers and of all-too-real magic is an absolute marvel of imagination and an irresistible invitation to wonder.” —*Booklist*, starred review



If you could steal things from your dreams, what would you take? Ronan Lynch has secrets. Some he keeps from others. Some he keeps from himself. One secret: Ronan can bring things out of his dreams. And sometimes he's not the only one who wants those things. Ronan is one of the Raven Boys—a group of friends, practically brothers, searching for a dead king named Glendower, who they think is hidden somewhere in the hills by their elite private school, Aglionby Academy. The path to Glendower has long lived as an undercurrent beneath town. But now, like Ronan's secrets, it is beginning to rise to the surface—changing everything in its wake.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Reread the quotations before the prologue of *The Dream Thieves* from Samuel Taylor Coleridge, T.E. Lawrence, and August Strindberg. How do each of these relate to the story? Which one do you think is most pertinent to the book, and why? Find another quotation from a poem, book, or song that could have also been used in the opening of *The Dream Thieves*. Explain why you chose it and how it relates to the story.
2. *The Dream Thieves* begins with the line: "A secret is a strange thing." All of the characters in the book have secrets. Choose three characters, list their secrets, and explain why he or she chose to keep them from other characters.
3. In the prologue, the narrator states that "all of us have secrets in our lives." How do you define a secret? Have you ever kept a secret from someone? If so, why?
4. Because of the prophecy that if she kisses her true love, he will die, Blue is afraid to pursue a romantic relationship with any of the boys in her life. Do you think Blue should let her fate dictate her life? Why or why not?
5. The dorm rooms at Aglionby were named after attributes that the administration hoped its students would strive for. The Gray Man noticed this, and thought back to a time when someone had called him "effervescent." How does this label define the Gray Man? Do you agree with it? Why or why not? Choose three other characters from the book and define them in one word.
6. There are many instances of magic in *The Dream Thieves*. List three. Give an example of something in your life that you think is magical. Do you think that people want to believe in magic? Why or why not?
7. Why do you think Ronan is able to manipulate his dreams more when he's under the influence of drugs and alcohol?
8. Different characters wanted to find Glendower for different reasons. Explain how the following characters would benefit from finding Glendower first: Gansey, Adam, Blue, Noah, Ronan, and the Gray Man.
9. The Orphan Girl told Ronan that when he takes things out of his dreams, he is stealing. Do you agree with her accusation? Why or why not?
10. If you could dream things into reality like Ronan, what would be the first thing that you would dream into existence? Why?
11. Adam continually lets his pride get in the way of letting his friends help him. Do you think Adam's pride is a good or bad trait? Why? Explain a time when you let pride influence your doing or not doing something.
12. Gansey, Adam, Ronan, and the Gray Man all spend a lot of time thinking about what makes a "home." How are their ideas about home similar? How do they differ?
13. Why do you think Kavinsky resents Ronan and Gansey's friendship?
14. The word "creature" is used to describe many things throughout the book. Identify three things referred to as a "creature." For each example you give, explain why or why not you agree with it being called a "creature."
15. Why does Blue kiss Noah and not tell anyone else about it? Do you think Blue should have told Adam about the prophecy earlier? Why or why not?

16. Niall Lynch never told Ronan about his ability to take things from his dreams. Do you think that it was fair for him to keep this secret? Why or why not? What reasons could he have had for keeping the dreams a secret from his family?
17. Why do you think that Niall did not teach Ronan how to properly take objects out of his dreams? How do you think things would be different for Ronan if his father had taught him how to take things from dreams?
18. Compare and contrast the following pairs of characters: Ronan and Kavinsky, Adam and Blue, Gansey and the Gray Man.
19. The author associates colors with many of the characters. In what ways is the Gray Man gray? In what ways is Blue blue? What color best describes you? Why?
20. How were all of the animals at the Barns and Ronan's mother, Aurora, affected by Niall Lynch's death? Why do you think Niall banned his sons from the Barns?
21. Both Ronan and the Gray Man like the idea of brothers, yet they both have problematic relationships with their own brothers. Explain how Ronan and Declan's relationship is strained, and why the Gray Man and his brother are at odds.
22. Gansey believes that Adam is the way he is because he has never been wealthy in either money or love. Do you agree with Gansey's assessment of Adam? Why or why not? Do you think it is more important to be wealthy in love or financially wealthy? Explain the reasoning behind your choice.
23. Explain how the past, present, and future are all connected in *The Dream Thieves*.
24. Gansey and Kavinsky both dream about Cableswater. Why do you think both boys traveled to the same "secret place" in their dreams? Describe what you would want the "secret place" you travel to in your dreams to look like.
25. How was Ronan able to finally overcome his fear of the night tremors?
26. How did Cableswater become hidden? Why do you think Adam was the only person who could fix it? How does fixing the ley line make Adam more like The Magician—the tarot card he pulled from Persephone's deck?
27. List and discuss three themes found in *The Dream Thieves*.
28. Explain how the loophole in Niall Lynch's will worked. Why do you think Niall left this loophole in his will?
29. Why do you think Maura continued to see the Gray Man even after she found out he was a hit man? Why do you think Maura decided to follow Glendower underground?
30. How did listening to music aid the Gray Man? Create a playlist of songs that makes you think about *The Dream Thieves*. Try to match each song to a character or location from the book.

COMPARISONS

You can have interesting discussions comparing the themes in the following books to those in *The Dream Thieves*.

Albin, Gennifer

Crewel (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012). Sixteen-year-old Adeline is a Spinster—a girl with a special gift that allows her to weave the very fabric of time and reality.

Bray, Libba

The Diviners (Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2012). Banished from a small town in Ohio to New York City in the 1920s, Evie O'Neill finds herself in the middle of a mysterious and supernatural thriller.

Clare, Cassandra

The Mortal Instruments (Simon & Schuster, 2007–2013). A six-book urban fantasy series featuring Clary Fray, a seemingly normal teenager locked in an ancient battle to protect Earth from demons.

Hartman, Rachel

Seraphina (Random House, 2012). Seraphina joins the court as a member of the royal family is murdered, is drawn into the investigation, and uncovers a sinister plan that could cost Seraphina her own life.

Lu, Marie

The Legend Trilogy (Penguin, 2011, 2012, 2013). Fifteen-year-old prodigies June and Day are bred to hate each other—until they discover the despicable lengths their country will go to to keep its secrets.

Marr, Melissa

Carnival of Souls (HarperCollins, 2012). Murder and pleasure are for sale at The Carnival of Souls in The City—a corrupt city filled with magic, daimons, and witches.

Rudnick, Paul

Gorgeous (Scholastic, 2013). After her mother dies, Becky Randle is whisked from her trailer park home to a glamorous and magical new life in New York City.

Saenz, Benjamin Alire

Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe (Simon & Schuster, 2012).

Aristotle, an angry teen with a brother in prison, and Dante, a know-it-all with a unique way of looking at the world, discover a special friendship.

Shannon, Samantha

The Bone Season

(Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013). Paige Mahoney is forced to harness her clairvoyant-like powers in a world where everything has been taken from her.

Taylor, Laini

Daughter of Smoke & Bone (Hachette Book Group, 2011).

Days of Blood & Starlight (Hachette Book Group, 2012).

Seventeen-year-old Karu is caught up in a brutal otherworldly war involving angels, demons, monsters, and forbidden love.

This guide addresses the following Common Core State Standards for Reading Literature:

Key Ideas and Details

Grade 6 – RL.6.1-3
Grade 7 – RL.7.1-3
Grade 8 – RL.8.1-3
Grades 9-10 – RL.9-10.1-3

Craft and Structure

Grade 6 – RL.6.5-6
Grade 7 – RL.7.6
Grade 8 – RL.8.5-6
Grades 9-10 – RL.9-10.5

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

Grade 6 – RL.6.10
Grade 7 – RL.7.10
Grade 8 – RL.8.10
Grades 9-10 – RL.9-10.10

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Grade 6 – RL.6.9

PRAISE FOR *THE SCORPIO RACES*



A 2012 Michael L. Printz Honor Book

A Publishers Weekly Best Book of the Year

A School Library Journal Best Book of the Year

A New York Times Notable Children's Book

A Horn Book Fanfare Book

A Kirkus Reviews Best Teen Book of the Year

“[Stiefvater] not only steps out of the young adult fantasy box with *The Scorpio Races* but crushes it with pounding hooves...If *The Scorpio Races* sounds like nothing you’ve ever read, that’s because it is.”

—*The New York Times Book Review*

“With this beautifully executed drama, Stiefvater has established herself as one of the finest YA novelists writing today.”

—*Entertainment Weekly*

★ “Masterful. Like nothing else out there now.” —*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

★ “A study of courage and loyalty tested....an utterly compelling read.” —*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

★ “An intoxicating ride.” —*Horn Book*, starred review

★ “A book with cross-appeal to lovers of fantasy, horse stories, romance, and action-adventure.”

—*Booklist*, starred review

★ “Action, conflict, excitement, and a heart-stopping climax...marvelous.” —*School Library Journal*, starred review

Free downloadable discussion guide

mediaroom.scholastic.com/files/discussion-guide-scorpio-races-2012.pdf

PRAISE FOR THE SHIVER TRILOGY



SHIVER

A New York Times Bestseller

A Publishers Weekly Best Book of the Year

★ “Stiefvater skillfully increases the tension throughout; her take on werewolves is interesting and original while her characters are refreshingly willing to use their brains to deal with the challenges they face.”

—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

★ “Beautiful and moving.”

—*School Library Journal*, starred review

LINGER

A #1 New York Times Bestseller

A USA Today Bestseller

“Skillfully captures the four teens’ longings for love, forgetting, remembering, righting wrongs and life itself...will leave readers panting for the next sequel.”—*Kirkus Reviews*

“Riveting...impossible to put down...beautifully written.”—*Voice of Youth Advocates*

FOREVER

A New York Times Bestseller

A USA Today Bestseller

“An intelligent paranormal romance that surreptitiously folds in serious adolescent issues, including teens’ relationships with their parents, suicidal ideation, morphing bodies and young love.”—*Los Angeles Times*

“Stiefvater’s emotional prose is rich without being melodramatic, and she clearly shares her fans’ love of these characters.”—*Booklist*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Maggie Stiefvater is the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *Shiver*, *Linger*, and *Forever*. Since publication, rights to thirty-six foreign editions of *Shiver* have been licensed. Maggie is also the author of *The Scorpio Races*—a 2012 Michael L. Printz Honor Book. Her latest series, The Raven Cycle, combines mystery, romance, and the supernatural, and has received numerous starred reviews. An avid reader, award-winning artist, and accomplished musician, Maggie lives in Virginia with her husband and their two children.

Visit Maggie Stiefvater online at maggiestiefvater.com, on Twitter at [@mstiefvater](https://twitter.com/mstiefvater), on Facebook at facebook.com/MaggieStiefvaterAuthorPage, and on Tumblr at maggie-stiefvater.tumblr.com



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The Dream Thieves:

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Discussion guide written by Mary Kate Doman



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