

A Curriculum Guide to

**Five Kingdoms, Book Four: *Death Weavers***

By Brandon Mull

**About the Book**

Cole is about to face his biggest peril yet.

Since arriving in the Outskirts, Cole and his friends have fought monsters, challenged knights, and battled rampaging robots. But none of that has prepared them for Necronum.

In this haunting kingdom, it's hard to tell the living from the dead, and secret pacts carry terrifying risks. Within Necronum lies the echolands, a way station for the departed where the living seldom venture.

Still separated from his power, Cole must cross to the echolands and rely on his instincts to help rescue his friends. With enemies closing in, Cole risks losing everything to find the one thing that might save them.

**Prereading Questions**

What does the word *destiny* mean? Do you think of yourself or others as having a certain destiny?

**Discussion Questions**

**Setting**

The following questions contained in this section particularly address the following Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.1) (RL.4.3)

1. From the first page, echoes are a major aspect of this book. What are echoes? What are the differences between live and dead echoes? What role do slipstreams play there?
2. Talk about the music in the echolands, its power, and Cole's reaction to it at different times during his adventures there.
3. Describe the history of the echolands and its physical features such as scenery and towns. How are the echolands similar to, and different from, the Outskirts? What makes them a good setting for an adventure story?
4. Give examples of why the Pass of Visions is so difficult for Cole to go through. What strengths does Cole draw on to survive his passage through it?

## **Characters**

The following questions contained in this section particularly address the following Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.3)

5. After Cole offers to look for Destiny, the narrative reads, “Something about protecting people brought out the best in him.” Do you think it’s true? Find evidence that supports the statement or shows that it’s wrong.
6. Why is Cole looking for Destiny, also called Tessa? Who is she and what makes her so important? Why does her aunt Prescia say of Destiny, “That child frightens me”?
7. Brainstorm some adjectives to describe Harvan. What is Cole’s impression when he first meets Harvan in the Cave of Memory? What role does Harvan end up playing in Cole’s adventures and what is their relationship like?
8. Many people besides Harvan help Cole along the way as the boy tries to find and rescue Destiny. Choose a few of those characters and describe who they are and what they do. What motivates the characters to help him?
9. Near the end, Cole encounters Nazeem at the Fallen Temple. What has Cole learned about Nazeem earlier in the book? What dangers does Nazeem pose and how did he get to be so powerful? What makes him an effective villain?

## **Plot and Structure**

The following questions contained in this section particularly address the following Common Core State Standards: (RL.4-7.3) (RL.5-6.5)

10. Visiting the Hall of Glory proves useful for Cole. What does it look like? Why can Cole enter it when others can’t? Who does he meet there that becomes important in the story, and how did they end up in the Hall of Glory?
11. In what ways is the Mare more than a horse? Discuss the role that she plays in the story and how she helps Cole. What happens to her at the end?
12. The Weaver’s Beacon also serves Cole well. Describe it, what it does, and how it helps Cole. How does it interact with his power, especially at the Fallen Temple?
13. Describe what causes Cole’s power to come back. Why had it been inaccessible to him? How does he use it once it has returned?

## **Themes**

The following questions contained in this section particularly address the following Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.2, 4)

14. Lottie Natt says to Cole, “It’s hard to be the rescuer and the quarry.” What is a *quarry*? What specifically is Lottie referring to? At what other points in the novel does Cole play both of those roles? Why is it hard?

15. As Cole approaches the dangerous Deadlands with Harvan and Winston, he says, “When you can’t avoid something like this, all you can do is be brave and get it over with.” What does his comment show about his personality? How else might someone react to the situation?

16. Dandalus answers Cole’s question, “What is the meaning of life?” by saying that the “meaning of life is to learn to love the right things.” Reread the rest of that passage (pp. 394-395) and discuss if you agree with Dandalus’s views. Does Cole agree with him? Discuss other possible answers you or someone else might have to that big question.

## **Extension Activities**

### **Playlists of Echolands**

Cole thinks of the music in the Deadlands as a “depressing playlist.” Have students create playlists of five to ten songs from music they know. The songs can be the kind found in the Deadlands, the wonderful sounds of the homesongs, the bold music of the Hall of Glory, or another playlist that reflects the echolands. Have students share the titles or the songs themselves with the class and explain their choices.

### **Best Kid Ever?**

Several times, Harvan calls Cole, “Best kid ever!” When he does so on the way to the Farthest Mountain, Cole worries that maybe he’s really the “worst kid ever” or the “most gullible kid ever.” Have students write an essay using evidence throughout the story to discuss all three possibilities, addressing why Harvan calls Cole that, whether the student agrees, and why Cole is unsure.

### **Travel Warning!**

The U.S. State Department puts out travel warnings about countries that might pose risks to U.S. citizens traveling there. Their website reads, “We issue a Travel Warning when we want you to consider very carefully whether you should go to a country at all.” (See: <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/alertswarnings.html>) Have students work in pairs to create and decorate a poster with an official travel warning about the echolands. It should list reasons not to go there and places to avoid if someone ends up in the echolands.

### **Vocabulary Preview**

Assign a few students to do a vocabulary preview for a chapter just before the class reads it. They should identify words that are new to them and try to understand them by using context

clues. They can then check the words in a dictionary and share their findings with the class before or during discussions of the chapter.

*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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