

Teaching & Discussion Guide

Wolves of the Beyond By Kathryn Lasky

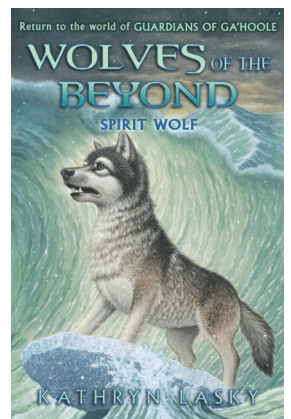
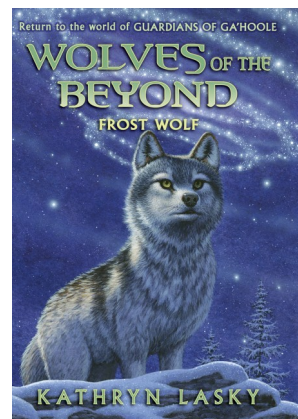
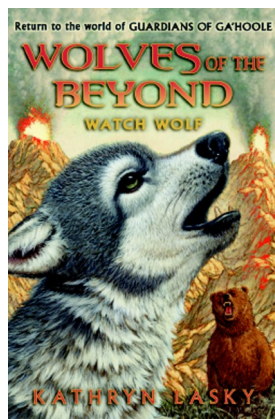
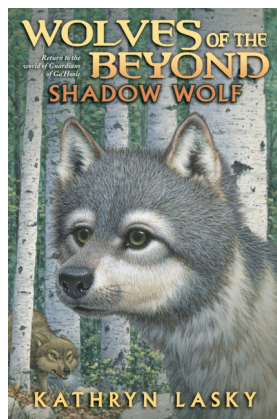
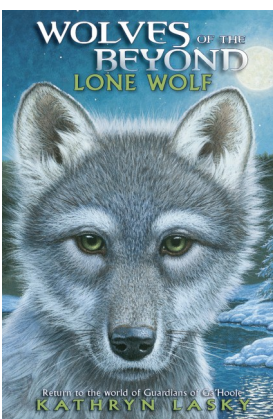
About Wolves of the Beyond

Kathryn Lasky, creator of the empire of owls in the Guardians of Ga’Hoole series, explores a world of wolves in her latest series, *Wolves of the Beyond*. A meticulous researcher, Kathryn stays true to the behavior of these beautiful animals while creating an imaginative and engrossing fantasy world around them. She invites readers to join the pack.

In *Wolves of the Beyond*, Lasky creates a different world from that of the owls, and in particular a different kind of society. Intrigued by the elaborate social behavior of wolves, Lasky remarks, “Wolves have a very complex way of interacting. There is real politics in the packs. The hierarchies of wolf groups are pretty elaborate, but it works—works for hunting, for their family life, and for their territorial boundaries. I wanted to build on this and make it a key element of the books. So to me, the wolves as a society, a civilization, offered even more opportunities than the owls. And there is so much research available on wolves, which I was able to use and re-imagine to create a rich and authentic world.”

About this Guide

This guide is meant to extend the use of the series in classrooms while enhancing individual readers’ enjoyment. Within the guide, students will find engaging activities and topics for discussion that cover individual titles as well as the series as a whole. Activities are designed to complement language arts (reading comprehension, vocabulary, creative writing, literature, theater), art, and social studies curricula, while encouraging cooperative learning and research.



Summary of the Books

Book 1 – *Lone Wolf*

In the harsh wilderness beyond the owl world of Ga’Hoole, a wolf mother hides in fear. Her newborn pup, otherwise healthy, has a twisted paw. The mother knows the rigid rules of her kind. The pack cannot have weakness. Her pup must be condemned a *malcadh*, a cursed one, and left on an icy riverbank to die.

But alone in the forest, the pup, Faolan, does the unthinkable. With the help of a grizzly bear foster mother, Thunderheart, Faolan survives. *Lone Wolf* is Faolan’s story, the story of a courageous young wolf pup who rises up to change forever the Wolves of the Beyond.

Book 2 – *Shadow Wolf*

Beyond the owl world of Ga’Hoole, a wolf named Faolan has made it back to his clan. He was born with a twisted paw and cast out as a pup, abandoned in the forest to die. But with the help of a grizzly bear who raised him as her own, Faolan survived.

Now he’s a gnaw wolf, the lowest-ranking pack member. His twisted paw marks him as an outsider, destined to eat last, sleep far from the warm wolf den, and feel always alone. And the hardships are just beginning. A wolf pup is murdered and Faolan is framed for the crime. Faolan’s survival is once again on the line. He must hunt the true culprit . . . while his own pack hunts him.

Book 3 – *Watch Wolf*

Far from the owls of Ga’Hoole, a war is brewing. A bear cub has been snatched by a wolf — an unthinkable betrayal of the peace that has long existed between the wolves and grizzly bears of the Beyond. The bears are massing, roaring for revenge. The wolves claim to be innocent, but they must either fight back or face total annihilation.

For Faolan, now a member of the prestigious wolves of the Watch at the Ring of Sacred Volcanoes, the threat of war starts a terrible race. Somewhere in the honorable wolf clans hides a traitor, and Faolan must stop him and rescue the lost bear cub before it’s too late. If he fails, Faolan will lose everything . . . and the wolves of the Beyond will be destroyed forever.

Book 4 – *Frost Wolf*

The winds have shifted in the Beyond. It’s summer, and that should mean warmth, fish, and meat, but blizzards rake the land, and the caribou and moose that the wolves hunt have disappeared almost completely. Famine has arrived in the Beyond, and the strict order among the wolf clans is starting to break down.

Worse, there’s one wolf thriving on the chaos. He wears a stolen owl battle mask and calls himself the Prophet. There are horrible rumors that instead of helping the wolves survive, he’s leading hundreds of them to their deaths. The elite Wolves of the Watch send young Faolan and his friend Edme on a desperate mission to bring down the Prophet. But how can the two wolves stop an enemy they can’t even find?

Book 5 – *Spirit Wolf*

The Beyond has broken. A cataclysmic earthquake has shattered the land and flattened even the Ring of Sacred Volcanoes. Most of the wolf clans are gone, lost in the giant tremor. What the survivors need now is a leader – a wolf to show them the way to a better place.

Young Faolan’s destiny has arrived. He’s been a marked wolf since birth, with a strange, splayed paw and an uncanny connection to the bears. There’s something about Faolan that inspires certain wolves . . . and leaves others deeply suspicious. Now, with survival at stake, the remaining wolves must make a choice. Will they trust the silver outsider to lead them to safety? Or will the wolves of the Beyond disappear forever?

Classroom Activities and Discussion Questions

1. The world of the wolves of the Beyond is shown not only through descriptive settings, but also through the wolves' actions, thoughts, behaviors, language, and even names. Kathryn Lasky chose to create a unique new language for the wolves, yet the meanings of these invented words can be understood through context.

We asked Kathryn about her sources for the wolves' language.

Q. What is the origin of the names of the wolves?

A. The names are Scottish and Celtic clans, inspired by *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare. I also went to 'name your baby' websites and found names that I liked.

Q. What about the wolf language and vocabulary? Are words invented, or are they based on other languages?

A. The language is made up. I used a Celtic and a Gaelic dictionary and found words that looked engaging. I would take a piece of this word and a piece of another and put them together in a way that I thought was fun to read. I then made up their meanings.

Q. Did you find yourself using any of the words in your daily life?

A. The only one I seem to use is *cag mag* when I'm thinking I'm going 'bananas'.

Kathryn Lasky thought it would be fun for your students to create their own vocabulary based on Celtic words. You can direct your students to the following website for several different Celtic dictionaries:

www.alphadictionary.com/directory/Languages/Celtic/Scottish/

Using three-by-five-inch lined index cards, students can create an extensive Wolves of the Beyond glossary. As they read the books, students should write each wolf word they encounter on the unlined side of an index card. On the lined side, students should:

Cite the page on which the word is introduced

Write the definition of the word

Identify the word's part of speech

Use the word in a sentence

The cards should be kept in alphabetical order for easy reference. When students have read all of the books in the series, they will have amassed a comprehensive glossary of the wolves' language.

2. Expand the glossary to include a running record of all the wolves and animals with which Faolan comes in contact. The entries should include:

Type of animal

Clan

Pack (if known)

Significance of the character and how he or she relates to Faolan.

These character reference cards should be kept together at the end of the glossary. The two sets of cards can be distinguished with a line of color at the top of each card.

3. The wolves of the Beyond have strong traditions, beliefs, and ethics that guide their behavioral codes and systems of government.

We see that even after the Beyond is destroyed in Book 5, *Spirit Wolf*, the concept of the Great Chain, for example, will serve Faolan and his group in a new way as he leads them west to an unknown land.

[Book 1, Pages 119-120] Faolan speaks to Mhairie and Dearlea about his use of the words “Great Chain”: ““Everything has changed in the Beyond...The land has been disrupted and so has the order. We have been abandoned, so to speak... It is time for a new order. A new chain of being... And so let us begin now.””

Have your students record these aspects of wolf society in their notebooks. When they’ve read several of the books in the series, have them gather the details and write an encyclopedia entry for the Beyond, citing the books as primary references.

4. The Wolves of the Beyond series portrays wolves as heroes. This is quite different from the way wolves are depicted in the folklore and fairy tales (recall Little Red Riding Hood and The Three Little Pigs) we learned as young children. The wolves of the Beyond are also different from the werewolves that play a role in many contemporary novels and movies. Ask students to consider how the wolves of the Beyond compare to other stories they know about wolves. What lessons can we learn from the wolves of the Beyond?

5. Faolan’s “curse” is that he was born with a splayed paw that has a swirled design on the pad. When other wolves in the clans see the spiral image, they are intimidated by it, as if it has some mystical power. Have your students speculate as to the meaning of this design.

Artists often take a popular image or scene and re-style it based on their own concepts. Often a group of artists will re-imagine the same source, then display their unique interpretations together. Faolan’s spiral lends itself to countless artistic interpretations. Have your students draw their own version of the splayed paw for display in the classroom or hallway.

6. Starting in Book 2 and continuing throughout the series, changes in the weather confound the wolves of the Beyond.

[Book 2, page 103] The Sark says to Faolan: ““Something is *cag mag* with the weather these days. The seasons. I’ve been trying to figure it out.””

[Book 3, page 14] “A thin coat of ice skimmed the shallow water of the marsh. ... ‘What in the world is going on?’ Edme said. . . Edme’s teeth were chattering as she stepped close to Faolan. ‘It’s almost the summer moons, the Moon of the Flies. It makes no sense for it to be this cold!’”

Throughout books 2 and 3, we find several references to changes in the weather: ice in the spring, unusual cold in the summer, snow falling when there should be flies from the heat. As your students read the books, have them document as many weather-related references as they can. As in the example above, students should note the book and page number where the weather is mentioned. Have students contemplate what these changes mean and what they could possibly indicate before moving on to book 4.

7. The lives of the wolves revolve around the cycles of the moons. For example, the moons indicate when the caribou will come and when to expect the start of winter. Through book 5, Kathryn Lasky identifies eleven of the moon cycles. Using the chart below, have your students keep track of these cycles and align them with the corresponding months of our own calendar.

Cycles of the Moon

Moon	Season	Characteristic	Calendar Month

[Note to the teacher: Below are the eleven moons mentioned in the books.]

- Caribou
- Red leaf
- First Snow (First hunger)
- Frost Stars (Second hunger)
- Cracking Ice
- Singing Grass
- Shedding Antlers
- New Antlers
- Flies
- Mossflowers
- Salmon

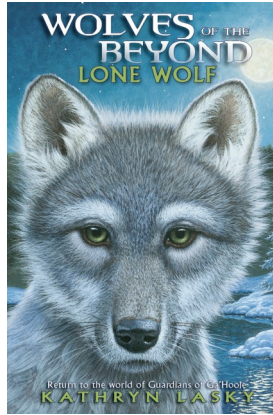
8. During Faolan’s first *raghnaid* (wolf council) as a gnaw wolf, the chieftain Duncan MacDowell notices Faolan’s subtle reaction to a crackling fire and suspects Faolan has fire sight.

[Book 2, page 41] “*What has this lad seen in the flames?* the chieftain wondered. *Does he see that it is about to snow before the snow moons? ... Is the time of the Long Cold returning?*”

[Book 2, page 203] After performing poorly during the *gaddernaw*, Faolan seeks support from Mhairie and Dearlea, two she-wolves who have befriended him: “Mhairie and Dearlea both tipped their heads slightly and blinked as if they had seen something in [Faolan’s] eyes as well. For a moment, the three young wolves seemed caught in a web of golden light.”

Often authors insert details into their stories that suggest or point to events that will happen later on. This is called foreshadowing. Sometimes after the event has happened, it occurs to us that it had been foreshadowed in an earlier part of the book. In the case of *Wolves of the Beyond*, the foreshadowed event can also appear in a subsequent book. Your students should look for other instances of foreshadowing and write down what they think the foreshadowing suggests. Encourage students to use this technique when they are writing their own stories.

Activities and Discussion Questions for the Individual Books



Book 1 – *Lone Wolf*

Classroom Activities

There are many ways to record stories and pass them down through generations. Poems and songs are one way. What other ways might your students think of? Have students study ancient cave paintings, or the great totem poles of the Pacific Northwest Indians, to learn their meanings and the stories they convey.

Next, have your students create a story about their own culture or family tradition and convey it through a style of their choice: a poem, song, drawing, painting, or sculpture. Set aside a day for your students to perform or display their stories.

Questions for Discussion

1. After seeing the images in the Cave Before Time, Faolan knew he was ready to leave the past and return to the present. What about those images made him realize it was time to return to the clan?

Kathryn Lasky used the Chauvet Cave in France, discovered in 1994, as her model for the Cave Before Time. Enrich your discussion by researching this cave.

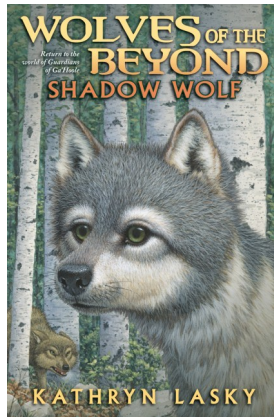
2. In the *byrrgis*, the hunt, teamwork is everything. Each wolf has a specific role that allows the pack to function in harmony. How do you view teamwork in school, at home, on the field? Cite specific examples of teamwork in action. What made it successful or unsuccessful?

3. **[Page 153]** “The song went straight to her gizzard. It was a song of grief, yet also one of acceptance...” After hearing this song, Gwynneth, a rogue owl, sets out to find the wolf that howled it. What draws her to seek him out? What do she and Faolan have in common and how does it become the foundation of their friendship?

4. **[Page 183]** “Faolan asked himself the same question over and over. *What kind of life am I going to? To be alone or be reviled, is there no other choice?*”

As Faolan observes a pack of wolves bring down a moose, he sees how the gnaw wolf is treated with disrespect and contempt, and how it must behave with total subservience to the pack. Despite this observation, why does Faolan still want to return to the pack, knowing that this will be his fate?

5. How do the circumstances of Faolan’s first year shape his character? Describe his traits and values. How might these qualities shape the events of future books?



Book 2 – *Shadow Wolf*

Classroom Activities

1. [Page 52] Mhairie’s mother, Caila, has given birth to a new litter of pups. “The worst part was their howling. Mhairie wasn’t sure why, but wolf pup cries were nothing like the melodious howls of mature wolves. . . [T]heir howls were sharp barks, like the clash of hard rocks tumbling against one another in a slide.”

The most important way wolves communicate is through their howling. As a research project, have the class investigate wolf howls. Whether howling alone or as a pack, growling or yipping, as matured wolves or as pups, each sound is identifiable and meaningful.

Divide the class into groups of four or five and have them access the websites below to read about wolves and wolf sounds:

http://www.wolfsongalaska.org/wolf_why_howl.html

<http://www.wolfcountry.net/information/WolfObserved.html>

Then invite students to hear wolf howls and other sounds by visiting the following two sites:

<http://www.searchingwolf.com/howls.htm>

<http://www.wolfcountry.net/WolfSounds.html>

Have each group present what it found to be the most interesting and surprising facts about wolf sounds. Students can even try to replicate the sounds in their presentations!

2. The *gaddernaw* is the most important event in the life of a gnaw wolf. The winner of the competition becomes a member of the Watch of the Ring of Sacred Volcanoes and is no longer treated with disrespect and contempt. Each gnaw wolf aspires to be the winner, but, as we learn, only one will go to any length to prevail. In many ways the *gaddernaw* is conducted like popular sports competitions. There are different events, and each participant is graded on how well he or she performs. At the end, points are totaled to declare an overall winner. While there are second-, third- and fourth-place finishes, only the winner becomes a member of the Watch, while the remaining participants return to their lives as gnaw wolves.

Have your students organize in groups to become newspaper and television reporters covering the *gaddernaw*. Students can narrate parts of the challenge, interview competitors, report scores, and predict outcomes. Groups can create scripts and visual materials to help broadcast their coverage, or write their report as an article for a newspaper or sports magazine.

Questions for Discussion

1. As a gnaw wolf, Faolan is banished to sleep not with his peers, but isolated on the edges of the pack's territory:

[Page 3] "My nose tells me I am home, I belong, this is my kin, my clan, and yet..."

[Page 7] "...Faolan tried to assume the posture of submission that was required whenever a pack member approached..."

What defines the place of a gnaw wolf in the MacDuncan clan? What is the job of the gnaw wolf? From what activities is Faolan excluded? How does this make him feel?

2. While the wolf clans live by a specific code of ethics and laws meant to protect the sanctity of the packs, gnaw wolves are excluded from these regulations, constantly subjected to abuse from the others. Even pups are permitted to publicly challenge a gnaw wolf. What is the justification for this mistreatment? Can your students think of parallel examples of this oppressive behavior in our own society?

3. [Page 14] In Faolan's presence, Heep ingratiates himself to Lord Claren: "Know that I am filled with humility at the mere chance of serving thus, and I shall wear the stench [of scat] as a badge of my most humble service."

One of the most intriguing characters in *Shadow Wolf* is the gnaw wolf Heep. Inspired by the unctuous character Uriah Heep from Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield*, Heep, a most despicable wolf, has perfected the art of submissive behavior. Heep's groveling nauseates Faolan, although many other wolves consider Heep a model.

Why might Heep revel in his conduct as a gnaw wolf while others, especially Faolan, are repulsed by it? Is this the only method Heep has of expressing himself? Why? What has shaped his character? How do Faolan's and Heep's feelings toward each other play out through the course of the novel?

4. During a moose hunt, Faolan breaks one of the codes of the clan. What is his offense? What is the punishment imposed by the clan leader?

5. [Page 61]

*"O Thunderheart, I long to see you,
Feel your booming heart in my blood."*

[Pages 87-88]

*"The night has come on, the stars walk the skies,
Now let the snow fall where a dying pup lies ..."*

Above are excerpts from two songs that Faolan howls when he is overwhelmed with emotions. What are the circumstances that cause these feelings? Take a close look at the language and images in each of the poems. How do they express feelings recognizable as human responses, while still remaining true to the life of a wolf?

6. In Book 2, we get to know the Sark when the mother of a *malcadh* pup seeks her counsel after her pup has been taken away. The Sark is an outsider: packless, friendless, shunned by the clans—yet wolves still come to her for help. Why does the Sark live outside the pack? What are her powers, and how does she use them to help the wolves? Do you trust her? Compare her to characters you've encountered in other books.

7. The wolves of the Beyond consider themselves to be a civilized society. Yet, while they cast *malcadh* pups out of their clan, the pups' survival is meant to be determined by natural forces. One of the most serious offenses a wolf can commit is to murder a *malcadh* pup.

When Heep accuses Faolan of killing a *malcadh* pup, what is his motivation for the charge? What evidence does he bring to the clan? After hearing Heep's testimony, how do the wolves react? How does Faolan eventually prove his innocence?

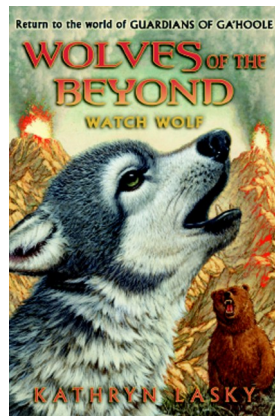
In the United States, a person is considered innocent until proven guilty. Do the wolves' courts operate in a similar manner? Which system do you think is a better form of justice? Why?

8. [Page 144] ““But don’t you see that together we have it all? We might be able to solve this monstrous crime. We are more than the sum of our parts!””

When Gwynneth and the Sark decide to help Faolan prove his innocence, they must work together in search of evidence. What skills and knowledge does each of them bring to the task? How do they solve the mystery? Could either of them have accomplished this alone? Have you ever needed a partner in order to accomplish a goal?

9. How does Faolan distinguish himself at the *gadderghnaw*? What does he use for inspiration?

At the close of *Shadow Wolf*, Faolan, the Sark, and the remaining members of the clan intercept Heep on his way to desecrate the *drumlyn* of Thunderheart. Faolan refuses to kill Heep, insisting, “I will not have your blood on my paws.” What does Faolan do instead? Do you think this is the last we will see of Heep in the series?



Book 3 – Watch Wolf

Classroom Activities

Kathryn Lasky’s vivid descriptions of the settings and characters’ actions in *Wolves of the Beyond* allow us to easily visualize each scene. After your students finish reading *Watch Wolf*, have them create story boards for the book that incorporate their favorite tableaux. Arrange your class in groups of two, and have each group select a scene from the book for which to create a four-panel storyboard. Storyboards can include illustrations, dialogue, and description. Possible scenes to consider are:

- Edme’s visit to the MacHeath *gadderheal*
- Watch wolves leaping and twisting at the Ring of Sacred Volcanoes
- The rescue of the bear cub Toby
- Toby’s return to his mother
- The reunion of Faolan and his birth mother, Morag

Questions for Discussion

1. **[Page 5]** After becoming wolves of the Watch at the Sacred Volcanoes, Faolan and Edme are instructed to return to the places where they were abandoned to die. “Through each wolf’s mind coursed the same questions. *Will my desolation dissolve? Will I truly find peace? Will I finally belong?* Their Fengo’s words still rang in their ears. *Go forth, find your tummfraws, and know that you are cursed no more.*”

Faolan and Edme each find different answers to these internal questions. Which one of them comes closer to finding peace? Why does the other find it impossible to leave the past behind? What questions does this raise for Faolan? What issues does it open for Edme?

2. Anger and revenge are popular themes throughout *Watch Wolf*. Have your class explore these themes in the following prompts:

- **[Page 25]** Kyran and Ingliss, two young female wolves from Edme’s clan who had abused her when she was the clan’s gnaw wolf, reveal to her that she was not born *malcadh*. She was maimed by the clan chieftain Dunbar MacHeath.

How does Edme respond to this knowledge? How does she plan to use the knowledge? How will she get even with Dunbar MacHeath?

- **[Page 42]** “The time had come for Airmead [the Obea] to explain the dark, dirty secret of the MacHeath clan...”

Airmead gives Edme all the details of Edme’s maiming and of her mother Akira’s response. Retell this story in your own words, commenting on how you think the characters involved felt. What do they think about the scar Akira left on Dunbar’s face? Do you think this was an appropriate response to the maiming?

- **[Page 49]** As they are returning to the Ring of Sacred Volcanoes after visiting their *tummfraws*, Faolan and Edme come upon wolf blood at a gruesome scene. Edme recognizes the dead wolves, Ingliss and Kyran, from their pelts, and Faolan wonders why they were killed: “They are the ones who told me that I was made a *malcadh*. Dunbar MacHeath must have found out.”

Why is Dunbar so angry? What is the usual punishment for a misdeed like Ingliss and Kyran’s? Why didn’t Dunbar send them to the pit? Does killing the two she-wolves fit their crime?

- **[Pages 74-75]** “I am not a true *malcadh*. ... I was born normal and then was disfigured. My eye was torn out. ... It was Dunbar.”

When Edme tells the Fengo the truth about her disfiguration, what is his response? How does he plan to punish the MacHeath clan? Is the Fengo acting out of anger or a sense of justice? Explain.

3. **[Page 65]** Faolan teaches Edme how to pronounce the names of the volcanoes: “How do you know all this?” Edme said. ... Faolan shrugged. ‘I’m not sure.’” Speculate on the source of Faolan’s knowledge.

4. Faolan reads in the bone of bones a relationship between the wolves and bears. What does he learn about that relationship?

5. Early in *Watch Wolf*, we are given glimpses of Dunbar MacHeath’s ambition and treachery. Keep track of his evil schemes. What is Dunbar’s goal? What tactics does he use to achieve it? Are there characters from other books that remind you of this kind of villain? How did they all fare in the end?

6. A thousand years before, Hordweard, a she-wolf from the MacHeath clan, formed her own clan, the MacNamaras, as a refuge for abused she-wolves. Talk about how the she-wolves escaped from the MacHeaths in *Watch Wolf*. How successful was their escape? What role do MacNamaras play in trying to prevent the war between the grizzlies and the wolves? How do they help Faolan's birth mother, Morag?

7. Over the course of the novel, Faolan and Edme develop a firm friendship. What actions and events bring them together? How does that friendship solidify?

8. **[Page 71]** Faolan and Edme attend their first *gadderheal* as wolves of the Watch. "Welcome to the Ring," Finbar the Fengo said, "We wolves of the Watch serve as the highest governing wolf body in the Beyond."

As you read *Watch Wolf*, you will learn the numerous responsibilities of the wolves of the Watch. With your classmates, create a list of their duties. Discuss what methods they use to accomplish each one. For example, what is the purpose of their leaps and twists?

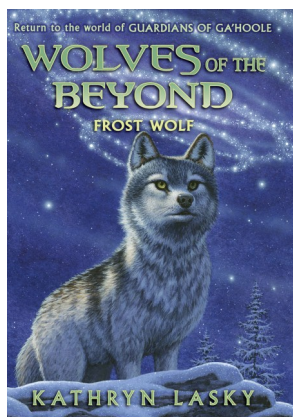
9. As part of their plan to instigate war between the bears and the wolves, the MacHeaths bring Toby to the Pit to be guarded by the rabid wolf, Old Cags. Why do you suppose they don't just kill the little bear?

10. **[Page 187]** Arthur, the graymalkin owl that Faolan snatches out of the sky, soon becomes Faolan's and Edme's scout in their quest to rescue the kidnapped bear cub. "*This is my chance*, Arthur thought. *I'm tired of being bullied.*"

What acts of bravery does Arthur perform? How does he summon the courage to spy for news of the impending war, and later, to save Edme? Were you surprised that this young owl would turn out to be a hero? What characteristics do heroes have and who from your own life can you cite as a hero?

11. **[Page 218]** "Malan and Fretta's eyes flashed green in the night as they looked at each other. *Was it regret, remorse, or was there a glint of a challenge?* Edme wondered."

What is Edme thinking in this passage? Do you believe Malan and Fretta will return in a future episode of *Wolves of the Beyond*? Why or why not?



Book 4 – *Frost Wolf*

Classroom Activities

Divide the class into four theater groups. Using dialogue from the text of the novel in addition to dialogue and narration that students write themselves, have groups create scripts for one-act plays based on specific scenes from *Frost Wolf*. The plays should be performed as staged readings. Scenes to consider dramatizing include:

- Faolan and his four companions going to the Blood Watch (Chapters 10, 12, 13)
- The meeting with Caila, Mhairie and Dearlea's mother (Chapters 15 and 16)
- The confrontation between Faolan and a group of Skaars dancers (Chapter 25)
- The Officers of the Blood Watch in the *gadderheal* with Liam MacDuncan (Chapter 28)

Questions for Discussion

1. **[Page 23]** “The outclanners were the most savage of all wolves...If outclanners dared to venture over the border into the Beyond, they were killed immediately.”

The killing of another wolf is a very serious offense in the Beyond. Yet there are situations when even murder is permissible. In *Frost Wolf*, what is the justification for taking a wolf's life? Can you find evidence of similar acts in our own society?

2. **[Pages 36-37]** ““The Prophet ... the Prophet ... and in my sacred pelt I shall dance to the place of warmth and meat and everlasting game...”

The Prophet in *Frost Wolf* promises things he can never deliver. How is he taking advantage of the wolves? What does he tell them and why are they so eager to believe him? Draw parallels between the Prophet and similar figures you have heard about in the news or in other books.

In this passage, Kathryn Lasky was inspired by the Ghost Dances of the Plains Indians, who, having lost all hope after their final defeat by the U.S. Army, began to throw themselves into frantic dances. Can you find parallels between this human behavior and that of Lasky's wolves?

3. **[Page 40]** “If his parents had only let him do more when he was younger, be more independent, he'd know what to do now.”

In monarchies like the MacDuncan clan, rule passes down from father to son, regardless of whether or not the successor is fit to rule. How is Liam performing as a chieftain? How do you think he feels to be in this powerful position?

4. [Page 55] “‘Edme,’ [Faolan] said as they trotted along after their most recent rest. ‘If the herds don’t come and even the small game vanishes, there will be famine. And you and I both know who will die first.’”

Who does Faolan believe will suffer first? What plan do he and Edme devise to help these potential victims? Why will this plan benefit the entire pack?

5. [Pages 111-114] “‘I was never your mother. I deny you! I deny you! I deny you!’”

In her delirium, Caila reveals to Mhairie and Dearlea that she is not their birth mother and disowns them.

How do they react to this? What does Faolan do to comfort them? When Faolan finally realizes that Mhairie and Dearlea are his sisters, what does he fear most? How does this affect his relationship with his newfound siblings?

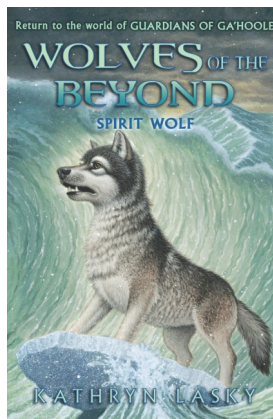
6. How does the wolves’ dire situation change them as individuals and as a society? Make a list of the different changes you find while reading and show examples of each.

7. In *Frost Wolf*, the wolves of the Beyond are beset by a devastating change in the weather and a resulting famine. How do they react? Can you think of recent natural disasters that have plagued our own world? How have people risen up together in response? How have they failed to respond?

8. [Page 113] “...Edme watched, transfixed, as Faolan reared on his hind legs....His green eyes darkened to black and the tips of his guard hairs turned bright white. Suddenly, it seemed to Edme that Faolan had ceased being a wolf.”

As his closest friend, Edme sees things in Faolan that he doesn’t see in himself. How do you think these and other changes will affect their relationship in the future? What does Faolan make of these changes in himself?

9. At the end of *Frost Wolf*, the cold has not abated. Faolan thinks to himself: “*My service is not over. I am in but my first pelt of a new season.*” What does he mean by this statement? Predict what is in store for Faolan in future books.



Book 5 – *Spirit Wolf*

Classroom Activities

1. Knowing her death is imminent, the Sark tries to get back home to be near the things she holds most sacred and true: her memories.

The Sark stored her memories as scents in jars. How do your students save and share their memories? Have your students make a group time capsule. Each student should contribute one written account of a personal memory or a piece of memorabilia from a special experience. Have the students explain why they chose their particular memory.

Keep the time capsule in a safe place. At the end of the term, unseal the capsule and ask students how it feels to recall their memories from an earlier time.

2. **[Page 112]** “[Edme] knew that just as there were dozens of kinds of snow, there were at least as many kinds of ice.”

As she clings to an ice ledge in the crevasse she has fallen into, Edme recalls what she’s learned about ice over the past year. She knows that trying to climb her way out would be deadly.

People who live in and travel to regions of extreme winter weather need to know much about the various types of ice and snow. Why? Have your students research the many varieties of ice and snow, recording and illustrating their findings.

Useful websites include:

<http://www.abc-of-snowboarding.com/snowtypes.asp>

<http://www.its.caltech.edu/~atomic/snowcrystals/class/class.htm>

<http://www.its.caltech.edu/~atomic/snowcrystals/frost/frost.htm>

Questions for Discussion

1. **[Page 4]** Faolan and his sisters cling to a ledge of ice after the earthquake: “Beneath him he felt the spasms of the dying earth. *I am rocking in the cradle of my lost souls*, he thought.

The earth is dying, yet the image of the rocking cradle implies birth. Why might these concepts be consistent rather than contradictory? What is being born out of this natural disaster? How can tragedy lead to a new beginning? Have your students reflect on recent natural disasters that have shaken the globe (New Orleans, Haiti, Japan, for example). Can good grow out of calamity?

2. **[Page 61]** On finding that Edme is alive, Faolan thinks of his fellow Watch mate: “*She is more than that, much more than a Watch mate!*”

In the section of this guide for Book 3, *Watch Wolf*, we asked what students thought of Faolan and Edme’s developing relationship. What do they think now? How has this friendship become even more special?

3. In *Spirit Wolf*, Faolan has a series of dreams in which he sees himself as other souls.

- **[Page 51]** The first of these souls is a bear called Eo. In the dream, Eo kills a moose that was threatening a mother bear and her cubs. “I am a bear. A bear.” What is the importance of this dream to Faolan’s understanding of himself?

- **[Page 69]** Next, Faolan dreams of the first Fengo. “*In his dream, Faolan was dimly aware that Fengo was the wolf’s name, not his title...Had he gone back to the very origins of the Ring more than a thousand years ago?*” What do your students think the message of this dream might be?

- **[Page 143]** In a third dream, “There was a coming and going of his being through the centuries – a time of disintegration and assembling ... a cycling that was infinite, a spiraling as old as the constellations sliding through the night skies.” These dreams raise questions about reincarnation. Open a class discuss about past lives, reincarnation, and other-worldly connections to the past. What do your students think about these beliefs?

4. Chapter fourteen is titled, “Beyond the Beyond, Before the Before.” What do your students think the meaning of this heading is?

[Page 105] Later in the chapter, Edme speculates: “*If there is a Beyond the Beyond, there must be a Before the Before. That’s where we are going – somewhere before time.*”

The concept of “before time” is one that scientists and philosophers have discussed and debated throughout time. If the universe was indeed created in a “Big Bang,” what existed before that, before time? Have your students research some of the current thinking and report on their own findings and beliefs.

Helpful websites include:

<http://scienceline.org/2006/08/ask-snyder-bang/>

<http://io9.com/5881330/what-happened-before-the-big-bang>

5. **[Pages 119-120]** In explaining to Mhairie and Dearlea why using a “Great Chain” to rescue Edme is not blasphemous, Faolan tells them: “*What’s blasphemous is leaving Edme to die alone...Everything has changed in the Beyond...It is time for a new order.*” While he doesn’t forsake the memories of the past, Faolan knows they must live in the present. Why does he feel it is time to move on?

6. **[Page 126]** When Edme is rescued, she tells her companions, “I am forever grateful, forever in your debt.” Faolan responds, “There are no debts. We can’t think that way.” What does he mean by this? When have your students felt the same way as Edme? as Faolan?

7. **[Page 127]** Faolan: “We are going west. There is, I believe, a new world somewhere waiting. The moon that shines here will shine there, but here the land is broken and there it is whole.”

How does optimism fuel the wolves’ journey to a new life? How does a strong belief in the future serve as a catalyst for exploration? How do you think these sentiments came into play during America’s westward expansion? The exploration of space?

8. In light of what has transpired in *Spirit Wolf* and what your students now know about the characters and wolf culture, how do they think Faolan and his companions will establish their new society in the land they are seeking? What new ideas will they adopt? Which parts of the old society will they discard? Have your students refer to past discussion questions and the encyclopedic entries about wolf culture they have been keeping while reading the series.

9. How is Faolan able to lead the group to a new land if there is no trail to follow?

10. **[Page 143]** During one of his dreams, Faolan comes to a realization: “Gyre souls we are!”

A “Gyre” refers to a vortex, circle, spiral, or ring. Explain how the author uses this word to describe Faolan and the animals in his dreams. How does it connect to the image on Faolan’s splayed paw?

11. **[Page 203]** The meeting of Faolan with his gyre souls has changed his physical stature. “Faolan looked larger and brighter than before, his luminous pelt glistened like ice. He had never seemed more powerful.” What forces do your students think are at work in this transformation? Spiritual? Supernatural? Personal?

12. By the end of the novel, it is clear that Faolan must now lead his pack to the “Distant Blue,” the land from which the wolves originally came a thousand years before. Looking ahead to the next book in the series, how would your students answer the following questions?

- What might the wolves find in the “Distant Blue”? Protection? Another savaged land?
- How might Faolan and Edme’s relationship grow?
- What roles will the pups and cubs play in the establishment of a new society?
- Do you expect a confrontation between Faolan and Heep?
- Will the wolves of the Beyond find other refugees who have also survived the quake?
- How will Faolan’s destiny play out?

About the Author

Kathryn Lasky is the Newbery Honor–winning author of over one hundred books for children and young adults. Her bestselling Guardians of Ga’Hoole fantasy series has sold more than 4 million copies and has been made into a major motion picture, *Legend of the Guardians: The Owls of Ga’Hoole*. Lasky is also the author of *A Time for Courage* and other Dear America titles, as well as the *Daughters of the Sea* series. Kathryn has written a number of critically acclaimed historical fiction titles, such as *Beyond the Burning Time* and *True North*. She lives with her husband in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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