

A Reading Group Guide to

The Unwanted Quests: Dragon Ghosts

By Lisa McMann

About the Book

Everything has gone wrong for the Artiméans and their friends. Their treasured leader, Alex, has gone, taking their magic with him. Sky, his romantic partner, is missing, feared dead. In Artimé, the sudden loss of magic has left people bereft or angry. Far away in Grimere, twins Thisbe and Fifer are separated to face possible death, not knowing each other's fates. Meanwhile their allies, the dragons, have given in to the call of the evil Revinir. *Dragon Ghosts* follows each thread in this action-packed plot as the friends eventually unite to fight together once again. Danger, friendship, romance, and magic make this a gripping page-turner.

Discussion Questions

The discussion questions below particularly address the following English Language Arts Common Core State Standards: (RL. 4–7, 2, 3) (RL.5-6.5)

1. How do the people in Artimé figure out what happened to Alex? How does this news affect the physical structures and way of life there? How do the people try to restore it to its previous condition? What is the emotional impact of Alex's fate? Does everyone react similarly?
2. What impact does Alex's fate have on Aaron? Why does Aaron help those in Artimé? What would he rather do, and why? Why do some dissenters object to having Aaron as a leader? How do you feel about Aaron's leadership abilities?
3. Why is Thisbe so surprised to find Sky? How does Sky help Thisbe and Rohan? Why are the three of them in hiding? Why do Fifer and the others believe that Sky is dead?
4. How do Sky and Thisbe learn about Alex? What effect does the news have on them? Explain how seek spells work, and their role in conveying information about Alex. When can the seek spells be confusing or misleading? What advice would you have for Sky and Thisbe in working around that confusion?
5. Compare Thisbe and Fifer in terms of personality, abilities, and strengths, giving specific evidence for your answers. How are they alike and how are they different? Which one do you think would make a better leader?
6. Fifer realizes that she may have to take on a leadership role after Alex dies. How does she feel about this? What does she learn about being a good leader? Discuss some of the decisions she makes, and what those choices show about her leadership skills.

7. Once vitally important to Alex, Simber now turns his attention to Fifer. How does he try to help her become a good leader? Identify areas where they disagree and how they resolve those differences. How does he help the other Artiméans at different times in the story? Have you ever disagreed with someone on a big issue? How did you handle the situation? What did you take away from that experience?

8. While adjusting to her new role as a leader, Fifer “became more and more reclusive as she tried to distance herself from loving her friends too much.” Why do you think she felt this way? How does she treat Seth because of it? How does he react? Do you agree with Fifer’s attitude? Explain your answer.

9. Thisbe also changes during the story. What effect did the dragon-bone broth have on her? What about the ancestor broth? In what ways does she feel more connected to the country and people around her? Describe her relationship with Rohan and how it changes.

10. Dev is a complex character. How does Fifer feel about him? How does Seth feel about him? Why do you think Dev hides his scales? What might happen if he didn’t? What happens to him during and after the Revinir starts roaring?

11. What makes the Revinir an effective villain? How does she grow in power during the story, and how does she use her new power? What is her ultimate goal?

12. Describe the ghost dragons. What hints do you get about their pasts? What is their attitude towards the Revinir? How do they help Thisbe and her companions?

13. When the Revinir first roars in the chapter titled “In the Night,” Thisbe sees images of pirates, a ship, and a girl struggling. The final two paragraphs of that chapter reveal that “the last of the black-eyed rulers who’d survived” in the king’s dungeon had that same nightmare. How does that information create a sense of mystery? What does it suggest about Thisbe’s relationship to Grimere?

14. What clues do you read about Maiven Taveer and her past? What does Rohan figure out about her? Describe Maiven and Rohan’s relationship at the end of the book. What do you think the future holds for them?

15. Find sections in the last few chapters that foreshadows what might happen in the next book. What does Drock’s behavior suggest about his future role? What does Sky learn about traveling by volcano that would be helpful information for Thisbe and the others who are trying to find Sky?

16. Give a quick summary of the story’s various settings, including different parts of Grimere. Find and describe times in the novel when the author switches from one setting to another. How does she make the transitions? How do some transitions create suspense?

17. Analyze the book's title and why the author might have chosen to emphasize the ghost dragons. Look at chapter titles and relate them to the contents of each chapter. Discuss whether you think those chapter titles are effective.

Extension Activities

1. Seek Spell Stories.

Invite students to write stories which explore the question: How would you use seek spells if you could perform that type of magic? The narrative should incorporate the kinds of information seek spells can convey, but also describe their limitations. The stories' settings can be magical, historical, contemporary, or a combination of all three. Have students share their stories and compare how their characters interacted with the spells.

2. Leadership Tips.

Simber observes Fifer's leadership qualities and tries to help her improve as a leader. Ask students to gather in small groups to discuss what makes a good leader. They can bring up specific examples from their own experiences and also refer to books, history, politics, and other areas that might give insight. Each small group should come up with five pieces of advice that they would give Fifer on how to be a good leader.

3. A Reporter in the Field.

A number of scenes in the novel would be worthy of reporting on the local television news. Have students choose a scene and write a news story to perform for the class. The student can work individually as a reporter in the field, or pair up to create a conversation between a news anchor and reporter, or between the reporter and a character from the novel.

4. Alike and Yet Different.

Twins Fifer and Thisbe have much in common, but they also differ in many ways. Ask students to create a Venn diagram with a circle for each girl and fill it in with information from the book. They should put similarities where the circles overlap, and differences in the other parts of the circles. Categories of comparison can include personality traits, magical abilities, actions in the book, friends and family, and so on. Share the results.

5. Come On Over.

This novel is full of interesting characters. Have students choose a character they would especially like to spend time with; their character can be human, animal, or another creature. Then students will write an invitation to the character to visit and spend a day together. The invitation should draw from the novel to explain why the student is interested in spending time with that character. It should also lay out what they will do during the visit, and why it will be enjoyable for both of them.

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