



A Curriculum Guide to:

## ***Keeper of the Lost Cities: Unlocked***

**By Shannon Messenger**

### **About the Book**

The world of the Lost Cities has everything: great characters, wonderful and frightening places, cool gadgets, fascinating food and elixirs, and so much more. In this insider book, author Shannon Messenger gathers together all the details that her readers crave, and follows them up with a novella about Sophie and Keefe each facing new challenges. Learn more about your favorite Lost Cities people and places, pore over pictures and maps, take quizzes, and even make recipes with this detail-packed guide to an enchanting fantasy world.

### **Discussion Questions**

The discussion questions below particularly address the following English Language Arts Common Core State Standards: (R.L.4-7.1) (R.L.4-7.2) (R.L.4-7.3) (R.L.4-7.4) (R.L.5-6.5)

1. Throughout the book, including just before the novella begins, the author includes notes in which she speaks directly to readers. Why do you think the notes are included? What do they add? Describe her tone and how it makes you feel as a reader.
2. Design features in the book sections outside the novella signal to the reader that they aren't reading a novel. What are the design features? How do the fonts vary? What makes some sections look like official documents? What are some of the lists, and why are they in that format?
3. *Unlocked* includes much more artwork than the other books in the series. How are black-and-white pictures used to add information? Discuss the two inserts with color pictures. What do they convey? Do they match how you imagined the characters to look? Explain your answers.
4. What kind of information is contained in the Registry entries? Who is the information for? Why do some characters have longer entries than others? What is notable about Keefe's entry? Did you learn anything about the characters that you didn't already know? What information might you want to particularly keep in mind when reading future books or rereading past ones?
5. Find some of the final notes about the main characters and compare them. Whose are the most extensive? Do you agree with the assessments of the characters' strengths? What do the notes foreshadow about the future?
6. One section describes "Life in the Lost Cities." Explain what is included in this long section. Why does the author say that the Lost Cities are "luminous, and vibrant"? Why does she also say they are a "Crumbling Utopia"? How can something be two seemingly contradictory things?
7. Look closely at the lists of gadgets, alchemy and elixirs, and medicines. Choose the two items from each list that you would most like to have for yourself. Explain why you chose them and how you would use them.
8. Review the author's note that comes before the novella, and then discuss how viewpoints alternate between Sophie and Keefe. What does having two main characters and their perspectives add to the story? How could the author have conveyed similar information just from Sophie's point of view? What might have been left out?
9. Keefe is facing a host of problems in the novella. Describe his new powers and why they have him so worried. In what way do they seem to be combined abilities? What role does he think his mother has in his new powers, and how might she misuse them?

10. What are some of the emotions that Keefe senses from Elwin in the Healing Center? Why does Keefe go to stay at Elwin's house? Describe the house and how it reflects Elwin's character and needs. How else does Elwin try to help Keefe besides giving him a place to stay?

11. Dex and his family pitch in to help Keefe too. What experiments do they conduct? Describe the role of the triplets in the experiments. What medicines and devices are tried that might help Keefe? How successful are they? Dex gives Keefe an Imparter. What does it allow Keefe to do, and why?

12. How does the preface foreshadow the problems Keefe will face? At various points, he thinks it's important that he stop talking, hard as that is for him. Why does he believe that? What is it like for him to listen and feel instead of speaking up and making jokes? What kinds of words does he suppress during the experiments?

13. Describe Ro's interactions with Keefe. What emotions does she feel for him that he can sense more than before? What does she do to protect him? What does he do to keep her from following him at the end, and why?

14. In chapter five, Edaline and Sophie have a long talk in which Sophie comes to a deeper appreciation for Edaline as a mother. Why does she feel she can't tell Edaline more? What does she see about "the contrast between her different mothers," meaning her human mother, Oralie, and Edaline?

15. What is Glimmer's role in the novella? Why don't the others trust her? Discuss what she says to Sophie in the storehouse about choices, including her comment, "'You're the moonlark, aren't you? The one who's supposed to lead everyone to victory. So *lead!*'" How does that influence Sophie?

16. What does Mr. Forkle think about Sophie's choices at the storehouse? How do his comments make her feel both better and worse? Describe the symbol she draws in the storehouse. What is his reaction to it, and why?

17. Discuss Mr. Forkle's advice to Sophie, "'You must never let yourself forget that winning won't matter if you sink fully to the Neverseen's level.'" What does he mean? How can she fight the Neverseen without sinking to their level?

18. In a metaphor that occurs several times, Sophie's heart is compared to a wound with shrapnel in it. Early on, she feels her heart turn "sharp and heavy . . . like a lump of shrapnel slowly shredding the inside of her chest." What is shrapnel? Explain the comparison and discuss whether you find it effective.

## Extension Activities

### **Your Place in the Registry**

Ask students to consider what their own file in the Registry might look like if they lived in the Lost Cities. Then each should write up their file, complete with a self-portrait and family crest. They should include at least some of the given categories like known abilities, residence, family, and so on, with longer paragraphs on topics about their imaginary lives there.

### **Quiz Time!**

*Unlocked* presents three quizzes. Ask students to take the quizzes and write down their answers. Then they can gather in small groups to discuss their choices and why they made them. Have each group create a similar quiz to give to their classmates for a fun exchange.

### **Add Your Input**

Although the Registry gives a lot of information about some of the characters, readers have their own viewpoints about the characters too. Invite students to choose three of the profiles in the Registry and add comments of their own. They can add to the categories listed or create their own categories for each character.

### **Where Would You Live?**

Fourteen pages revisit the different locations in the World of the Lost Cities. Have each student consider where they would most like to visit and jot down their reasons, including references to earlier novels. Using their notes, each student should prepare a short persuasive speech about that place and why it's a good choice for them.

### **Plan a Party**

Sophie and her friends face a lot of serious problems; however, as Mr. Forkle says near the end, they also need to celebrate. Invite students to work in pairs to plan a party in the Lost Cities, choosing a place to hold it and food based on what's listed in the book. They can add other party elements such as games, decorations, music, and more. Each pair should create a detailed invitation, including a menu.

*Guide written by Kathleen Odean, a youth librarian for seventeen years who chaired the 2002 Newbery Award Committee. She now gives all-day workshops on new books for children and teens. She tweets at @kathleenodean.*

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