

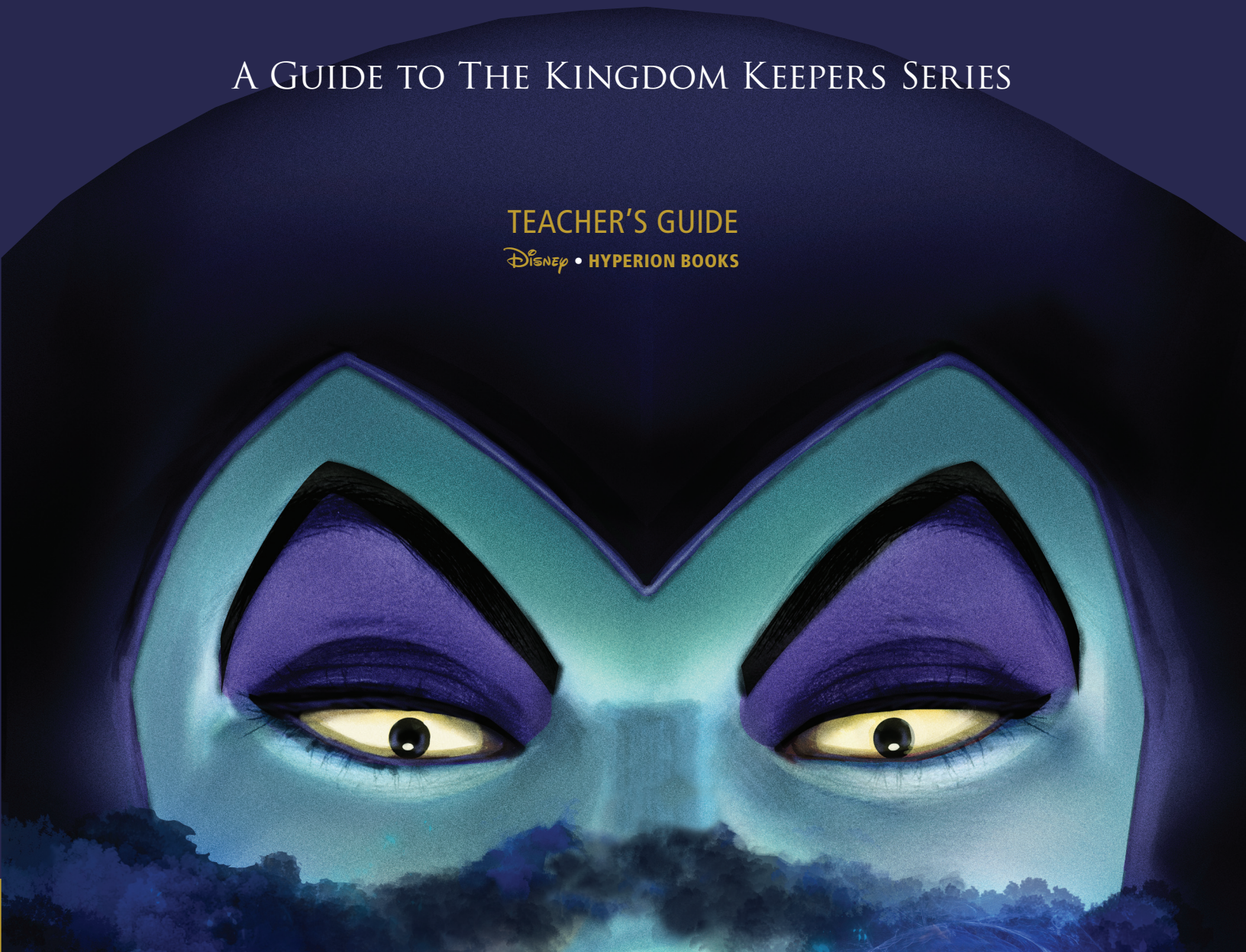


RIDLEY PEARSON  
KINGDOM  
KEEPERS

A GUIDE TO THE KINGDOM KEEPERS SERIES

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Disney • HYPERION BOOKS





# KINGDOM KEEPERS



## KINGDOM KEEPERS: DISNEY AFTER DARK

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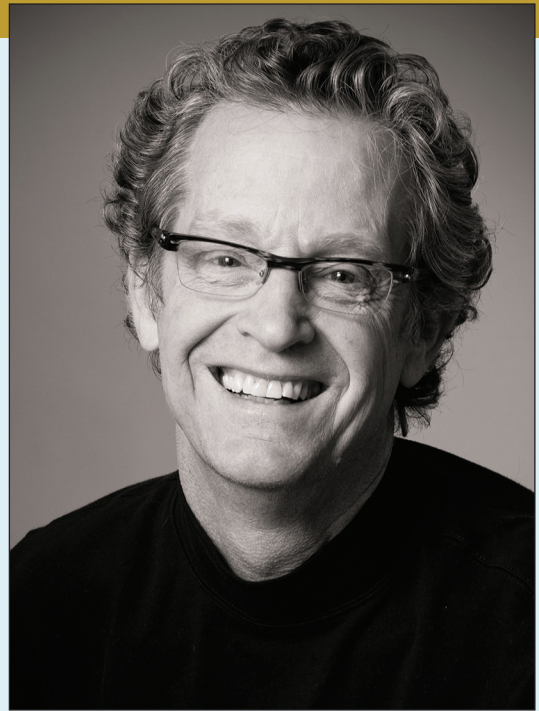
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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**RIDLEY PEARSON** is the award-winning co-author, along with Dave Barry, of *Peter and the Starcatchers*, *Peter and the Shadow Thieves*, *Peter and the Secret of Rundoon*, *Peter and the Sword of Mercy*, *Escape From the Carnivale*, *Cave of the Dark Wind*, *Blood Tide*, and *Science Fair*. In addition to *Kingdom Keepers: Disney After Dark*, *Kingdom Keepers II: Disney at Dawn*, *Kingdom Keepers III: Disney in Shadow*, *Kingdom Keepers IV: Power Play*, and *Kingdom Keepers V: Shell Game*, he is also the author of the young adult thrillers *Steel Trapp—The Challenge* and *Steel Trapp—The Academy*. He has written more than twenty best-selling crime novels including *Killer View* and *Killer Weekend*. He was the first American to be awarded the Raymond Chandler/Fulbright Fellowship in Detective Fiction at Oxford University.





# KINGDOM KEEPERS

## DISNEY AFTER DARK

### ABOUT THE BOOK

In this fantastical thriller, five young teens tapped as models for theme park “guides” find themselves pitted against Disney villains and witches that threaten both the future of Walt Disney World and the stability of the world outside its walls. Using a cutting-edge technology called DHI—which stands for both Disney Host Interactive and Daylight Hologram Imaging—Finn Whitman, an Orlando teen, and four other kids are transformed into hologram projections that guide guests through the park. The new technology turns out, however, to have unexpected effects that are both thrilling and scary. Soon Finn finds himself transported in his DHI form into the Magic Kingdom at night. Is it real? Is he dreaming? Finn’s confusion only increases when he encounters Wayne, an elderly Imagineer who tells him that the park is in grave danger. Led by the scheming witch, Maleficent, a mysterious group of characters called the Overtakers is plotting to destroy Disney’s beloved realm, and maybe more. This gripping high-tech tale will thrill every kid who has ever dreamed of sneaking into Walt Disney World after hours and wondered what happens at night, when the park is closed.

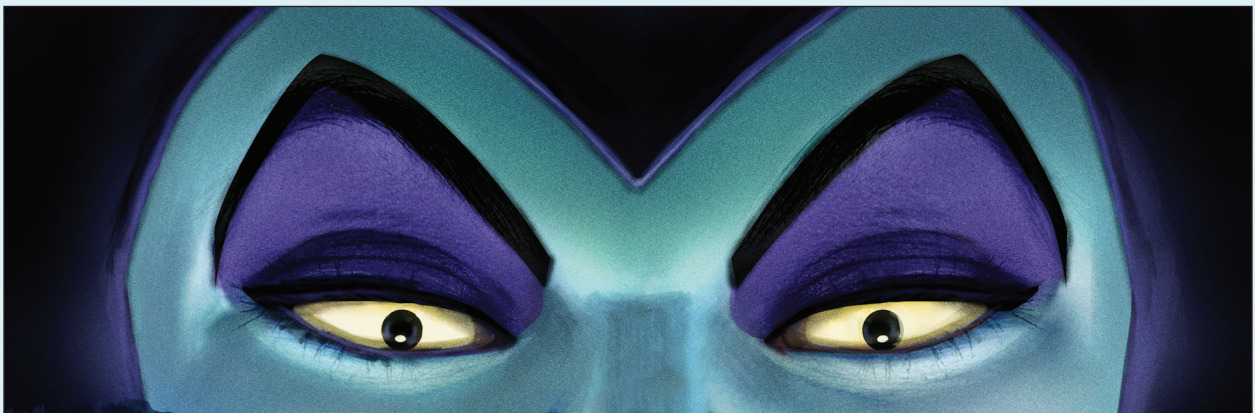


### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Discuss the character traits that allow Finn to assume the role as leader of the DHI (Disney Host Interactive) teen group. During their first meeting, Wayne recognizes Finn’s potential for leadership and shares this with him. In your opinion, what is his motivation in doing so? Do you think Finn is the leader Wayne predicts he will be? Use specific evidence from the story to support your opinion.
- 2 Describe Wayne. Is he an important character? Explain your position. Predict what role he will ultimately have in assisting the DHIs as they fight to defeat the Overtakers.
- 3 Consider the story’s setting. Does the Disney World location seem fitting? Would the story work as well if the setting were changed? Offer an alternate setting and make a case for why that location would be appropriate for the story.



- 4 In your opinion, are there any benefits to becoming a DHI? If so, what might those be? Would you be interested in a similar opportunity? Why or why not?
- 5 *The Kingdom Keepers* contains a number of characters who exhibit a variety of strengths or skills. In what ways do their personalities complement Finn's and make the DHI group complete? Who most impresses you with their strength or skill? Explain your choice.
- 6 Consider the Overtakers. Why are they so dangerous? How do they use technology against the DHIs? In what ways is this effective? In your opinion, what is their ultimate goal?
- 7 Wayne states, "Conviction is the better part of intent. Few battles are won by strength alone. Cunning and knowing your resources can help you overpower the most powerful." What do you believe he means by offering this statement? Do you agree?
- 8 Disney stories and films are ripe with evil villains. Consider Maleficent. What makes her the ideal villain? Though the novel doesn't specifically address other villainous characters working in collaboration with her, who else do you predict will be discovered as an Overtaker? In your opinion, what are some reasons the author chose to include these characters?
- 9 Wayne tells Finn and Philby, "Amazing things happen when we put our minds to it." There is a saying that seeing is believing. But believing is seeing, as well. And touching. And hearing. Connecting." In what ways is his statement indicative of the experiences of the teens who become DHIs? Can you apply Wayne's statement to your own life? If so, in what ways?
- 10 Using the phrase, "This is a story about . . ." supply five words to describe *The Kingdom Keepers*. Explain your choices.



# KINGDOM KEEPERS II DISNEY AT DAWN

## ABOUT THE BOOK

It's supposed to be a happy day at the Magic Kingdom—the return of the teenaged holographic hosts. But things go very wrong when a sudden lightning storm disrupts the celebration, and Amanda's mysterious sister, Jess, disappears. The only clue is the sighting of a wild monkey in the Magic Kingdom during the storm. The mystery deepens as Finn is contacted by Wayne, an old man he hasn't heard from in months. Wayne tells Finn that there's trouble at the Animal Kingdom: the evil Overtakers have gained control of one of the computer servers that will be used to operate Daylight Holographic Imaging there. That means that if any of the holographic hosts fall asleep, they will go into comas—permanently. Filled with action and brimming with the same meticulous detail as *The Kingdom Keepers: Disney After Dark*, this second book in the series—*Disney at Dawn*—is the result of hands-on research behind the scenes at Disney's Animal Kingdom Park. The wild rides have only just begun; and the clock is ticking. How long can the teens keep themselves awake in their quest to find their friend—and what happens if they fail?



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 In what ways has Finn become more capable and comfortable with his DHI? What are some of the ways he uses the DHI to his advantage?
- 2 Why are some of the possible reasons that Wayne hasn't been in touch with Finn for several months? What does his lack of communication imply?
- 3 Setting plays a critical role in shaping *Disney at Dawn*. What three specific places do you believe to be integral to the story? Why?
- 4 Explain the significance of the group being given the moniker “Kingdom Keepers” by the local press? Why does Willa wince when she hears kids shout, “The Kingdom Keepers rule!” What expectation does Willa and the others place on themselves? What is expected of them by the public?



- 5 In *Disney at Dawn*, the action of the Kingdom Keepers series moves to Animal Kingdom. In your opinion, is this a good choice of setting for the second installment? Why or why not?
- 6 What do the Overtakers hope to achieve by taking over the computer servers that operate Daylight Holographic Imagining in the park?
- 7 Amanda tells Finn that she and Jess are different and are called Fairlies. Given her explanation, what makes them special? Would you want to have similar gifts? Why or why not?
- 8 Explain the significance of statement “Change Rob” written in Jess’s journal and on the walls. What is Jess trying to communicate to the others?
- 9 Why do you believe Maleficent kidnaps Jess? Does she have a valid reason to fear the teen?



# KINGDOM KEEPERS III DISNEY IN SHADOW

## ABOUT THE BOOK

When Disney Imagineers installed hologram guides for the Magic Kingdom using teenage models, they had no idea the technology might backfire. But backfire it did: some nights when the kids go to sleep, they wake up in one of the Disney parks as a hologram.

With the adventures set forth in the first books now behind them, *Kingdom Keepers III: Disney In Shadow* follows the five teens—Finn, Philby, Willa, Charlene, and Maybeck—as they search for Wayne, their mentor and head Imagineer who has mysteriously gone missing. Concerned that Wayne has been abducted by the Overtakers—Disney villains, who along with other Disney characters, take over the parks when the turnstiles stop spinning, but who want desperately to steer the parks to a far darker place—the five kids pick up a major clue from a close friend, Jess, whose dreams (nightmares, really) often accurately predict the future.

The very few clues from Jess’s dream lead the kids into Disney’s Hollywood Studios and Epcot—through imaginary worlds that become real, by imaginary kids who are real. Each clue seems tied to the last, and with the stakes growing ever higher, what starts out as a puzzle ends up as a fight for their lives. Through a transparent paper box, a quest for a sword, rides on Soarin’ and Maelstrom, life-and-death encounters with giant snakes, and a devious Maleficent, the Kingdom Keepers not only begin to decipher deeper meanings to the clues, but discover new truths about themselves and their ever-growing friendships.

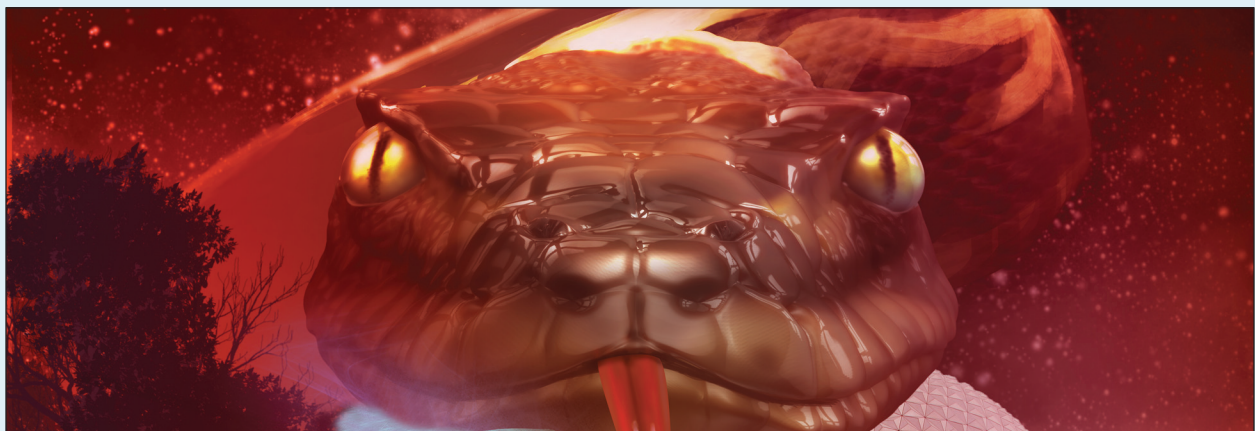


## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 As the novel opens, Maybeck is described as someone who “thought of himself as God’s answer to everything and wasn’t afraid to share that opinion.” Do you agree with this assessment of Maybeck? Do you find his confidence to be off-putting? Why or why not?
- 2 Why does Wayne’s disappearance cause Finn and the other DHIs to feel such concern for his safety? How does his role as a mentor and head Imagineer guide their actions?



- 3 Wayne tells Finn that Walt Disney designed it so that when the humans leave the Magic Kingdom, the characters come to life and get to have the Magic Kingdom for themselves. Why does Walt's design become corrupted? Do you agree with Disney's decision to empower his characters? Why or why not?
- 4 Consider Finn's ability to show the most control over his crossed-over state as a hologram. What makes him more capable of separating himself from human sensations such as touch, sound, taste, smell, and sight?
- 5 What role do Jess's dreams play in the novel *Disney in Shadow*? In what ways do the others come to rely on Jess's visions? What makes this "gift" of Jess's so challenging? Have you ever experienced a dream that seemed to predict an event to come?
- 6 The primary settings for *Disney in Shadow* are Hollywood Studios and Epcot; what specific locations within these parks did you find most unusual or interesting? Why?
- 7 As Wayne tells Finn about a pet monkey he had in his childhood, he offers, "The more freedom I gave him, the more freedom he wanted. The more freedom he *took*. . . . He couldn't give up his newly found freedom." How does Wayne's analogy relate to what is happening at the Magic Kingdom? Why are the villainous characters from the parks so dangerous? What do they ultimately hope to accomplish?
- 8 Consider the condition of the "Syndrome." What makes it so dangerous? Why must the DHIs attempt to avoid catching it at all costs?
- 9 While talking to the other DHIs, Charlene states, "We make more sense as a group." Do you agree with her assessment? Do the others? While considering yourself, do you prefer to work alone or with others? When has working as a group made your efforts easier?



# KINGDOM KEEPERS IV POWER PLAY

## ABOUT THE BOOK

For the five teens who modeled as Disney Hologram Imaging hosts, life is beginning to settle down when an intriguing video arrives to Philby's computer at school. It's a call for action: the Overtakers, a group of Disney villains, seem to be plotting to attempt a rescue of two of their leaders, both of whom the Disney Imagineers have hidden away somewhere following a violent encounter in Epcot. A staged attack by new Overtakers at Downtown Disney startles the group. One of their own, Charlene, is acting strangely of late. Has she tired of her role as a Kingdom Keeper or is there something more sinister at play? When caught sneaking into Epcot as her DHI, acting strictly against the group's rules, Finn and Philby take action. Has the impossible occurred? Have the Overtakers created their own holograms? Have they found a way to "jump" from the Virtual Maintenance Network onto the Internet, and if so, what does that mean for the safety of the parks, and the spread and reach of the Overtakers? Are they recruiting an army from outside the parks? A dark cloud in the Kingdom Keeper era is forming, and with dissent in their own ranks, it's unclear if there's any chance of escape.

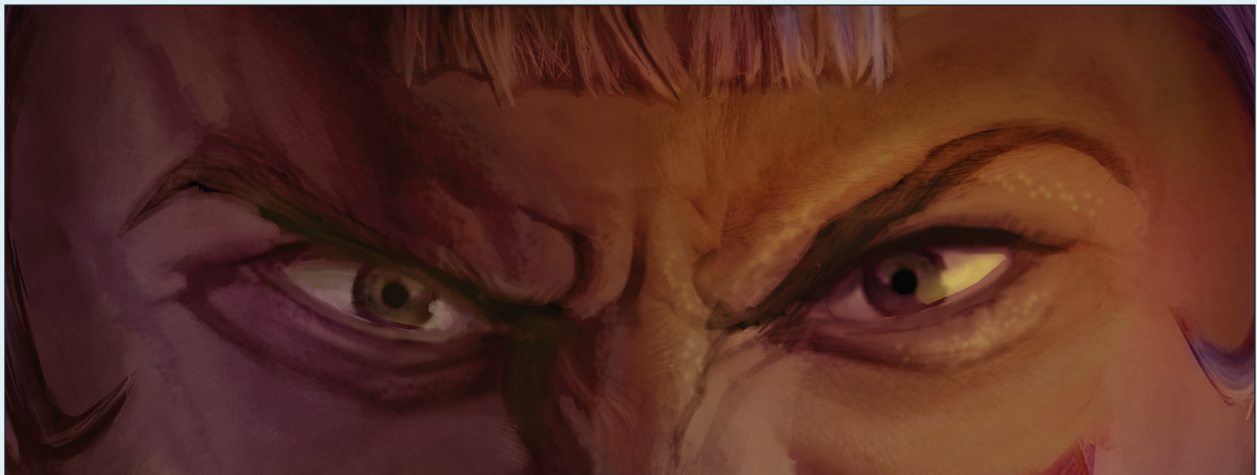


## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Consider Finn's crush on Amanda; why does this cause tension between Charlene and Amanda? How does Finn feel about Charlene? In what ways does this cause tension among the Kingdom Keepers? Have you ever found yourself in a similar situation? If so, how did the situation get resolved?
- 2 After Finn and Amanda have a near-death experience on a roller coaster simulation, they suspect Charlene caused the dangerous ride, but quickly realize that the Overtakers have rigged it. Why are the Overtakers so intent on halting their efforts in the Magic Kingdom?
- 3 The Evil Queen tells Finn, "You cannot stop us. We will do this with or without your help." What kind of "help" do you think the Overtakers hope to convince the Kingdom Keepers to give them? How might the Kingdom Keepers be persuaded to help?



- 4 Wayne tells Philby, “You understand the bigger picture. Finn is the natural leader, but you Philby, are the navigator. Steer Finn in the right direction and he will lead you well.” Why does Wayne see Philby as the “navigator” of the group? In what ways is Philby’s role so critical to the overall success of the team?
- 5 Which DHI is your favorite? Who is your least favorite? Why?
- 6 After the team decides that Charlene is under a spell by the Evil Queen, the boys decide that to break the spell, Charlene will need to be kissed. After Maybeck’s unsuccessful attempt, Philby kisses her and breaks the spell. Do you think this will cause a shift in the relationship between Philby and Charlene? Why or why not?
- 7 Why does Finn think the Evil Queen is using his classmates Greg Luowski and Sally Ringwald to assist her with her plans?
- 8 After saving her life, Ariel tells Willa, “We know who you are. We are most grateful for what you are doing. We all—any of us—will do whatever we can to keep the magic. The magic is what feeds us.” What does Ariel mean by this statement?
- 9 Though they feel committed to their work as Kingdom Keepers, what are some of the challenges the DHI teens face? Do you think their sacrifices are worthy endeavors? Why or why not?



# KINGDOM KEEPERS V SHELL GAME

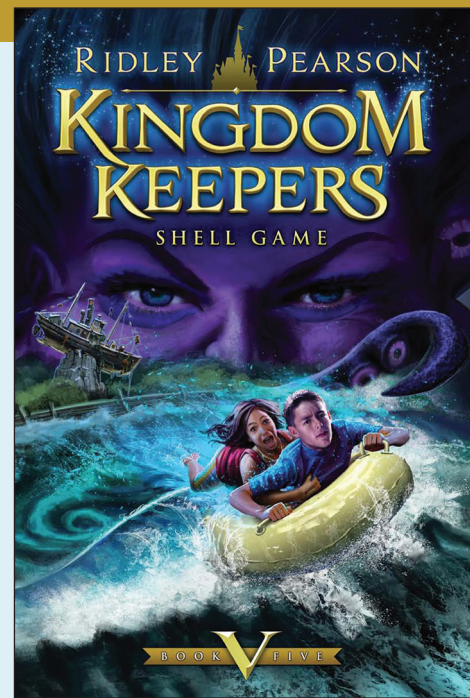
## ABOUT THE BOOK

As the Disney *Fantasy* joins the cruise fleet, a special treat is in store for guests aboard its inaugural sail from Cape Canaveral to Los Angeles: the Disney Host Interactive teenage guides will be part of the *Fantasy* crew.

Finn, Maybeck, Charlene, Willa, and Philby are to attend the cruise as celebrity guests, and to perform a ribbon cutting for the DHI server to go live. The *Fantasy* is now the most advanced cruise ship in the world.

But all is not right belowdecks. Strange things are happening. Unexplained phenomena. Only the Kingdom Keepers know the truth behind their invitation: nearly every Disney villain is represented onboard the new ship, whether on its decks or in its theaters. It's believed the Overtakers have infiltrated the cast and are "stowaways." Worse: it is believed they have stolen an important journal that once belonged to Walt Disney himself—Finn has been having dreams about this—and that some kind of mission is planned.

The ship sets sail filled with enthusiastic guests and crew, and the battle is on in new and exotic arenas: the beaches of Castaway Cay, the caves of Aruba, the locks of the Panama Canal, Costa Rica's rain forest zip-line . . . But the endgame is far more complicated and intense than anything the Kingdom Keepers had planned on. If the Overtakers get their way, a power will be unleashed that no one will have the ability to vanquish: Chernabog, dormant for years, is about to have his full powers restored.

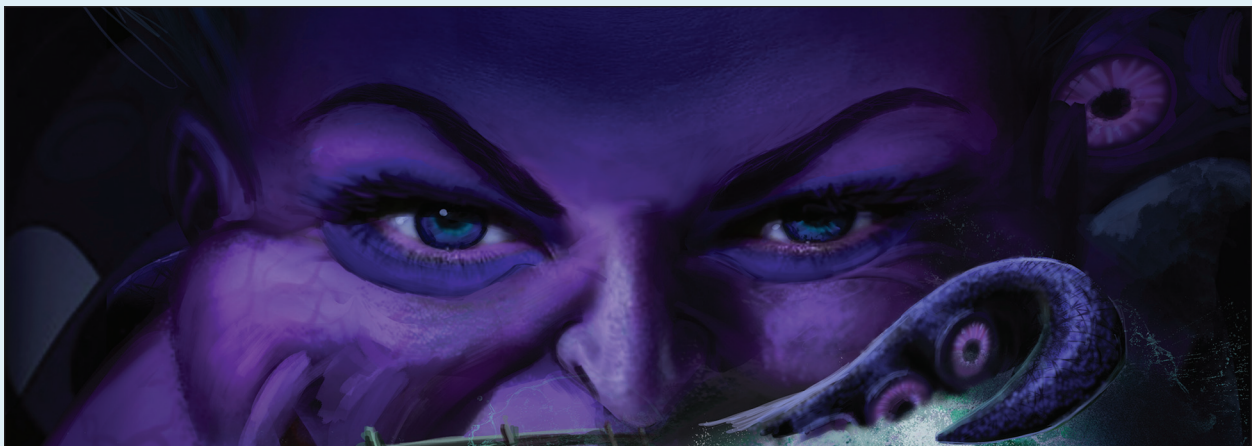


## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What are shell games? Why do you think Ridley Pearson chose such a title for this book? In your opinion, is the title fitting?
- 2 As the novel opens, Finn and Willa observe Maleficent, the Evil Queen, and Cruella De Vil searching through the catalogs in the Disney Library and Archives. Why do Finn and Willa find their presence there so threatening? What are the possible results of the Overtakers gaining insider secrets and knowledge?



- 3 Consider Finn's ability to completely remain in his DHI state; what are the dangers of him becoming solid or mortal? What are the techniques he must utilize to keep himself safe?
- 4 For the Kingdom Keepers, the experiences of dreaming and DHI are closely correlated. What makes it difficult for them to tell the difference? If you had an opportunity to serve as a Kingdom Keeper, would you be interested in doing so? Why or why not?
- 5 In your opinion, how does the shift in the novel's setting impact the story? Do you prefer the Disney parks to the cruise ship? Why or why not?
- 6 Consider Finn's relationship with his parents and his honesty about his role as a Kingdom Keeper. Why do you think his mother remains supportive while his relationship with his father becomes more strained? Have you ever had a similar experience with your parents? Were you able to overcome it? If so, how?
- 7 Why do Wayne and the Kingdom Keepers find Chernabog to be the most fearful of all of the Overtakers? Do you agree? Why or why not?
- 8 What makes finding the Overtaker stowaways aboard the Disney *Fantasy* so difficult?
- 9 Philby asks Finn and Maybeck, "Has it occurred to either of you that now that 2.0's in beta, the Imagineers will be looking for new models?" Consider Finn's reaction to this news; why does the idea of being replaced as a DHI disturb him so greatly? What problems might arise from such a transition?
- 10 Consider the dramatic ending of *Shell Game*; predict what will happen next to Finn and the rest of his Kingdom Keeper team.



# CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS: READING, WRITING, AND RESEARCHING

## EXPLORING THE KINGDOM KEEPERS SERIES THROUGH WRITING AND RESEARCH

In the Kingdom Keepers novels, the complexities of the characters, their relationships, and the situations in which they find themselves provides students opportunity to dig deep in the text as they examine and answer the following writing prompt:

- In the Kingdom Keepers novels, Finn’s story focuses on his connection and relationship with Wayne and his DHI group as they work together to guard and protect the Magic Kingdom from the Overtakers. Consider your most special friendships. What makes these individuals so important? Compose a personal journal entry where you share your thoughts, and be sure to answer the following questions:
  - Who are the individuals that mean the most to you?
  - Why are these particular relationship so special?
  - What’s the greatest sacrifice you’ve made for the people you consider your closest friends?

To culminate, ask for volunteers to share their writing with the class.

- Walt Disney World is the backdrop for Finn and the DHI group as they work to halt the efforts of Maleficent, Chernabog, and the rest of the Overtakers to conquer the Disney theme parks and possibly the world. Have students research this dynamic setting to learn more about its rich history, being sure to consider the following about the park:
  - Founder
  - Location
  - Construction challenges
  - Mission and philosophy
  - History
  - Future plans
  - Roles of cast members
  - Similarities and differences between Disneyland and Walt Disney World

After gathering information, have them create an informative presentation to be shared with their classmates.



## CONSIDERING CHARACTER: HOST A MOCK TRIAL

After reading the Kingdom Keepers series, students will brainstorm “crimes” committed by characters from the novel. Have groups of students work together to act as the prosecution or defense for the selected characters, while also acting as the jury for other groups. Students will use several sources to research for their case, including the novels and Internet resources on judicial proceedings and roles of the members of a trial. All the while, students will be writing a persuasive piece to complement their trial work. Additional teaching resources for literary mock trials can be found at [www.readwritethink.org](http://www.readwritethink.org).

## CONSIDERING CHARACTER: CREATE A BIOPOEM

The purpose of this strategy is to help students demonstrate knowledge of a character in the Kingdom Keepers series by following written prompts to complete a poem about the individual. Students can be given the prompts to follow on a worksheet, or alternatively, students may create an original slideshow using PowerPoint or Movie Maker.

### BIOPOEM

*Line 1:* First name \_\_\_\_\_

*Line 2:* Three traits that describe the character \_\_\_\_\_

*Line 3:* Relative of \_\_\_\_\_

*Line 4:* Lover of \_\_\_\_\_ (three things)

*Line 5:* Who feels \_\_\_\_\_ (three things)

*Line 6:* Who needs \_\_\_\_\_ (three things)

*Line 7:* Who fears \_\_\_\_\_ (three things)

*Line 8:* Who gives \_\_\_\_\_ (three things)

*Line 9:* Who would like to see \_\_\_\_\_ (three things)

*Line 10:* Resident of \_\_\_\_\_

*Line 11:* Last name \_\_\_\_\_

## CREATE ORIGINAL KINGDOM KEEPERS–INSPIRED ART

Allow students to create one of the following as a means of exploring the novel.

- Music is often used to connect people to each other and the world at large. Select a favorite character from the Kingdom Keepers series and create a CD with an original playlist that represents of the experiences that character undergoes throughout the novels. Create original art for the jewel case and on the interior, and after including appropriate artist information, offer an explanation for the selection of each song.
- Create a “Wanted” poster detailing the individual you find most deserving of punishment for his/her transgressions from a Kingdom Keepers novel. The poster should include the following features:
  - Original “mug shot” (this can be original art or computer-generated as long as the image accurately portrays the character’s description in the novel).
  - Detailed list of offenses
  - Reward information, if applicable
- One of Pearson’s greatest strengths as a writer is his ability to offer richly descriptive scenes. In small groups, have students select a favorite scene from a Kingdom Keepers novel and create either a digitally or manually illustrated graphic novel for that scene. Using a digital comic strip creator (<http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/Comix> or <http://infinitecomic.com>, for example), have students begin by using the strips to create storyboards for their scene. Have students select original art, images, and graphics. Alternatively, students could assume the roles of two of the characters with each one’s personality and voice and have them interact with each other by creating an extension of a scene from one of the novels. As part of the evaluation component, consider panel size and number of panels, transitions and layouts, artwork, writing, and lettering.
- Previews of coming attractions in the movie industry are known as trailers. Design an original book trailer for the Kingdom Keepers series or one of the novels in the series. Begin by creating a storyboard, detailing which scenes you intend to incorporate in your trailer. Use a moviemaker program such as [www.animoto.com](http://www.animoto.com). Post your finished trailers to [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com).





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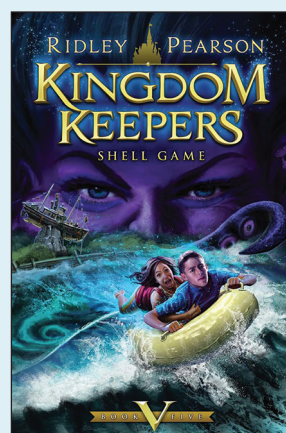
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This guide was created by Rose Brock, a teacher, school librarian, and doctoral candidate at Texas Woman's University, specializing in children's and young adult literature.

Many more Teacher's Guides can be found on the Disney • Hyperion Web site at [www.disneyhyperion.com](http://www.disneyhyperion.com).



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