

A Curriculum Guide to

Keeper of the Lost Cities, Book Five: *Lodestar*

By Shannon Messenger

About the Book

Dark schemes unfold—and Sophie’s loyalty is pushed to the limit—in this thrilling fifth book in the bestselling Keeper of the Lost Cities series.

Sophie Foster is back in the Lost Cities—but the Lost Cities have changed. The threat of war hangs heavy over her glittering world, and the Neverseen are wreaking havoc.

The lines between friend and enemy have blurred, and Sophie is unsure whom to trust. But when she’s warned that the people she loves most will be the next victims, she knows she has to act.

A mysterious symbol could be the key—if only she knew how to translate it. Every new clue seems to lead deeper into her world’s underbelly and the Black Swan aren’t the only ones who have plans. The Neverseen have their own Initiative, and if Sophie doesn’t stop it, they might finally have the ultimate means to control her.

Discussion Questions

Setting

These discussion questions align with the following English Language Arts Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.1)

1. Describe Rimeshine, both inside and out. How does Juline’s ability relate to Rimeshine? Discuss the reactions of Sophie, Fitz, and Biana to Rimeshine, and the reasons that Dex was worried about having them visit.
2. Sophie goes with Sandor to Gildingham to honor Brielle. How do they get there? What is Gildingham like? How does it reflect the goblins and what they value? Describe how the goblins honor Brielle.
3. What is Lumenaria like? Describe the castle and the events that take place there. What are the elves trying to communicate with the opulence of the castle and the gala?

Character

These discussion questions align with the following English Language Arts Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.1, 3)

1. In the first chapter, Sophie thinks about the silver moonlark pin that was a “symbol of the role she needed to figure out how to play.” What does the moonlark stand for? When in the novel does she make progress in figuring out her role?

2. Most of the time in this story, Sophie and Keefe communicate telepathically. How does that affect their relationship? What is Keefe up to, and how does Sophie feel about it?
3. Describe Grizel, her personality, and some of her actions. Talk about her relationship with Sandor and what it shows about him. What is Sophie's reaction to their relationship?
4. Lord Cassius sends Keefe a message that says he can always come back home. Why does that surprise Sophie? Did it surprise you? What does it say about Lord Cassius as a person?
5. In Chapter 41, Keefe shares an important memory about his mother with Sophie, which Fitz also sees and hears. What is the memory? What does it reveal about Keefe's mother? Discuss how it explains some of Keefe's problems. How do Sophie and Fitz react to the memory?

Plot

These discussion questions align with the following English Language Arts Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.1) (RL.5–6. 5)

1. Stop after reading the preface and discuss what it might foreshadow about the novel. Then discuss it again after reading the novel to see how the preface fits into the whole and why the author chose to open the story with it.
2. Describe how the matchmaking works. Why does the fact that Fitz can get a matchmaking list catch Sophie by surprise? What is Fitz's plan about the list? Why does Dex say he might not register for matchmaking?
3. Why is Juline's admission about who she really is so important? How does Kesler react, and why? What are Dex's emotions and reaction? Explain how the birth of her triplets inspired Juline to make her important choice.
4. How does Sophie's new Enhancer ability work? What are its advantages and drawbacks? Describe ways she uses it in the story.
5. Chapter 21 ends with a dramatic cliff-hanger. Read the cliff-hanger again and then analyze the content of the chapter. What aspects of the chapter make the cliff-hanger's impact stronger? What emotions do the chapter and the cliff-hanger evoke?

Theme

These discussion questions align with the following English Language Arts Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.2)

1. Mr. Forkle describes himself as someone whose "first instinct is to deny things." What is he referring to in general and specifically in this scene? Point to other places in the story where he exercises this instinct. What is Sophie's opinion of his tendency?

2. When she can't sleep, Sophie thinks about something Keefe told her: "Sometimes things have to get worse before they get better." Identify examples in the plot where this pattern is true. What role does this pattern play in writing any adventure story?
3. In the same scene, Sophie also remembers Bronte's advice that, "Worry can bring power Better to embrace it than ignore it." What does this mean? Do you agree with the advice? Can you find examples of Sophie following the advice?

Language

These discussion questions align with the following English Language Arts Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.4)

1. What is a lodestar? What role does it play in the plot? Discuss the Lodestar Initiative and why it is named that. Why do you think the author used *Lodestar* as the title?
2. Keefe's mother writes him a note that says, "All it takes is a leap of faith." What does the phrase "leap of faith" mean to you? What does Keefe's mother mean by it?

Extension Activities

Keeping You Safe

Bodyguards are everywhere in *Lodestar*. Have students imagine a bodyguard that they would like to have for themselves. How would the bodyguard protect them? What would the bodyguard's personality and physical attributes be? Students should draw their creation on a small poster and add a few paragraphs of description to share with the class.

Make a Literary Map

Visual organizers can help students understand literary elements in a novel. Have students open the NCTE's ReadWriteThink interactive for mapping such elements. Have them choose one or all of the elements to expand on. The interactive asks questions that the student answers online. They can save the work to expand later or print it out to post in the classroom.

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/student-interactives/literary-elements-30011.html>

What Could You Do with an Obscurer?

One of the most intriguing devices Mr. Forkle has is an obscurer, which hides the user from being seen or heard. Have students write short stories in which the main character makes use of an obscurer as an important part of the plot. The students should share their drafts in small groups and then revise their stories to compile into a class book.

Find a Poem in a Passage

One type of found poetry is created by taking a text and using words from it to create poems. Have students find several passages or even a chapter that they think would work well for poetry. They will then take whatever words and phrases from the text that appeal to them and "remix"

them into a poem. Information and examples at the Academy of American Poets can be found here: <https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/text/found-poem-poetic-form>

Essential Objects

Sophie's world is full of unusual objects and artifacts. Have students choose five objects from the story that they consider significant, and list them. Then have the students gather in small groups to talk about what they chose and why. After the small group discussions, have each student choose just one object and share their thoughts about it with the whole class.

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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