

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### Prologue

In the prologue, the Evil Queen tells Snow White, “Once the world has made a decision, there is little anyone can do to change its mind.” Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? Give an example from the real world to support your view.

What is the purpose of the prologue? What information do you think will be important as the rest of the story unfolds?

### Chapters 1-3

How would you describe Mrs. Peters? What evidence from the story helps you visualize her?

Alex and Conner are introduced in the first chapter. Although they are twins, they are very different. Compare and contrast the twins using the information you have been given so far. Which twin do you most closely identify with? Why?

Mrs. Peters assigns the class the task of choosing a favorite fairytale and writing about the real lesson the story is trying to teach. Why do you think she gives her students this assignment?

On the way home from school, Alex is chatting with her brother and then stops mid-sentence. What sight caused her to stop speaking? Why is this important?

Alex cheats in school to help her brother. She decides she did the right thing, “not as a student, but as a sister.” What does she mean by this? Do you agree with her reasoning? Why or why not?

The twins father used storytelling to connect with his children. What story does he tell Alex? What story does he tell Conner? How do each of these stories help the twins?

Alex shares with the class her interpretation on the real lesson taught by Cinderella. What does she say is the lesson? Do you think she is right? Explain your answer.

The twins were excited to discover their grandmother was visiting. What special gift did she bring them for their birthday? Why was this gift so meaningful?

### Chapters 4-6

Conner notices a change in Alex’s behavior. What specific changes does he notice? What does he think might be the problem?

How does Conner discover what has been bothering Alex? What does he do to keep Mrs. Peters from learning about the buzzing sound?

What is Alex’s reaction when she falls into *The Land of Stories*? How does Conner react? What specific phrases or descriptions help you know how they are feeling?

When Alex and Conner meet Froggy, he says, “I’ve learned that the more people embrace their disadvantages, the less disadvantaged they become.” What do you think he means by this statement? Do you agree or disagree? Explain your position using examples from your own life or from history.

What reason does Froggy give for not searching for the Wishing Spell items himself? How does this show he is not done learning the witch’s lesson?

How does the encounter with the witch from Hansel and Gretel begin to change the way Alex sees her brother?

When the twins first see Goldilocks, she is nothing like the little girl many imagine from the tale of *The Three Bears*. What is she like? What are some specific characteristics mentioned?

## Chapters 7-9

When Alex first sees Rapunzel's tower, she says, "It must have been so hard for her. Seeing people and places so far away and never able to visit them." Alex seems to identify with Rapunzel. How does this help explain some of Alex's actions up to this point?

As Alex and Conner read the journal, they discover a set of riddles that describe the items needed for the Wishing Spell. Read the riddles, and using your prior knowledge of fairy tales, try to predict which items will be needed for the spell. Record your thoughts, and then compare your list to the ideas Alex and Conner have about the items. Are there any you could not figure out?

The Evil Queen gives the Huntsman a chance at redemption. What is redemption? How does The Huntsman hope to achieve it?

When the Evil Queen looks in the Mirror of Truth, she sees a disheveled and aging woman. Then, when she looks in it while holding the heart of stone, she sees a different image entirely. Who do you think she sees? What do you think this could mean?

Alex and Conner use different methods to cross the river bordering the Charming Kingdom. How did Alex cross the river? How did Conner cross it? Which method would you use? Why?

As Alex chatters at Smithers (the man driving the cart full of firewood) she asks him if it is frightening to live in a place of such uncertainty. His response causes Alex to conclude that her world and the fairytale world might not be so different after all. Do you agree with Alex's conclusion? Why or why not?

During their tour of the Charming's castle the twins learn there are four Charming brothers. Where is each one now? How did the disappearance of the youngest Charming help lead his oldest brothers to their wives?

Alex has a new respect for Cinderella after talking with her. What are some of the challenges Cinderella faces?

## Chapters 10-12

What are some of the possible explanations the twins suggest for the appearance of the glass slipper? What do you think?

Red Riding Hood's castle appeared massive from a distance, but was quite different up close. In what ways was it like Cinderella's castle? In what ways was it different? What is Red Riding Hood like as a ruler?

When Jack meets the hooded woman outside the castle gates, he tells her he loves her. She replies, "A flame may love a snowflake, but they can never be together without harming the other." What did she mean by this?

In the Troll and Goblin Kingdom, the Tradesman makes a sacrifice for Conner and Alex. Why do you think he does this?

When Alex and Conner encounter the fairy, Trix, they have different goals. Alex wants to help, but Conner just wants to gather the items needed for the Wishing Spell. Later, it is Conner that tries to help. How do the personal experiences of Alex and Conner influence their motivations?

## Chapters 13-15

The Evil Queen makes a pact with the wolves. What does she promise Malumclaw in return for the twins? Why would this prize be so important for Malumclaw?

When Conner and Alex meet Sleeping Beauty, they discover she has many challenges to face as a leader. Compare and contrast her situation with Cinderella's. In what ways do they face the same challenges? How are their situations different?

While looking through Snow White's castle, the twins find some love letters and a painting. What did the twins discover in the painting? Why is this important? What could be the significance of the love letters?

While heading toward the Dwarf Forest, Alex and Conner look up to see a lone tree in the middle of a field of stumps. Upon seeing this, Conner said, "Things always find a way of becoming more complex." What does he mean by this statement?

## Chapters 16-18

After narrowly escaping a confrontation with Malumclaw and his gang, Conner and Alex find themselves captured once again. Conner leaves a trail of blood, and although Alex is not sure why he is doing it, she trusts he has a plan. Why is this an important moment in their relationship? In what ways have the experiences to this point changed the relationship between Alex and Conner?

The Evil Queen reveals the "true story" behind Goldilocks' visit to the home of the bears. How does this differ from the traditional tale? Why would the Evil Queen reveal this to Goldilocks?

What do the twins learn from *The Little Mermaid*? How might this information change the way they approach their next task?

## Chapters 19-21

Outside the Thornbush Pit, Alex and Conner make a decision that puts their goals in jeopardy in order to help a friend. What is their reasoning? Do you think you would do the same in their position? Why or why not?

Alex seems to make sense of the world around her by making connections between her own experiences and the experiences of others. She identifies with many of the

fairytale characters she meets, but she is unsettled to discover herself identifying with the Evil Queen. In what ways can she relate to her? How does this change how she views the Evil Queen?

The Evil Queen manipulates Alex in order to get her to cry. Why does she do this? What could this mean?

In what ways have Mira and Evly changed? Why are they so different now than they were years ago?

## Chapters 22-24

What tragic lesson do the twins and Snow White learn from the story of the Evil Queen? What is Snow White's suggestion for how to honor her memory? Do you think this is a good suggestion? Why or why not?

Red Riding Hood can be characterized as self-centered and spoiled throughout most of the book. What does she do that does not fit this description? What advice does Froggy give her?

There are many secrets revealed in the final chapter; what do you think is the most shocking secret? Which one holds the most meaning for Alex and Conner? Which one holds the most meaning for the Charmings?

Alex and Conner changed and grew through their adventures in *The Land of Stories*. Using evidence from the story, choose one of the twins and show how they changed. How might this affect their future?

