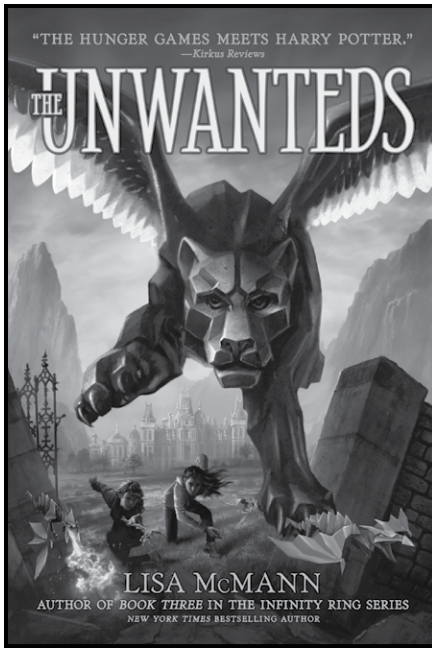


A Curriculum Guide to
THE UNWANTEDS SERIES

By Lisa McMann





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THE UNWANTEDS BOOK 1

THE UNWANTEDS

About the Book

Alex knows that when he turns thirteen, he'll be officially categorized as a Wanted, a Necessary, or an Unwanted. And since he's been caught showing a creative skill, he dreads the inevitable—being labeled an Unwanted and sent to his death along with the other Unwanted children from the grim country of Quill because they have broken the law by drawing, singing, or writing. But instead of dying, Alex and the other children find themselves in the secret haven of Artimé, a joyful place where people celebrate the arts and practice magic. He and his new friends revel in their music, art, drama, and writing classes, and their newfound freedom. But the ominous shadow of neighboring Quill still hangs over them—especially when Alex secretly tries to convince his twin brother, a rising star in Quill's tyrannical government, to join him in Artimé.

Prereading Questions

Why do the arts, such as music, visual art, drama, and writing, matter? What would our society be like without them? What would your life be like without them?

Setting

The following questions contained in this section particularly address the following Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.1, 2) (RL.5.5)

1. Describe the worlds of Quill and Artimé. How are they different? Do they have anything in common? Which one comes across as a better place? How can you tell? Give specific details and find specific words that describe each.
2. Look at the book's structure in terms of how the settings of Quill and Artimé are developed. Does each chapter focus on just one of the two settings? Or do some chapters include both? Do you learn about Quill in the chapters set in Artimé? Look at the structure also in terms of how the characters of Alex and Aaron are developed.
3. The arts are at the heart of life in Artimé. Find details about the role that arts play there. How are the arts used in Artimé as weapons for fighting Quill? Are there ways that the arts are powerful in our society?
4. Quill is said to be a world that discourages creativity. Yet Aaron is working hard to solve problems about poor food and lack of water. Can this be considered creative? What other areas in life show creativity besides art, drama, music, and writing?

Characters

The following questions contained in this section particularly address the following Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.1, 3) (RL.5–7.6)

1. Quill has three categories of thirteen-year-olds: Wanted, Necessary, and Unwanted. The Wanted and Necessary go on to become adults in Quill. Find details about different roles of the Wanted and Necessary in Quill society. Why do the Necessary accept their roles? Why do they let their children be removed? What would the Necessary think of Artimé if they knew about it? Give specific details to back up your thoughts.
2. What does it mean to be an Unwanted? How does it make each of the four children—Alex, Lani, Meghan, and Samheed—feel? How does each of them deal with those feelings? Give examples about each of the four children, considering their similarities and differences.

3. Alex, Lani, Meghan, and Samheed become friends in Artimé. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each one? In what ways is each one creative? Do their special areas of creativity reflect their personalities? If so, how? Find specific details to support your views.
4. How does being in Artimé change each of the four newcomers? Give specific examples. How do their relationships with one another change? What incidents in the plot affect the characters and their relationships? For example, Lani starts teasing Alex. Why does she do that? How does it affect their friendship?
5. Samheed feels the most divided between the two worlds. How does this show in his actions? Why does he feel that way? Why does he eventually change his mind about where his loyalty lies? Cite specific examples.
6. Twins play an important role in this book. How do Alex and Mr. Today represent Artimé? How do Aaron and Justine represent Quill? What does Alex have in common with Aaron? How are they different? What does Mr. Today have in common with Justine? How are they different?
7. Although Alex's and Meghan's parents play minor roles, Lani's father, Haluki, turns out to be important. What clues in the text foreshadow that Haluki is working with Mr. Today? Give details about his role.
8. Describe the narrator's point of view in this novel. Besides describing events, does the narrator reveal the characters' emotions and thoughts? If so, which characters? How does this point of view influence your understanding of the characters and events?

Plot

The following questions contained in this section particularly address the following Common Core State Standards: (RL.4.9) (RL.6–7.3)

1. Summarize how the battle between Artimé and Quill unfolds in a series of episodes. How do the four children respond to the fighting? How have they changed throughout the story to be prepared for their role in the fight?
2. In a school play rehearsal, Alex plays the role of Perseus fighting Medusa, a story from Greek mythology. What details are mentioned in the book? Find the myth and read it. Are there parallels between Alex and Perseus? If so, when do they occur in the novel?

Themes

The following questions contained in this section particularly address the following Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.1, 2)

1. Secrecy is a theme throughout *The Unwanteds*. Make a list of the secrets that different characters are keeping and why they've chosen secrecy. Would the outcome have been different for some of the characters if they'd known the truth? For example, Lani doesn't understand her father's role, Alex doesn't confide in anyone about his hopes for Aaron, and Mr. Today doesn't tell the children about his relationship to Justine or Claire.
2. Mr. Today says of Justine, "Her power is the fear she instills in people. She hides behind the palace so that Quill can't see that she is afraid too." Fear is a pervasive part of life in Quill; give details that show this. How does fear affect Alex and his friends in Artimé during the fighting? Describe what you think the future of Quill might be without the people's fear of Justine and the government.
3. Mr. Today talks about not punishing anyone for their thoughts, only for their actions. Read the First Amendment to the US Constitution and discuss how it relates to Mr. Today's ideas. Do you think Mr. Today makes the right decision? Why or why not?
4. Mr. Today decides to open the gates permanently between the two worlds. What is the symbolic role of the gates? How does he justify opening them? What are the arguments against doing it? Do you think he makes the right decision?

Language

The following questions contained in this section particularly address the following Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.4)

1. Have students make note of unfamiliar words as they read, first trying to understand them from clues in the text. A second step would be to look the word up in a dictionary. Here are some words that may be unfamiliar:

- | | | |
|-------------------|----------------|-------------|
| ■ dispersed | ■ jeopardize | ■ enticing |
| ■ insubordination | ■ egregious | ■ arsenal |
| ■ infraction | ■ perpetual | ■ cheekily |
| ■ disembark | ■ resigned | ■ brusquely |
| ■ pungent | ■ biannual | ■ remorse |
| ■ queue | ■ veer | |
| ■ emanating | ■ extinguished | |

2. Although McMann emphasizes dialogue and plot, she occasionally uses figurative language. Have students jot down such language and consider how it adds another dimension to the text. Here are some possibilities:

- “bland looks of sleeping fish on their faces”
- “his heart fell like a cement block”
- “pealed like a pleasant-sounding bell”
- “a prune of a woman”
- “to run Quill like a puppet show”
- “like a flouncy skirt”
- “Aaron’s face looked like a troubled sea”
- “like a swarm of bees was trapped inside his head”
- “watched Aaron like a dog watches a gopher hole”
- “like an empty paper cup”

Activities

Artimé Creatures

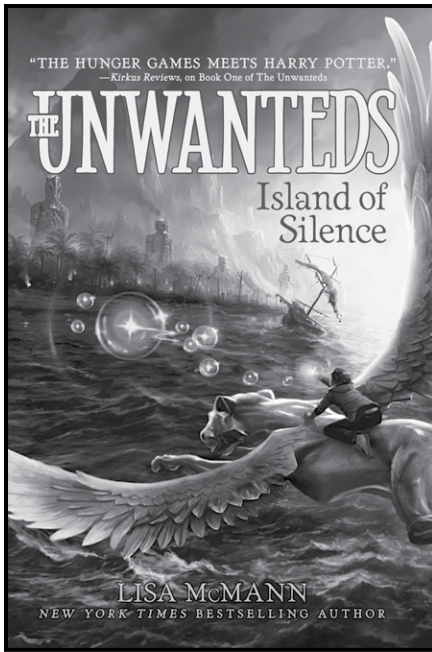
Artimé has creatures which combine two animals in their names and features. Have students find them in the novel. They include the following:

- Rabbitkeys—rabbit and monkey
- Squirrelicorns—squirrel and unicorn
- Owlbats—owl and bat
- Beavops—beaver and opossum
- Girrinos—giraffes and rhinos

Have students (alone or in small groups) brainstorm a creature that combines two other creatures. They should consider how it might look, sound, and move. Then have them write a four-line rhyming verse about the creature modeled on Mr. Appleblossom’s rhymes in *The Unwanted*s. After they’ve written the verse, have them draw a picture or create a painting of the creature and incorporate the verse in the artwork. Create a wall or bulletin board that’s an Artimé menagerie.

School Brochure

The Artimé that Alex and his friends experience is very much like a boarding school. At the end of the novel, children from Quill may have a choice of going there, too. Have students (alone or in small groups) design a brochure with text that describes the school, its classes, and its grounds. Have them draw or paint pictures to illustrate the brochure. Word processing programs, such as Microsoft Word, have brochure templates as does NCTE’s ReadWriteThink website (ReadWriteThink.org/Files/Resources/Interactives/Printing_Press/). Text and images can be uploaded, and the brochure printed out.



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THE UNWANTEDS BOOK 2

THE UNWANTEDS

Island of Silence

About the Book

Alex and his friends are happy, living in Artimé and studying magic under the guidance of kindly Mr. Today. Despite problems with neighboring Quill, life is good. But when something terrible happens to Mr. Today, everything changes in Artimé, and Alex must take on the role of leader, even though he feels unprepared for it. A brother and sister who can't speak wash ashore on a raft, wearing cruel thorns on their neck, while Lani, Samheed, and Meghan go off on a sailing trip that goes wrong. And in Quill, Alex's brother, Aaron, is out of power but scheming to get it back, which will mean danger to Alex and Artimé.

Prereading Questions

What qualities make a good leader? What makes someone a poor or even dangerous leader? Does it vary by situation? Can a leader have good intentions and still be unsuccessful?

Setting

1. Compare what Artimé is like without magic to what it's like with magic. In what different ways do the Artiméans respond to the lack of magic? What do their responses show about them?
2. How have conditions changed in Quill since Artimé became accessible? In what different ways do the Wanteds and the Necessaries respond to the changes? Why have some of the Necessaries moved to Artimé?
3. Describe what this book reveals about the Island of Silence. What do Lani, Meghan, and Samheed think it will be like? Explain what they are basing their ideas on. What do they see at first on the island? What happened to Meghan there, and how is it related to the silent girl and boy? Describe what happens to Lani and Samheed on the island.

Characters

The following questions contained in this section particularly address the following Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.1, 3) (RL.7.6)

1. Mr. Today wants to train Alex to be his successor. Why does he want to do this? What traits in Alex's character suggest that he could be a good leader?
2. Alex resists being trained as the new leader. What is he worried about? What aspects of accepting Mr. Today's offer appeal to Alex? How does his view of himself differ from Mr. Today's view of him? How does his view of himself differ from how his friends view him?
3. Ultimately, Alex has no choice but to lead the Artiméans. Find examples of Alex doing a good job as a leader. Are there examples of mistakes he makes? What motivates him to keep trying?
4. Meanwhile, Aaron is scheming to lead Quill. Mr. Today describes Aaron as "power-hungry." Compare Aaron's reasons for wanting to lead with Alex's reasons for leading. Later, Aaron refers to revenge. What role does revenge play for Aaron? What do the differences between them say about the kind of people they are?
5. Both Alex and Aaron are good at planning. Aaron thinks about his plan: "If all went well, it would still take years." What is his plan? Find examples of each character's ability to plan and think ahead. Compare the differences in what they plan for and why they make their plans.

6. Sisters and brothers play important roles in this book: Lani and Henry, Meghan and Sean, and the two children from the Island of Silence. Discuss the relationship between each pair. Then compare each pair to the others. How are their relationships similar? How are they different?

Plot

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

1. It's common in fairy tales for characters to disobey a rule or command, causing something bad to happen. Although there's no clear rule against it, Lani, Meghan, and Samheed know they shouldn't take the boat. Describe why each of them chooses to go. What are the consequences?
2. Issues about silence are important in the plot in several ways. Mr. Today deals with the fact that he hasn't told six of the original founders of Quill an important fact. Why didn't he tell them sooner? Why does he tell them now? What are the consequences of Mr. Today finally breaking the silence?
3. At first Alex doesn't tell his friends about Mr. Today's idea to train him. Why is Alex silent about it? Once his friends know, it causes a rift between Alex and Lani. Why? What does Alex think the problem is about? What are Lani's feelings about it? How do Meghan and Samheed react? Explain what their reactions show about each of them.

Themes

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

1. Leadership is one of the main themes in this novel. Compare the leadership styles of Alex and Aaron. How do they treat people? How does each motivate people to follow him?
2. Meghan also has a chance to lead when Mr. Today chooses her and Cole to be in charge of orientation for the newcomers. What traits does she have that made Mr. Today choose her? How does she go about helping the newcomers? Give examples of how she shows leadership.
3. A theme related to leadership is making mistakes. Mr. Today comments on his writings about his past, "You'll find history, magic, and mistakes galore." Why does he think mistakes are important? Besides the three friends taking the boat, what mistakes do people make in this novel, and which ones have serious consequences?

Language

The following questions contained in this section particularly address the following Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.4)

1. The characters, including the blackboard Clive, use mild sarcasm in this book. Sometimes the narrative uses the word "sarcasm" or "sarcastically," but sarcasm is also conveyed by body language, such as when Meghan rolls her eyes. What are the characters conveying with sarcasm? Is it used for different purposes, depending on the situation? What emotional effects can it have?
2. Mr. Appleblossom often speaks in rhyme. Why does he use rhymes? What does it tell you about him? How does it fit in with other aspects of his character?

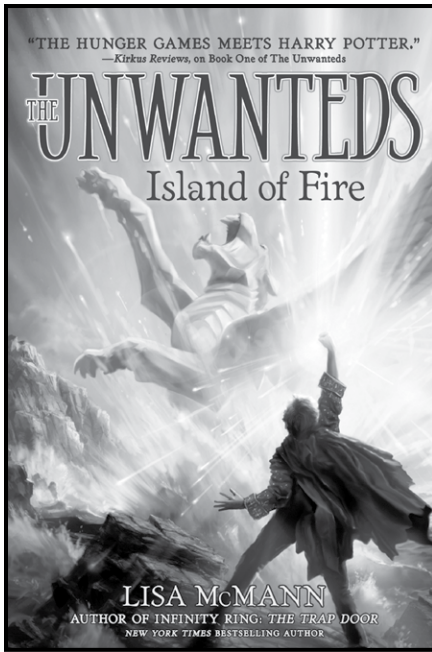
Activities

Create Your Own Interactive Blackboard

Alex's interactive blackboard, which is named Clive, has a strong personality. Clive can talk, show things, communicate with other blackboards, and more; he also has a face. Mr. Today's blackboards can do even more. Have each student create a blackboard of his or her own, name it, and decide on a personality and voice for it. What is its voice like? Each student can brainstorm about what the blackboard can do. Have them draw a picture of its face and other attributes, using labels to explain different parts. Then have them write a paragraph describing its personality. Have the students share their blackboards with one another.

Museum of the Large Bulletin Board

The Museum of the Large serves as a refuge for Mr. Today. Discuss as a class the different items in the museum. Some of them, like the ship and the whale, are truly large. Have students brainstorm real-life large objects, current or from the past, such as buildings, bridges, pyramids, dinosaurs, and so on. Have each student choose a large object to research, describe in a paragraph or two, and illustrate (draw, paint, create online) for a bulletin board. Mount the illustrations and writing to form a classroom Museum of the Large display.



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THE UNWANTEDS BOOK 3

THE UNWANTEDS

Island of Fire

About the Book

With so many things gone wrong, Alex needs all the help he can get to restore the magic on Artimé and rescue his friends, Lani and Samheed, from the dangerous Island of Silence. Help comes from unexpected people, including the two mysterious Silent siblings and a blustering ship's captain named Ahab. Alex gains strength and confidence as a leader, even when his plans flounder and their ship goes off course. Meanwhile, tension mounts as Lani and Samheed, enslaved on Warbler, fight to survive, and Alex's brother, Aaron, gains support in Quill but faces unexpected threats from his own allies.

Prereading Questions

How could you communicate if you and your friends suddenly couldn't speak or write? What problems would it cause? Are there times when not speaking is a good thing?

Setting

The following questions contained in this section particularly address the following Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.1) (RL.5.5) (RL.6.3)

1. Mr. Today was originally from Warbler, the Island of Silence. He describes it as being “quite a paradise” when he left. Compare life in Artimé when it has magic to life on Warbler under Queen Eagala. Compare life in Artimé when it doesn't have magic to life on Warbler.
2. How are workers treated on Warbler? Consider whether there are parallels between their treatment and how slaves were treated in the US before the Civil War. For example, slaves usually weren't allowed to talk with each other while working. What are some other similarities? What are some differences?
3. How does the treatment of workers on Warbler compare to how the Necessaries were traditionally treated in Quill? How did the treatment of the Necessaries compare to slavery in the US?
4. While most of the chapters follow Alex, some chapters focus on subplots about Lani and Samheed, and about Aaron. How does the author structure the novel to tell all those stories? How does she create suspense about them?

Characters

The following questions contained in this section particularly address the following Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.1, 3) (RL.4.4)

1. Sky and Crow, known at first as the Silent girl and boy, start to become part of the Artimé community. Describe the ways in which each of them is helpful. Describe some of the ways they change from the beginning of the book to the end.
2. With Lani gone, Alex starts spending more time with Sky. How do their feelings for each other change? What obstacles are there to the two of them becoming close? How does Alex feel about their relationship?
3. Meanwhile, Lani and Samheed are becoming close. In what ways do they become important to each other? Explain how their experiences in the cave and afterward contribute to their changing relationship.

4. A third relationship in the plot is the one between Claire and Liam. How did they know each other in the past? How do they treat each other now? How does Claire feel about Liam after her rescue?
5. Captain Ahab is a character from the classic American novel *Moby-Dick* by Herman Melville. In *Moby-Dick*, Ahab is obsessed with a whale and is seeking revenge against it. What role does the captain play in the rescue? Describe the whale he's chasing and its role in the plot. Why do you think the author included these references to *Moby-Dick*?
6. Simber and Alex have become good friends. Describe Simber's background and character, including his strengths and limitations. What makes Simber important to Alex? What makes him important to Artimé?

Plot

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

1. With help from others, Alex slowly figures out the spell to restore Artimé. Describe the steps he takes in the process. Who helps him and how do they help? What problems does saying the spell solve? What problems remain?
2. The book includes several rescues, including those of Haluki, Claire, Lani, and Samheed, and the people in the Museum. Describe the rescues and the role that they play in the plot. What do they show about Alex's character?
3. The rogue ship leads Alex and his friends to Pirate Island, even though they don't want to go there. How does the detour affect the plot? Sky sees her mother and communicates with her. How does this relate to the secret plan Sky has near the end of the book?
4. Describe in detail Alex's plan for rescuing Lani and Samheed. What roles are assigned to the different people and creatures? How are they going to communicate? How well does the plan work?
5. The last four chapters, starting with "Back to Normal," bring the book to a close. What has returned to normal? What is now different than it was before the trip to Pirate and Warbler Islands? What hints are there about the future?

Themes

The following questions contained in this section particularly address the following Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.1, 2, 4) (RL.4.3)

1. One of the main themes in this novel is the power of silence. Reread the excerpt from the handbook for workers. It says that the thorns are for the workers' protection and that they "remove the burden of speech." Discuss this document and the role silence plays in the politics on Warbler. Why was silence instituted among the workers? How is speaking used as a reward?
2. Even though Warbler is referred to as the Island of Silence, people do communicate there through sign language. Describe the different uses of sign language and gestures in this book, including the gesture in Artimé to show loyalty. How does the sign language Lani and Samheed create help them? Consider everyday gestures that you use to communicate, such as a shrug or nod. Compare them to sign language. What are the similarities and differences?
3. Leadership is another major theme in the book. Alex gains confidence in his ability as a leader, but he is sure that being a leader will limit his life and relationships. What does he think those limits will be? Why does he think that? What changes his mind? Discuss how being the leader of a community or country, especially one that's in danger, might affect other aspects of the leader's life.

Language

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

1. The author has a playful approach to last names in this series. Make note of some of the unusual last names, such as Today and Rattrap. What does each name suggest about the person? Why does Carina change her last name? Why do you think she chose the new name Holiday?
2. Related to the theme of silence is the theme throughout the series of the power of spoken words. The spell to restore magic in Artimé turns out to be these words spoken in this order: “Imagine. Believe. Whisper. Breathe. Commence.” Discuss why these are the words of the spell and why they are in this order. How do they relate to building and rebuilding Artimé? Why are words considered powerful?

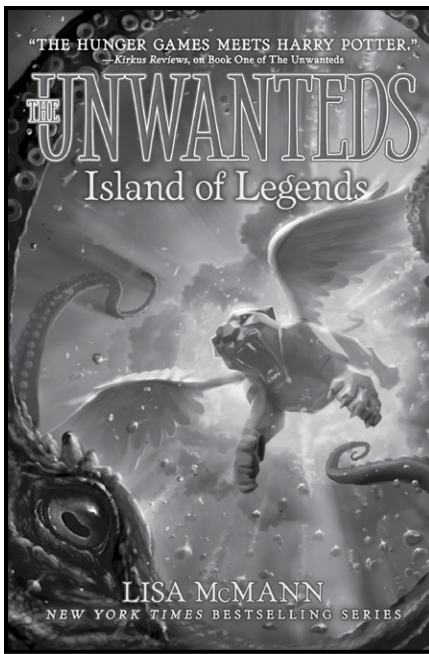
Activities

Favorite Character Cube

Have students choose a character from the book and create a six-sided cube with pictures and information about the character. NCTE’s ReadWriteThink website has a tool called Cube Creator (ReadWriteThink.org/Classroom-Resources/Student-Interactives/Cube-Creator-30850.html). You can print it out to get a blank template by initiating the process of creating a cube and putting in a general name, such as “Ms. Smith’s Class.” Without adding other information, press Finish and then Print. This will give you the blank template. Or you could have students use the Cube Creator online. Have them put in brief text for each side of the cube, such as a character trait or an action the character took. The students can then print the cube out and add pictures. Make a display of all the finished cubes.

Create an Island

Have students consider the islands in the book. It seems likely Alex and his friends will explore more islands. Have students work alone, in pairs, or in small groups and come up with their own island. They should brainstorm its geography, animals, flora, and inhabitants. What is the housing like? The government? And so on. Then have them name the island and create a travel poster for it that includes artwork and description. This could be done on poster board or using an online poster tool such as Glogster, which has teacher accounts for use with classrooms (Edu.Glogster.com).



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THE UNWANTEDS BOOK 4

THE UNWANTEDS

Island of Legends

About the Book

Artimé is under attack! Enemies approach by sea, using catapults to assault the beloved home of teenage mage Alex and his friends. The Artiméans, humans and magical, fight back with all they have. And that's just the first of their adventures in this thrilling tale. Next they set off to rescue Sky's mother from Pirate Island. That daring mission leads to another discovery: the Island of Legends. Meanwhile, Alex's brother and rival, Aaron, explores a secret spot near Artimé, scheming as always to expand his power. Compelling characters and a fast pace will once again keep readers spellbound by this popular fantasy series.

Prereading Questions

In what way can stories be powerful and make a difference? How is creating a new piece of art such as a painting or sculpture like telling a story?

Setting

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

1. When Aaron hits all the buttons on the glass tube, he accidentally travels to a new area near Quill and Artimé. What is that area like? Give details about the surroundings and the creatures who live there. What is their history? How do they interact with Aaron?
2. The book's title refers to the island that Alex and his friends visit after rescuing Sky's mother from Pirate Island. Describe the Island of Legends and its inhabitants. Compare it to Pirate Island both physically and in terms of how humans and creatures are treated in both places.

Characters

The following questions contained in this section particularly address the Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.1) (RL.4–5.3)

1. Eva Fathom emerges as a major character in the sections about Aaron. Discuss what you know about her. What is her relationship to Aaron? What about her is still mysterious? Explain the sacrifice she makes to help others near the end of the book. What does it reveal about her character?
2. Fox also plays a bigger role in this installment in the series. Give examples of what he's like as a character. What's his relationship to Kitten? Why does Fox pretend to understand her? Describe Fox's reaction when he learns he's not a cat. Why does it matter to him?
3. Alex has a rift with his good friend Simber when they are on their rescue mission to Pirate Island. What is Simber angry about? How does Alex react to Simber's feelings and his own? Give details about the conflict and how they resolve it.
4. Alex's relationship with Sky is up and down in this story. Discuss when they feel close to each other and what they admire about each other. What problems are they having in their relationship? What causes Alex to distance himself from Sky? Give reasons why Sky is feeling so anxious.
5. Florence and Talon are also developing romantic feelings in the story. Describe each of them, what they have in common, and how they are different. Give reasons why they are attracted to each other. What do they decide about their future?

Plot

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

1. The book opens with a dramatic scene concerning Aaron. Describe what happens in it and how it relates to the rest of the book. Why do you think the author started with Aaron instead of Alex in the first scene? What can you tell about Aaron's character from his actions and feelings in this chapter?
2. The author likes to use foreshadowing to hint at the future and create suspense. For example, Aaron sees two houses "with a strange, bluish-white glow coming from the windows." What does this glow turn out to be, and why does it matter? Find other examples of foreshadowing and trace them to how they matter later in the story.
3. Recount in detail the steps taken to rescue Sky's mother, Florence, and Spike on Pirate Island. What are Alex's plans for the rescue? Who adds ideas to his plan? How do things go wrong? Is the rescue successful and, if so, in what ways?

Themes

The following questions contained in this section particularly address the Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.2) (RL.4.3) (RL.6.3)

1. Leadership continues to be an important theme in this series. What does Alex learn about leadership in this book? How does he treat the people around him? What still troubles him about being a leader? Give specific examples.
2. Aaron, in contrast to his brother, is focused on gaining power to benefit himself. What are some of his plans to increase his power? Explain ways that he manipulates the people of Quill for his own purposes, including how he turns them against one another.
3. Alex is a creator as well as a leader. Describe how he creates Spike Furious and brings her to life. In what ways does Alex put himself into the whale? What does he learn from his successes and setbacks in creating Spike?
4. As Alex and his friends end their time on the Island of Legends, Alex thanks Talon for "introducing this storytelling thing to our evenings by the fire." Discuss the role of storytelling in this novel. Whose stories get told? Why is it important to share those and other stories?

Language

The following questions contained in this section particularly address the Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.4)

1. The book's opening scene creates vivid images by using words that appeal to the reader's senses. Find such words on the first pages and elsewhere throughout the book and make a list of them. Separate them into categories related to the senses such as words that describe sounds, smells, and so on. Discuss how words like this affect readers and draw them into the story.
2. The author also likes to use action verbs in certain scenes to create vibrant pictures and a fast pace. Reread the first three pages of the "In Over Her Head" chapter and jot down verbs that convey the action. Take some of the exciting sentences and substitute less vivid verbs; for example, substitute "fell" for "tumbled" and "jumped" for "torpedoed." Read the new sentences aloud and discuss the different impacts of blander and stronger verbs.
3. Look at the sequence of words that Mr. Today and Alex use in magic spells. Examine a few of the sequences, such as "Comfort, Happiness, Peace, Success," and discuss what each word means, including its connotations. Then consider why the words are given in that particular order, how they relate to each other, and why they might be considered magical.

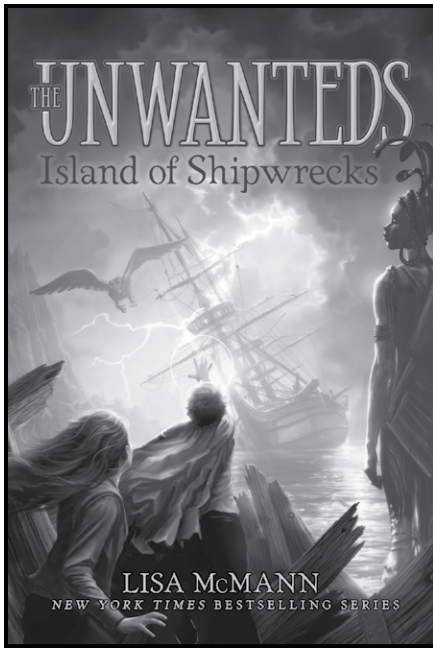
Activities

Hanging from a Cliff

Like other fast-paced stories, *Island of Legends* uses cliff-hangers at the end of certain chapters to create suspense. Have students find cliff-hangers in the novel and make a list of them. As a class or in smaller groups, students can discuss the term "cliff-hanger" and how cliff-hangers make a reader want to keep reading. Then have students divide into pairs and write a short action-packed or scary story in which many of the paragraphs end with a cliff-hanger. Have them read the stories aloud dramatically to the whole class.

Circles of Characters

Venn diagrams provide a concrete way to explore differences and similarities between characters. Have each student choose two characters from the novel and create a large Venn diagram to highlight their similarities and differences. The students can then gather in small groups to explain their diagrams to each other. Create a "Circles of Characters" bulletin board with the Venn diagrams.



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THE UNWANTEDS BOOK 5

THE UNWANTEDS

Island of Shipwrecks

About the Book

Alex and his friends are finally on their way home after rescuing Sky's mother and dealing with so many dangers. But just when they are confident of their safety, and their champion, Simber, has flown ahead, catastrophe strikes. A hurricane shipwrecks them on a seemingly deserted island. What are their chances of surviving and repairing their ship? Back home, their fellow Artiméans face another attack from Quill, this time without Alex to lead them. Filled with pirates, shipwrecks, ice magic, and maybe even the key to living forever, this fast-moving adventure tests the courage and friendship of the Unwanteds once again.

Prereading Questions

What gives someone self-confidence? What is the relationship between making mistakes and having self-confidence? How much do other people's opinions matter when it comes to believing in yourself?

Setting

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

1. Describe the Island of the Shipwrecks, including Ishibashi's shelter. How do Alex and his friends end up there? Give details about the inhabitants they meet and how those people treat the newcomers.
2. Tearing down the wall between Quill and Artimé significantly alters those two places. Describe the changes and how different characters react to them. Why does the General want the wall down? What are Aaron's fears about it?
3. When Ishibashi is describing the girl in the sailboat who left the island, he says he forgot where she came from. He later says he forgot which island he grew up on. How might his comments be related to Lani's map? Discuss where he and the other two old men, and the girl in the sailboat, could be from and why you think that.

Characters

The discussion questions below align with the following English Language Arts Common Core Standards: (RL.4–7.3)

1. Sky is upset with Alex, who misses her friendship and their tentative romantic connection. Discuss how Sky treats Alex and how he feels about that treatment. How does their relationship change while they are on the island?
2. Of the three islanders, Ishibashi is the most important to Alex and his friends. Describe him in physical terms and his personality. How does he spend his time? Give details about how he interacts with the newcomers.
3. Henry plays a large role in this story. What are his strengths and interests? Why do his skills matter to his fellow travelers? What actions show his character? Describe one of the scenes where he is important.
4. Back in Quill, General Blair becomes increasingly powerful. Talk about him, his past as revealed in this book, and his goals. Describe how he and Aaron interact with each other. Why is the general so angry with the Artiméans?
5. Liam, who has divided loyalties, takes risks to help the Artiméans. Discuss his relationship with Aaron. What are Liam's goals? How does he feel about his past? How does he show courage?

Plot & Structure

The discussion questions below align with the following English Language Arts Common Core Standards: (RL.6–7.3)

1. The prologue about pirates foreshadows events that take place much later in the story. What happens in the prologue? Discuss the later scenes with the pirates and the mistake that they make. How do the pirates' actions relate to what Alex does at the end of the book?
2. Having the ship wrecked by the hurricane leads to many actions that drive the plot. Describe at least three significant consequences of the shipwreck and how those consequences affect the characters.
3. Give a step-by-step description of Alex's plan for launching the repaired ship and leaving the Island of Shipwrecks. What assignment do each of his companions have? What are the possible problems? What happens that Alex doesn't expect?
4. Meghan is active in defending Artimé from Aaron and the military attack. How do she and Liam trick Aaron? What steps do those in Artimé take to defend themselves? Describe the battle and its outcome.

Themes

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

1. Ishibashi and his fellow islanders have a seaweed with special properties related to long life, maybe even living forever. When Ishibashi asks Henry if he'd like to live forever, Henry says he doesn't know and would have to think about it. Discuss the possible drawbacks to living forever.
2. Alex and Aaron both derive a lot of satisfaction from making or repairing things. What do each of them make? What process do they follow in carrying out their projects? Discuss why you think they find it so rewarding.
3. Aaron—and to a lesser extent, Alex—lack self-confidence at points in the story. Aaron even calls himself “a misfit and a failure.” Why does he think that? Do you agree? Alex grows discouraged when he can't repair the tube or weave the carpet. What helps him regain his confidence?

Language

The discussion question below aligns with the following English Language Arts Common Core Standards: (RL.4–7.4)

1. How does the author use questions in her writing? Find examples of questions throughout the book. For each one, discuss why a question is used instead of a declarative sentence. What effect do questions have on the reader?

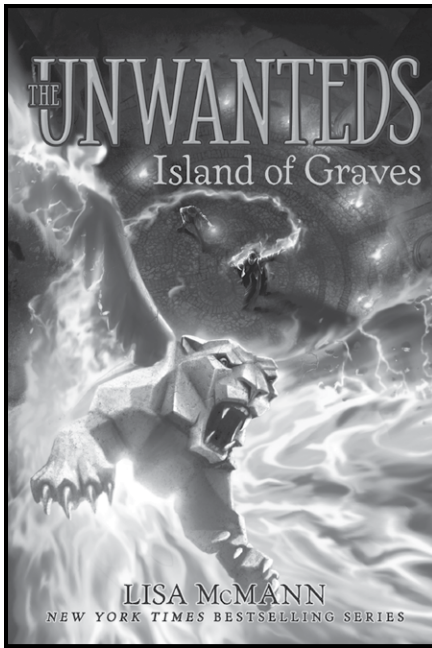
Activities

Creative Cornucopia

Ishibashi creates a “new fruit-and-vegetable combination he called sweet applecorn.” When he peels the husk, it reveals a “red and yellow checkerboard vegi-fruit.” Brainstorm lists of fruits and vegetables and have each student choose a fruit and vegetable to combine. They should describe the new vegi-fruit in writing, suggest a few possible recipes or other uses for it, and create a colored drawing to post on a Creative Cornucopia bulletin board.

Danger Ahead!

When the restored ship approaches the sixth island, Lani speculates about what dangers it might present. Have students each come up with three possible dangers, make notes about them, and describe them in detail in a group discussion. Make a list of the dangers suggested and hold a vote on the most original, creative ideas.



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THE UNWANTEDS BOOK 6

THE UNWANTEDS

Island of Graves

About the Book

Alex and Aaron Stowe are at a crossroads.

Everything Aaron has worked so hard to build in Quill has crumbled. Fallen from the height of power and influence and left for dead in a foreign place, Aaron has lost everything, and now he must humbly beg for food from those who saved his life.

In Artimé, Alex chooses his people over his brother and abandons his search for Aaron, closing the door on that relationship forever. The Artimeans need his focus now more than ever as they face the terrifying power of a new enemy who has taken control of Quill—the notoriously evil Gondoleery Rattrapp.

Desperate to stop her, Alex embarks on a risky mission to enlist help from an unlikely ally, and along the way he's determined to rescue a lone sailor from monstrous beasts with mysterious origins—a sailor who just might show Alex a different world. As he prepares for an epic war with all of Quill and Artimé hanging in the balance, Alex must place his faith in a reckless plan and hope that he and all of his friends make it through alive.

Prereading Questions

How can you figure out your own strengths and interests? Why is it a mistake to compare yourself too much to others?

Setting

The discussion questions below particularly address the following English Language Arts Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.1) (RL.4.3)

1. Much of this story focuses on Aaron and his time on the Island of Shipwrecks. Describe daily life there for Aaron and the three men, including meals and living quarters. What is the weather like and how does it affect their lives?
2. Alex and Sky reach island number seven first. What are the physical features of the island? Give details about the creature they meet and their interactions with it. What do they promise it before they leave?
3. The biggest adventure of their journey is on the Island of Graves. Summarize the physical features of the island and talk about its inhabitants. What do they learn about the graves and their history?
4. Food matters in several aspects of the story. Describe the role of food in Aaron's transformation, on Alex and Sky's boat, to Kaylee and her choices on the Island of Graves, in the final plan to eliminate Gondoleery Rattrapp, and elsewhere in the novel.

Characters

The discussion questions below particularly address the following English Language Arts Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.3)

1. Alex struggles with his role as leader, starting with the first chapter when he takes off in a boat. What are some of his qualities that make him a good leader, and when do you see those qualities in this story? Which parts of his personality jeopardize his success as a leader? Give specific examples.
2. Give examples of ways in which Aaron changes, and what motivates him to change. Describe his relationship with Ishibashi and the other two men. How does fixing the telescope contribute to Aaron's transformation?

3. While having Sky on the journey with him initially makes Alex happy, some awkward moments occur between them. Discuss these scenes and how the two of them resolve their differences. How does their relationship change in the course of the story?
4. Describe Kaylee's personality and how she has coped with danger. Discuss the part she plays in her own rescue. What are Alex's, Aaron's, and Sky's reactions to her?

Plot & Structure

The discussion questions below particularly address the following English Language Arts Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.3) (RL.5–6.5)

1. Give a step-by-step description of the first plan to assassinate Gondoleery. Why do the Artiméans want her gone? Who's involved in the attack and what are their assignments? What goes right and what goes wrong? How do Lani and Samheed react to the outcome?
2. Once Alex and Sky return with Aaron, the Unwanteds and their allies make another attempt to eliminate Gondoleery. Describe this plan in detail—its successful parts and its failures. How does Aaron help?
3. Where did Kaylee come from originally? How did she end up in Alex's world, and specifically on the Island of Graves? What does she mention about her own world that Alex, Aaron, and Sky never heard of?

Themes

The discussion questions below particularly address the following English Language Arts Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.2)

1. Explain what prompts Ishibashi to say to Aaron, "Your glasses are invisible, and through them you only see yourself. You must turn your lenses around, Aaron. Windows, not mirrors." What does he mean?
2. Ishibashi also has Aaron compare the insides of two appleorns, which are delicious in different ways. What comparison does Ishibashi draw between the two fruits and the two brothers, Aaron and Alex? Discuss why Ishibashi says, "You must be the appleorn that is inside you."
3. Aaron realizes at one point that his reaction to Ishibashi has changed from fear to respect, and that respect is something he'd rarely felt before. Discuss the use of fear and respect in the novel, and especially as a way to lead people. Which do you think is more effective, and why?

Language

The discussion questions below particularly address the following English Language Arts Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.4)

1. The author uses adjectives sparingly, instead relying on strong imagery to paint pictures. Find some of the adjectives that she uses effectively, and analyze how they add to the impact of the scene.
2. Similarly, the narrative relies mainly on strong verbs to create action, with a limited use of adverbs. Make a list of adverbs that you like and discuss why you think they work well.

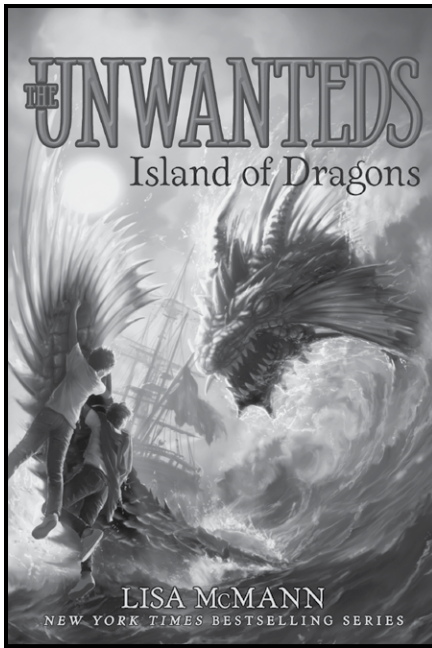
Activities

Let Me Ask You This . . .

Have students work in pairs and choose a character from the novel to interview. Together they should brainstorm a list of questions about the character's past as well as their likes and dislikes, successes and failures, hopes for the future, and so on. Each student in the pair can take half of the questions and write answers from the character's point of view. They can then perform the interview for classmates, with one of the pair as the interviewer and the other as the character.

Lost Circus Ship! Read All About It!

The narrative gives many hints about the shipwreck of a circus ship around 1914. As a class, make a list of all the facts about the ship, such as information on the gravestones and what Kaylee knows. Then have each student write a newspaper story that includes the facts but also fills in the gaps with their own ideas about the ship's origin, passengers, and journey. Have students find a historic newspaper template online where they can upload their story, add headlines and a picture, and print it out.



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THE UNWANTEDS BOOK 7

THE UNWANTEDS

Island of DRAGONS

About the Book

“We win or die today,” declares Alex, head mage of Artimé, rallying his people to defend their island against invading pirates. In this dramatic conclusion to the Unwanteds series, war sweeps over Artimé and tests Alex; his brother, Aaron; and their friends. Will their courage hold? Can their magic prevail? People and creatures that Alex helped in the past now return the favor, to his surprise. And even the youngest Artiméans make a difference during the days of fierce fighting. But the odds are against Alex and his allies, and it will take everything they have to survive this last major battle.

Prereading Questions

What would it be like to believe you'll live forever? How would it change your approach to life?

Setting

The discussion questions below particularly address the following English Language Arts Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.1) (RL.4.3)

1. Alex ends up on the Island of Dragons during this story to help the dragon, Pan, and her offspring. Describe the island and explain why Pan keeps her offspring hidden. What does Alex do for them, and how is it helpful? Discuss Pan's personality and her interactions with Alex on her island.
2. Although female fighters are the minority in our world, they are common in The Unwanteds series. Identify female fighters and female military leaders on both sides in this story. What are their strengths and their weapons? Describe how Alex and Florence work together before and during the battle with the pirates.

Characters

The discussion questions below particularly address the following English Language Arts Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.3)

1. The relationship between Alex and Aaron shifts in the course of the novel. Compare their relationship when the book opens to what it's like when the book ends. Describe places where they work together successfully during the story.
2. Why is the possibility of being head mage such a temptation to Aaron? Discuss his reactions to the idea at different times in the book. Why does he struggle against his feelings about being in charge? What does he ultimately decide, and why?
3. Thisbe and Fifer are starting to grow up in this book. Compare and contrast their personalities, and discuss how they get along with each other. What role does each of them play in the war against the pirates? What does that suggest about their future?
4. Aaron and Kaylee grow closer in this book. Describe their relationship, including the contrast between their two personalities. What makes it hard for Aaron to be close to someone or to believe someone, especially a girl, will like him?
5. While the scientists and Kaylee seem to come from our world, others who do are mythical, such as the *hibagon*, a Japanese bigfoot, and Issie. Describe these two mythical creatures. Discuss why you think the author included them and what it suggests about the version of our world that exists in the novel.

Plot & Structure

The discussion questions below particularly address the following English Language Arts Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.3) (RL.5–6.5)

1. Find places where Alex considers surrendering to Queen Eagala and the pirates. Discuss his reasons and why it seemed like a good idea at the time. Why does he ultimately change his mind?
2. Aaron's immortality plays a key role in several aspects of the plot. What action does it prompt Alex to take? Why is it important for Aaron during the fighting, and how does it change his approach?
3. People and creatures that Alex and his friends helped in the past, and even some that Aaron helped, lend their aid during the fight against the pirates. Name at least three groups who prove important in the battle, how they help, and why they are grateful to Alex and the Artiméans.
4. War always leads to loss. What were the losses for both sides in the war between Artimé and the pirates? Give specific examples of what magic could restore after the battle, and what it couldn't help with.

Themes

The discussion questions below particularly address the following English Language Arts Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.2)

1. The theme of leadership has pervaded this series. How does Alex show his leadership abilities in this novel? Why does he think losing the use of his right arm means he can't lead well? Analyze his reasons for deciding to remain leader rather than Aaron. How does he come to that conclusion?
2. Near the end, Lani writes down stories of the battles and adventures, and how life used to be on the islands, saying, "Maybe if we tell the stories, things won't ever get as bad as they have been." Why would that be true? Do you agree? Why or why not?
3. Alex once said he wouldn't want a medicine that might give him immortality. Why do you think he said that? How do you think Aaron felt about his possible immortality? Would you choose immortality? What are the possible advantages and drawbacks?

Language

The discussion questions below particularly address the following English Language Arts Common Core State Standards: (RL.4–7.4)

1. Read the John Donne poem aloud before you start the novel and then when you've finished it. Talk about the unfamiliar words and unfamiliar spelling, and what the poem means. How do the themes in the poem apply to the novel?
2. Before the war, Mr. Appleblossom says, "We must go forward with a blinded faith that we will see the end of the abyss." What does Alex then think about the word *abyss*? Discuss the word's literal and figurative meanings. What image comes to mind? What emotional impact do the word and image have on you?

Activities

Battle Maps and Charts

Have students review the section where Alex and Florence chart their battle plans. Students working in pairs should create their own chart, placing different characters where they belong during the fight. Then they should draw and decorate a map of the island and label where those characters are stationed when the fighting begins.

Into the Unknown

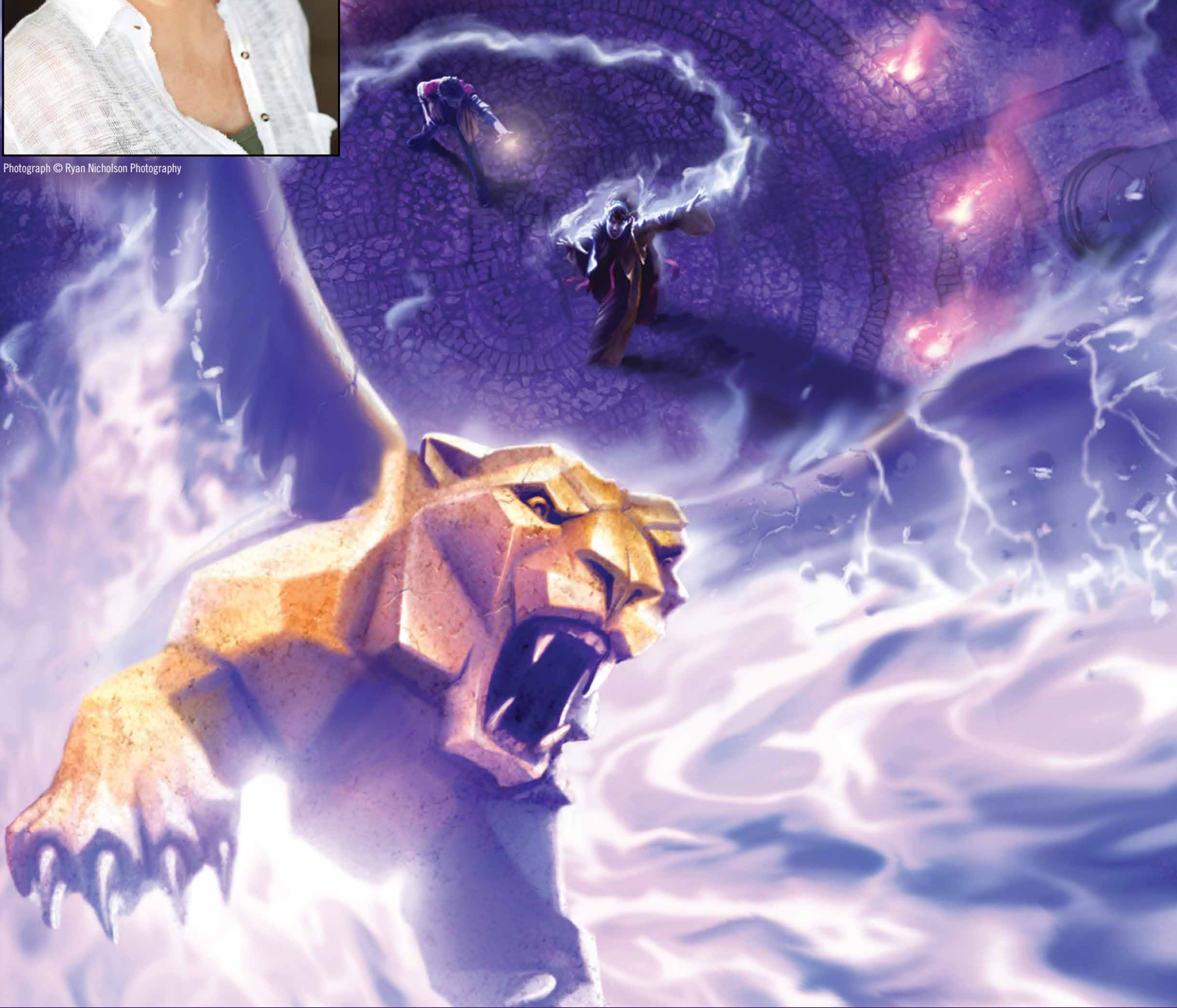
Aaron, Kaylee, and the scientists set off on a ship at the end to look for what Ishibashi calls "the hidden land." Have students choose one of the characters on the ship and write journal entries from their character's point of view. The entries can reflect life on the ship, interactions among those aboard, and their discoveries or adventures as they travel. Have students share their journals and compare their ideas.



Photograph © Ryan Nicholson Photography

About the Author

LISA MCMANN is the *New York Times* bestselling author of the middle grade dystopian fantasy series *The Unwanteds*, the YA paranormal *Wake* trilogy, and several other books for kids and teens. She lives with her family in the Phoenix area. Check out Lisa's website at LisaMcMann.com, learn more about *The Unwanteds Series* at UnwantedsSeries.com, and be sure to say hi on Instagram or Twitter (@Lisa_McMann), or Facebook ([Facebook.com/McMannFan](https://www.facebook.com/McMannFan)).



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