

Temora and the Dreamers



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RECOMMENDED FOR: Upper Primary

SYNOPSIS

Temora Tempest used to think she was just a regular girl, but after making a wish on her twelfth birthday, she learns the truth: She's one of the wordspinners from the fantastical Lunary World, tasked with bringing stories and dreams to the children of the other realm. But with the Wordsnatcher on the loose, the stories of the wordspinners are at risk. It's up to Temora and her group of friends to stop him and protect the realm from the Wordsnatcher's horrible machine.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kate Gordon grew up in a very bookish house, in a small town by the sea in Tasmania. After studying performing arts and realising she was a terrible actor, Kate decided to become a librarian. She never stopped writing and, in 2009, she applied for and won a Varuna fellowship, which led to all sorts of lovely writer things happening. Kate's first book, *Three Things About Daisy Blue*, was published in 2010. Her most recent publications are the middle-grade novels in the Direleaf Hall series, and *Aster's Good, Right Things*, which won the CBCA Book of the Year for Younger Readers.

THEMES

- Origins
- Forgiveness and change
- Perfection
- Humanity
- Autonomy
- Freedom
- Family

STUDY NOTES

BEFORE READING

- Show the cover to the class and ask the students what they think the book might be about.
- Read the back cover blurb. Does this give them more of an idea of what the book could be about?

AFTER READING

- Ask students how they feel about Temora in this latest instalment. How has she changed from the first book in the series to this one?
- How has the world changed from the first book to the second book? Is it better or worse?

- Does Temora have new relationships in this book? How have her friendships developed?
- What are some important ways in which Temora has learned about herself or the world around her?
- The villain of this book is different from the first in the series. Who is the new villain? Is there more than one? What are the reasons behind their villainy?
- What are Temora's powers? How did she get them? Does anyone else have powers and are they like Temora's or different?
- There are a lot of family themes and issues in the book. Choose one family relationship and try to describe it.
- If you could draw an alternative cover of *Temora and the Dreamers*, what would it look like?
- What do you think might happen in the next book in the series? Why? Did you pick up on any foreshadowing?

Themes

Origins

- There are several villains in the Temora books so far—Rider Marr, Temora's safekeeper 'The Shadowy Woman', Viktor Lapointe, and so on. What makes a villain? What is it about these characters that makes them villainous?
- Is there a point in these villain characters' backstories and origins that contribute to them being villains? How did they become villains? What motivated them?
- Write a list of the characteristics of a good villain. Why did you pick those characteristics?
- Thinking about the origins of these villains and the origins of characters like Temora, Emmeline, and Lavenza—what is the difference between the characters that became villains and the characters that became heroes? Was it a matter of choices, of personalities, or of character qualities?

Forgiveness and Change

- The question of forgiveness arises in Temora's story. Pick a character from the book who has hurt another, whether on purpose or by accident. Do they deserve to be forgiven? Why or why not?
- Can people change? What are some things that show a person's ability to change? How important is it that people want to change?
- What are some reasons you might not forgive someone? For example, should Temora forgive her safekeeper? Why or why not?

Perfection

- Cambridge Dictionary defines perfection as 'the state of being complete and perfect in every way' and Miriam-Webster describes it as 'flawlessness'. Reflecting on these definitions consider what does being perfect mean to you?
- Would it be hard to be perfect? What are some of the ways in which being perfect would be stressful or hard?
- Is it more important to be perfect or to be kind? Are there other qualities or traits that are more important than being perfect? In what ways are other character traits more beneficial?
- Do you ever feel the need to be perfect? What things can you do to help yourself ease that pressure like Temora needed to learn to do?

Humanity

- Look up 'humanity' in the dictionary and discuss the meaning with a classmate. What words are used to describe being human? What qualities make us human?
- Think about what words you'd use to describe animals. What qualities do animals have? What then are the differences between humans and animals? What separates humans from other creatures?
- Does being human give us any more obligations or responsibilities?

Autonomy

- Think about the following statement that describes what autonomy is then answer the questions that follow: 'As a person you have selfwill, independence, and control over your own body and mind. You can choose what you want to say, you can make your own decisions, you are not forced to do anything, you can think for yourself. You have what we call autonomy.'
 - What would it mean to not have autonomy? What would that feel like?
 - Think about the wordless in the book—do they have autonomy? Is this a good or bad thing?
 - What about the dreamers? Do they have autonomy?
- Think about autonomy and how it might apply to your own life and interactions. Consider the term 'boundaries' and

the phrase 'Just because someone else wants you to do something does not mean you have to do it.' Discuss as a class if it's okay to say 'no' to something, what boundaries mean to you, and how things like 'peer pressure' might affect you.

- Consider what responsibilities come with having your own autonomy and how that relates to consequences for your actions. The freedom to make your own choices comes with the responsibility of what those choices mean. How does this relate to characters like Rider Marr, Nyx, Temora, Lavenza and Temora's safekeeper? Choose one and explore their actions and consequences.

Freedom

- The Literati are an oppressive government. Think through their rules and governance and how it differs from our government. What are the differences? In what ways do they restrict freedoms?
- Think through the term 'freedom'. What does real freedom mean?
- Are there any ways in which we need to consider freedom versus law? How do our laws keep us safe? Why is the Literati oppressive but our government not?
- Many refugees migrate because of freedom and opportunities. What are some ways in which our government supports rights and freedoms that might not be present in an oppressive system?

Family

- There are a few different types of family connections in this book. What are the differences between biological families, adoptive families and found families? How would you define each of these family types?
- How is Temora's relationship with her safekeeper not the same as a traditional adoptive mother? In what ways would their relationship have changed if Temora's adoptive mother was a real person and not a false narrative construction?
- Who is Temora's found family? How did she create her found family?
- Reflect on Temora finding out who her biological family is and how that helps her work through her own feelings. What are some of the reasons this might be helpful after what she's been through? Some elements to consider are Temora's trauma, her powers and her questions about her identity and place in the world.
- What might it mean for Lavenza to reconnect with her brother and sister after so many years missing them? Do you think Ava and Elwin were right to hide away, or not? Is Lavenza in the right to be upset? Or are both points of view valid? Explain your thoughts and conclusions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Draw a picture of one of the characters in the book.
- Draw one of the creatures in the book.
- Draw a picture of 'The Tower' if it was going to reflect your personality.
- Design your own character or creature for the book and write down a list of their personality traits.
- If you could pick one book to 'fall into', what would it be? Why did you choose that book? If you could introduce one magical creature to Writungeard, from a book you love, what would it be and why? Research a foreign or ancient language. Create a 'word spell' using that language for your world.
 - Using those reasons, create your own world for someone to 'fall into' and your own creatures to inhabit it. What is your world like? Why would it be fun to fall into? What is interesting about your creatures? You can use one of the creations from the previous activity here if you'd like.
 - If you would like to take it further, and you have the time, you can write your own story about your world.