***The Kingdom of What Is***

**Study Guide**

The goal of this study guide is to engage readers in the story and to help them to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the novel. It includes a variety of questions, easy to advanced, intended to encourage readers to walk in the shoes of the characters, follow the events, and grapple with the conflicts in the novel. Some facilitate basic comprehension, some are interactive, some are predictive, and others require critical thinking.

The guide has three questions for each chapter for a total of sixty-nine questions. They can be edited and presented in any way that is most suitable. At times it may be best to let a question percolate until further reading gives a clearer answer.

After the chapter questions are general “dig deeper” questions. They are for use in group discussion or as prompts for paragraph and essay writing. They require readers to think about character development, story elements, literary devices, dominate images, themes, and tone.

Hopefully, this guide will evoke even more questions that are not included here. I have used it often with my own students with good results.

Enjoy the adventure!

Karl Petersen

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**Chapter One**

1. Describe your first impression of Kate. What is she like?

2. What is Kate's problem in Shelby?

3. What would make Kate want to go back to Shelby, and what would make her want to go further into the Kingdom of What Is?

**Chapter Two**

1. What clues do you have so far about the basic problem in the Kingdom?

2. Describe in your own words, or draw, or act out, how the goose transport works.

3. Why does Kate suddenly turn back from the palace?

**Chapter Three**

1. What’s going on between Kate’s mom and dad? Do you have any theories about what happened?

2. Why does Time Out Woods appear normal when Kate goes there with her family?

3. What advice does Kate get from Analyse and from Ms. Lee?

**Chapter Four**

1. Why do Kate and Analyse not hear each other at first? Why do the “tourists” not hear them?

2. Why does Analyse not hear the beaver or notice the smells Kate notices at first?

3. Explain the irony of the name, “Time Out Woods.”

**Chapter Five**

1. What do you think the black gunk in the water is?

2. What’s going on in the canyon?

3. Who do you think the stranger at the cave is? How do Kate and Analyse react differently to the stranger and other dangers?

**Chapter Six**

1. Why is Kate challenging her science teacher, Mr. Dunphry?

2. Contrast Kate’s relationship with her mom and with her dad.

3. Is it a good idea for Kate to tell her dad about the Kingdom? Should she have told him more, or less?

**Chapter Seven**

1. Why are Kate, Nolan, and Analyse in detention?

2. What important information do we learn about the Kingdom of What Is in this chapter?

3. Describe Corvus. What role does he play in the story?

**Chapter Eight**

1. How does Gavin know where the girls had gone? How do you feel about him finding them?

2. Describe the meeting with the strange people. Why do you think they have parts missing?

3. How do the animals find a birthday cake for Kate?

**Chapter Nine**

1. Why does Kate refuse Nolan’s gift? What do you make of their relationship?

2. What do you make of the Ancients? Are they to be trusted?

3. Grover’s story is like a proverb. What does it mean?

**Chapter Ten**

1. What is the freak storm from?

2. What do we learn about the King and Queen, Grod Vurmis, and Dreglings?

3. What is the purpose of Grover’s huge library?

**Chapter Eleven**

1. What mistakes do the girls, especially Analyse, make with the young man?

2. What is the purpose of the girls’ quest at this point? Has it changed?

3. What do you think of the idea of the boys joining in the journey?

**Chapter Twelve**

1. Why do they take the shortcut to Gulls Landing?

2. What effects of the Plague do we discover in this chapter? Describe the progression of the Plague. Why does Kate interact with the cougar?

3. Describe the area where they end up when they reach the sea.

**Chapter Thirteen**

1. What does Kate mean when she said, “We’re all Vurmises”?

2. What difficulties do they encounter getting from Fisherman’s Cove to Gulls Landing?

3. Describe the relationship between the two men on the docks, Jib and Hal.

**Chapter Fourteen**

1. How would you describe Bowman?

2. What difficulties do the travelers encounter on the River Royal?

3. What do we learn about the King and Queen and Prince from Bowman?

**Chapter Fifteen**

1. How would you describe the palace?

2. Is the palace what Kate expected? Is it what you expected? Explain.

3. What's your impression of the King and Queen? What does King Athar mean when he points to the people and says, “These are the crown jewels”?

**Chapter Sixteen**

1. What is happening to Mirabelle as she tells her story? How does she regain her body?

2. What impact does the palace and King and Queen have on the four young travelers?

3. What do they know of their mission?

**Chapter Seventeen**

1. What is your first impression of Prince Servan? What do we learn about him?

2. What does Horace mean when he says of the Darklands, “Places like this are the reason for this mission. So take a good look.”

3. Predict what will happen to the motley troops on their mission.

**Chapter Eighteen**

1. How do Kate and her friends put the mission at risk?

2. Describe their conquest of Downfield?

3. How do you explain Feargus’s transformation?

**Chapter Nineteen**

1. What is the elite task given to Kate, Analyse, and Grover?

2. How does Servan describe Kate and Analyse? Do you think he knows them well?

3. How has Vurmis affected the life of the goats? What other animals have suffered so far?

**Chapter Twenty**

1. How has the Great Gorge changed since the girls’ first sight of it?

2. What important discoveries from their cave exploration? What questions still remain?

3. What is the bad news they get when they return to camp? What will become of Gavin?

**Chapter Twenty-One**

1. What problem arises in camp among the troops? How does Servan resolve it?

2. What task is Kate given for the final assault? Why is this so important?

3. Describe the final assault. What sense do you make of it? Was it a failure or success?

**Chapter Twenty-Two**

1. How do Kate, Nolan, Grover, Adwen, and Josephine respond to what has happened?

2. Describe the scene at the palace. Why do people go there instead of going home?

3. What does the King say about Shelby? What does he mean by it?

**Chapter Twenty-Three**

1. What changes are beginning to take place in the Kingdom of What Is since the final assault?

2. Why does time not pass in the Kingdom?

3. Do you like the ending of the story, or is something missing?

**General Questions for Discussion and for Writing**

After finishing the novel, discuss the following questions. You can also use the questions as writing topics and your discussions as a primer for writing.

1. Choose one character (human or animal) in the novel and show how that character develops through the novel.

2. Compare Mirabelle and Feargus and show how their redemption is similar or different.

3. Describe what causes people in the novel to become Shadows and what causes them to become whole again. What does this say about us as humans, or is this just a clever idea to use to make the story interesting?

4. Respond to the absence of weapons in the battle against Grod Vurmis and the Plague.

5. Draw a graph showing the moments of highest suspense in the story. Let the peaks in your graph show how suspenseful these moments are in relation to one another. Choose one moment of suspense that occurs prior to the climax of the story and explain why it is so suspenseful. What is at stake at that moment?

6. Analyse the climax of the story. Tell happens and why this is or is not an appropriate resolution to the problem of Grod Vurmis.

7. Choose one theme or big idea in the novel and show how it is developed in the novel.

8. What elements of the story make this a fantasy? Are these elements used effectively? Why or why not? Are there other fantasy devices that could have been used? How?

9. Find out about the tradition of storytellers in First Nations culture, your culture, or another. What functions (purposes) do storytellers serve? Is this the same with modern storytellers, such as novelists? Contrast traditional storytelling with modern day journalism.

10. There is a debate in the novel about what is “real” and what is not. Discuss this. Refer to the passages where this debate comes up. In your opinion, can we speak of fantasies or fantasy lands as “real”? Why, in what way, or why not?

11. What is the tone in the novel and what examples help you see/hear the tone? (e.g. despairing, hopeful, humorous, serious, whimsical) Does the tone change? Give some examples.

12. Compare this fantasy to other fantasies you’ve read. What are the similarities, and what are the differences?

13. *The Kingdom of What Is* includes very little, if any, magic (e.g. pixie dust, magic ring, or ability to cast spells). It also includes no paranormal creatures (e.g. dragons, ogres, fairies, etc.). Is this really a fantasy? Why or why not? In what ways is the line between realism and fantasy is blurred in the story?