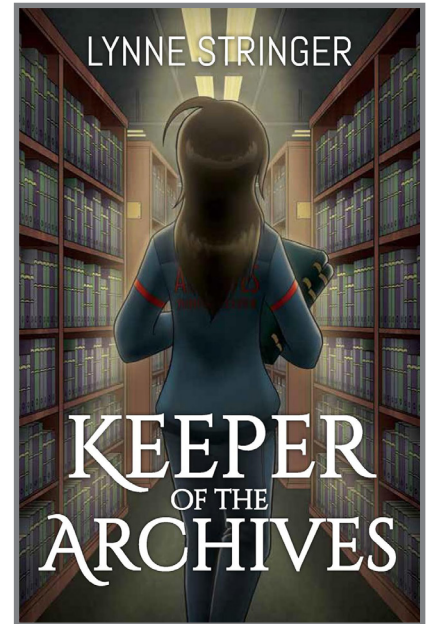


# Keeper of the Archives

AUTHOR

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**RECOMMENDED FOR:** Lower to Mid Secondary  
(Violence, Drug and Alcohol References, Suicide References)

## SYNOPSIS

After their home in Sendirian City burns to cinders, Eden Fittell gets a job working in the government's Archives to try and support her family and keep her alcoholic father away.

But, the city is being stalked by crime boss Kore Luddan, who is using a freak known only as, Izrod, to kidnap people off the street. And he usually snatches government employees.

Is Eden safe?

What is Kore planning?

Will it mean the end of Sendirian City?

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lynne Stringer has been passionate about writing all her life, beginning with short stories in her primary school days. She began writing professionally as a journalist and was the editor of a small newspaper (later magazine) for seven years, before turning her hand to screenplay writing and novels.

Lynne is the author of the Verindon Trilogy, a young adult science fiction romance series released through Wombat Books, and *Once Confronted*, a new adult contemporary drama. Lynne also wrote *The Verindon Alliance*, a prequel to her trilogy, in 2020. *The Verindon Conspiracy*, released in 2022, is a sequel to her trilogy. *Keeper of the Archives* will be her seventh novel.

## THEMES

- Masking
- Family Dysfunction
- Alcoholism
- Domestic Abuse
- Poverty
- Socioeconomic status

**STUDY NOTES****THEMES****Masking**

- Because of her family life, Eden has learnt to hide her true self behind a mask of emptiness. What negative effects does it have on her life and relationships?
- As a result of undergoing Kore's (Hensen's) treatment, Eden is able to see who everyone really is. What difficulties does this create for her? What benefits does she experience?
- How common do you think masking is in society today? Is there anyone in your life who you know engages in it? What effect does it have on your life and their life?
- Would you prefer to have the ability to mask your true self, or would you prefer the ability to see behind everyone's masks? Explain your answer.

**Family Dysfunction**

- Both Eden and Leon come from dysfunctional families. Eden's is her biological family; Leon's is the one he became part of when Kore took him in. What are the differences between the two family groups? What are the similarities?
- While Kore's 'family' is considered a gang by the Sendirian City locals, he doesn't see it that way. He indeed believes he has created a family. What elements do you think lead Kore to consider them a family?
- Both Eden and Leon start to find an alternative family at the Underground. Do you think this is a healthier environment for them? In what ways is it an improvement on both Eden and Leon's previous family groups? In what ways is it the same?

**Alcoholism**

- James Fittell, Eden's father, blames his alcoholism on what Dale Hensen did in ruining his career. Do you think this did contribute in some way, or do you think that there were other contributing factors? If so, what were they?
- Do you think Eden's behaviour towards her father was appropriate at the different stages in the novel? Do you think she could have improved or altered the situation by doing things differently? If so, what should she have changed?
- At the end of the novel, Elena Gregor has extended a job offer to James Fittell if he agrees to stay in a sobriety program. Eden is convinced that it will fail. Do you think she's correct? Do you think her attitude towards her father should be different at this point?
- Eden wonders if she still loves her father and if she can love him more than she hates him. Explain what you think she means by this.

**Domestic Abuse**

- Eden is angry at her mother because she doesn't protect Eden and her siblings from their drunken father. Do you believe she is justified in this? Do you believe her mother could have taken additional steps to protect the children from their father? If so, what are they?
- Sendirian City has little support in place for poor families and no services to help with situations like alcoholism and domestic abuse. In our society, there are often services of this kind available, but there are still families who don't seek help. Why do you think that is? What can be done to help families who may be reluctant to reach out?
- The abuse she has suffered caused Eden to retreat into herself and show no emotion. How do you think her new relationship with Leon might help overcome this? Or do you believe it's simply part of her character? Is it something that she should try and change? Why or why not?
- Leon's huge and frightening presence eventually makes James Fittell stay away. Do you think it would have been better for Eden to learn to stand up to her father directly? Why or why not?

**Poverty**

- While some government officials appeared concerned about the number of fires amongst the units housing the poor, others felt that it wasn't an issue worth focusing on. What steps do you think Sendirian City could put in place to make sure that appropriate housing is available in all sectors?
- Sasha had a program in place to help the poor and had developed steps to care for those who had been displaced by the fires. When the government sector takes over those plans, she is sceptical. Do you think she should be more optimistic? What do you think she could do to ensure the government sector keeps its promise to do more to help the poor?

### Socioeconomic Status

- In Sendirian City, there is a clear line drawn between the haves and the have-nots, to such an extent that they live in different sectors. List the most distinct differences between the rich sector, the middle-class sector and the poor sector. Use the map at the front of the novel as a guide.
- Many of the wealthy in Sendirian City would not believe there is a division between the wealthy and the poor, as it's not impossible for people from the poor sector to be employed in other sectors. But, even though Eden was employed by the government, she was sure it was only because of a number of mitigating circumstances. List them.
- Do you know of other societies that have significant division between different socioeconomic groups? What do you think causes this kind of division? How do you think it can be overcome? Do you think it should be overcome or do you think it has a place? Why or why not?

### GENRE

- Science fiction is often a genre of much discussion. It sits within the umbrella of 'speculative fiction' which includes the fantasy genre. There is a lot to unpack in science fiction, including subgenres and expectations. But, for the sake of this activity, let's define science fiction with three considerations:
    - An exploration of identity and change, or of humanity's identity and capacity for change.
    - A query of how new technologies impact our society, whether that be a positively or negative impact.
    - A consideration of how our actions in the present may shape life for future generations.
- In what way does this novel fit with the three considerations of science fiction?
- What other elements of the genre does *Keeper of the Archives* use to explore its themes? ie. a dystopian past or future.
  - How does science function within *Keeper of the Archives*? Is technology and science a key concept or is its use relegated to enabling plot exploration?
  - Mark Juddery says in *The True Fiction of Sally Marshal* that science fiction is the '... use of a surreal story to make comment upon the real world.' Considering the use of the term 'surreal' what about *Keeper of the Archives*, functions as surreal and how does it work to help the plot explore its themes?
- Come up with a few themes that you want to explore within the framework of a science fiction narrative. Then, design a story that uses the flexibility, science fiction allows, to interrogate those themes. If identity and the question of nature versus nurture is on your mind, a story that utilises both cloning technology and impact of generational choices would be something that could assist that exploration.