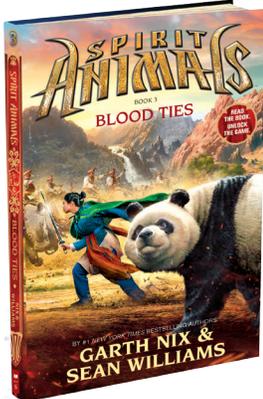


SPIRIT ANIMALS

CCSS
READY!

Text-Based Discussion Guide with Common Core Correlations

Spirit Animals: Book 3: *Blood Ties* by Garth Nix & Sean Williams



In the world of Erdas, Conor, Abeke, Meilin, and Rollan continue to come face-to-face with good and evil as they begin another quest to find the talismans of the Great Beasts. This time, Meilin, who prides herself on being a good fighter, abandons the group to go to Zhong and join her father in battle. He reminds her of her duty to the Greencloaks, and she returns just in time to join the group as they are finding their way to the Lake of the Elephant. There are some wrong turns, and plenty of surprises, before they win their first major battle against the Devourer and leave with the talisman they were sent to retrieve. But the four gain a few other things in their quest—mainly forgiveness and the power of teamwork.

Readers can join the quest and get their own spirit animal at scholastic.com/spiritanimals.

Questions for Discussion

1. Erdas needs heroes to defeat the Devourer, and it will take heroes to get the talismans of the Great Beasts. Why does Conor question whether he is cut out to be a hero?
2. Describe Tarik through Conor's eyes. Why does he think that Tarik is already a hero? What are Rollan's and Abeke's opinions of Tarik? Rollan questions whether Tarik has "street smarts." When does Rollan's view of Tarik begin to change?
3. Conor feels guilty about betraying the group. Tarik and Abeke are trying to forgive him, but Rollan just doesn't trust Conor. What does Conor need to do to gain Rollan's trust? At what point does their relationship begin to change? What do they all learn about trust and friendship by the end of the novel?
4. Meilin vows to reach Zhong and to fight the Devourer alongside her father. How does the Bamboo Maze hinder her journey? Explain how Meilin learns patience while in the Bamboo Maze. Meilin meets Xue, who assures her that Zhong has fallen. What makes Meilin realize that Xue is one of the marked? Meilin wants Xue to come with her, but the old woman has other plans. What is it about Xue that demands respect? At the end of the novel, Xue and Meilin meet again. Why is it so important to Meilin that Xue respect her?
5. Meilin is excited to find her father alive. What does General Teng tell his daughter about her duty? Why is she disappointed that he didn't welcome her into his army? Explain what he means when he says, "My hope lies with you, with them" (p. 74).
6. The Greencloaks get a new message: "Go to Kho Kensit, an outlying region of Zhong. Beware enemy holds city." The group is in search of the talisman of Dinesh the Elephant, one of the Great Beasts. Explain Tarik's warning that everyone but Rollan should call their spirit animals only in an emergency. Why is Rollan excluded from Tarik's order? How might Essix, Rollan's spirit animal, help in ways the others can't?
7. How does Tarik know Lishay? She is determined that the Conquerors will pay for killing her brother, Hanzen. Why is she concerned that Meilin isn't with the group? Discuss why she feels they need Jhi when they face the Conquerors?
8. Rollan takes charge of the group. How does Abeke doubt Rollan's ideas? How does Tarik believe that Rollan knows what he is doing? Rollan senses that Lishay is withholding information they need to accomplish their quest. Debate whether he is right. How does Essix contribute to Rollan's newly developed perceptions?

9. Explain what Tarik means when he says to Lishay, "I'm becoming paranoid in my age. War has a way of playing on our anxieties" (p. 56). Who does he think is following them?
10. Jodoboda, the leader of the Tergesh, or the Rhino Riders, tells the Greencloaks that they must complete a task before he will allow them passage to the Lake of the Elephant. He requires that they go into the deep swamp and bring back four banana gourds—one for each of the fallen. Trace their quest to complete the task. Who is the hero of the day?
11. How does Meilin explain her return? Discuss how the group receives her. Why is Rollan especially glad to see Meilin? Discuss her answer when Conor asked her why she returned. How must the four commit to teamwork if they are going to succeed in acquiring the Slate Elephant, the talisman of Dinesh?
12. Xue says that she doesn't have visions, but hope. Explain her belief that hope is powerful. How does the power of hope drive the Greencloaks' journey to the Lake of the Elephant? Debate whether hope contributes to winning their first battle against the Devourer? What does Lishay gain from the battle?
13. Discuss what Rollan learns about honesty when he returns the talisman that he finds. Why is it important that Dinesh present the talisman to him? Explain what Tarik means when he says, "Truly Rollan, there's more Greencloak in you than you acknowledge" (p. 192).
14. The end of the novel foreshadows the next quest. Predict whether there will be another betrayal in the group.

USE THIS GUIDE TO TEACH TO THE FOLLOWING COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

Reading Literature

Key Ideas and Details

- RL. 4-7.1 – Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- RL. 4-7.2 – Determine a theme of a story from details in the text.
- RL. 4-7.3 – Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story, drawing on specific details in the text.

Reading Literature

Craft & Structure

- RL. 4-7.4 – Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions.

Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration

- SL. 4-7.1 – Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing one's own clearly.
- SL. 4-7.3 – Identify the reasons and evidence a speaker provides to support particular points.

Photo Credit: Scott Westerfeld



Garth Nix is the bestselling author of many award-winning books, including *The Abhorsen Trilogy*, *The Seventh Tower* series, *The Keys to the Kingdom* series, and *The Troubletwisters* series (with Sean Williams). Garth lives in Sydney, Australia with his family and two budgerigars, who entertain many visiting parrots, but pretend not to be home when the neighbor's cats come by.

Sean Williams is the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *Twinmaker* and co-author with Garth Nix of the *Troubletwisters* series. He lives in Adelaide, South Australia with his wife, two stepsons, and a charming pair of green tree frogs on loan from globetrotting relatives.

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