

A Curriculum Guide to

Keeper of the Lost Cities, Book 3: *Everblaze*

By Shannon Messenger



About the Book

Adventure and mystery fill this fast-moving fantasy about thirteen-year-old Sophie, who was raised in California but now lives in a world of elves. At her unique school, she’s strengthening her extraordinary abilities while still recovering from being kidnapped not long ago. As she tries to figure out the identity of her kidnappers, Sophie comes to appreciate how much her new friends and family matter. She needs their help once more when her enemies close in again. But is it right to endanger those she loves in her own struggle against evil forces?

Prereading Questions

What are some advantages of working together as a team on a project or mission compared to working alone? What makes a team strong and successful? What factors can undermine a team?

Discussion Questions

Setting

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

1. Edaline tells Sophie, “Our world has been teetering on the edge of a blade for a very long time.” What are some of the political problems among the elves? What are their relationships and conflicts with the ogres and dwarves? Describe the conflicts of the Black Swan and the kidnappers with the elf world.
2. Even though the Council requires a reluctant Sophie to heal Fintan, they also put blame on her when it goes out of control. Describe how they punish her for probing King Dimitar’s mind. Fitz describes the Council’s treatment of Sophie as making her a “scapegoat.” What does he mean by that? Discuss whether the Council treats Sophie fairly, including her punishment.
3. Sophie tries to heal Fintan in Oblivimyre, which Sandor and Grady call “a place best forgotten.” Describe what Oblivimyre looks like, its history, and what happens to Sophie there. Discuss the word “Oblivimyre” and what other words it might be related to. Does the name suit the place? Why or why not?

Character

These discussion questions align with the following English Language Arts Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.1) (RL.4–5.3)

4. Early in the book, Dex’s ability as a Technopath is finally revealed to the rest of his world. Describe the changes this triggers, and why it’s so important to him and his

family. What kind of trouble does his talent get him into? How does he show his loyalty to Sophie?

5. Master Leto, the Beacon of Silver Tower, changes during the novel in how he treats Sophie. What's his attitude when she encounters him in Chapters 15 and 16? What does he do that surprises her in those scenes? How does he help her later in the story?
6. Ogres play an important role in the plot. Analyze scenes that convey information about ogres in general and about King Dimitar in specific. Compare the ogres and their society to the elves and theirs.
7. By the end of the book, Sophie realizes that she, Fitz, Keefe, Dex, and Biana are stronger and more able to protect one another when they work together. "Individually they were vulnerable. But together they were a *team*." Describe the skills that each of the friends brings to the team and how their strengths complement each other.

Plot

These discussion questions align with the following English Language Arts Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.1, 4) (RL.5–6.5)

8. After reading the book, go back and reread the preface. What scene does it show from later in the novel? What purpose does the preface serve? Discuss why the author chose this particular scene to open the book.
9. This fantasy adventure has a lot of mystery elements. Sophie is trying to figure out who the Neverseen are and what role Black Swan plays in her life. Describe how she gathers information about each of those mysterious aspects of her life and what she learns about them by the end of the book.
10. At the same time, Sophie is trying to understand more about Jolie. Explain how she goes about finding out about Jolie. How does Vertina contribute to what Sophie learns? What are the most useful clues and sources of information that Sophie finds?
11. Sophie's ability to enter the minds of others proves important several times in the plot. Describe at least two times that she does it, what the consequences are, and how it moves the plot forward.
12. The plot contains many gripping scenes where Sophie and her allies face danger. Find one such scene and examine what makes it exciting. Analyze how the author creates a fast pace through sentence length and choice of words, especially verbs. What adds to the suspense and sense of danger in the scene?

Themes

These discussion questions align with the following English Language Arts Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.2) (RL.4.3)

13. More than one character is betrayed by someone they care for. Describe these betrayals. Who betrayed whom? Why?
14. Parts of this story explore the role of parents in a person's life. Describe how Sophie and Keefe both worry about the influence of their parents on who they are. Keefe says, "Our family doesn't decide who we are. *We* decide who we are." What does he mean? Discuss how that's true of both of them.

15. Friendship is at the heart of this story. Sophie’s friends want to help her pursue the kidnappers, but she worries about putting them in danger, calling her friends the “Let’s Ruin Our Lives Club.” What are some of the dangers they face? Which of her friends get hurt, and how? Why do they choose to keep helping her?

Language & Point of View

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

16. As you read the book, keep a list of unfamiliar words. Try to figure out each word’s meaning in context, and then check a dictionary for the definition.

Here are some possibilities:

- *searing*
- *barricade*
- *kindling*
- *elixir*
- *transit*
- *minions*
- *ingenious*
- *legacy*
- *flurry*
- *albeit*
- *scepter*
- *cowering*
- *visionary*

17. The author uses words with Latin roots to describe important abilities and objects in the Lost Cities. Here are some of those words. Look in a print or online source (such as readingrockets.org/article/root-words-roots-and-affixes) to figure out the etymology of these and other words you find while reading the book.

- *empathy*
- *polyglot*
- *pyrokinetic*
- *stellarscope*
- *technopath*
- *telepath*
- *teleport*
- *translocation*

Activities

Home Sweet Home

Many of the elves in Sophie's new world live in homes with intriguing features and unusual names. Her home is Havenfield, Keefe's is Candleshade, and Fitz and Biana's is Everglen. Have students choose one of the young characters in the book and imagine the home they will have as an adult in the elf world. Have the student name the home and describe it in writing, using vivid vocabulary and ample detail. They can illustrate the description with one or more drawings or paintings. Have them share their ideas with the rest of the class and answer questions about the homes they've envisioned.

A Mountain of Facts

Mount Everest is one of the few settings in the novel that's part of the human world. Have students alone or in pairs do research about Mount Everest using at least one print and one Internet source. Have them compile ten facts about topics like geology, climate, history, famous climbers, recent expeditions, accidents, controversies, and so on. Have them create a list of the facts and add visual elements when helpful like photographs, drawings, time lines, and charts. Then create a Mountain of Facts bulletin board for students to post and compare what they found.

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