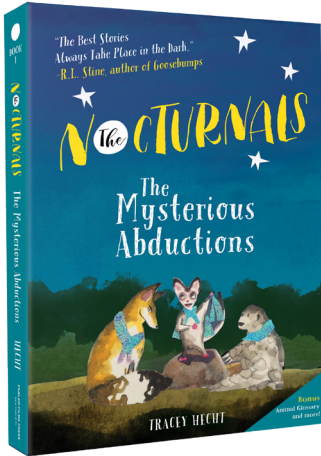


# Nocturnals

## THE MYSTERIOUS ABDUCTIONS BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS



1. Dawn, Bismark, and Tobin make up a team, the Nocturnal Brigade. How did the Brigade meet? What qualities do each of those three characters possess that help make them work so well together? Do they have qualities that might hurt the team?
2. The book takes place at night and all of the characters are nocturnal. Can you think of reasons it might be good for animals to be awake at night? Can you think of characteristics in Dawn, the fox, Bismark, the sugar glider and Tobin, the pangolin that are important to their nighttime survival?
3. If you were to pick one character from *The Mysterious Abductions* who is the most like you, who would it be and why? Who is the most unlike you and why? Which character from the book would you most want as your friend and why?
4. What are your favorite locations in the book and why? If you could visit the world of The Nocturnal Brigade, which things from the book would you most want to see? Where do you think these animals might live in the real world?
5. Bismark is an outspoken character. He boasts about his own superior qualities and his affections for Dawn. Do you think Bismark is actually a confident character? If so, why? If no, why not?
6. Dawn is the leader of the Brigade. What does she do to bring the animals together as a team? What does she do when she meets Ciro, the coyote? How does she talk to Boris, the crocodile when she meets him? Do the animals respect her?
7. When Tobin first meets Cora, the wombat, Cora is afraid to speak. How does Tobin try to coax her out of her shyness? What things could you reveal about yourself that might make someone in your life feel less shy around you?
8. Why don't Dawn and Bismark trust Jerry, the jerboa? What does he do to the Brigade that makes them worry about his character? Does he redeem himself in the book?
9. Bismark speaks many languages, as do the bats. What languages are in the book? Are you able to give examples of phrases in any of these languages? Can you come up with some new phrases that Bismark might say? Can you come up with some that the bats might say?
10. Explain the rules of NOC HOC. Which animals are used as equipment in the game? Discuss the actions of the offense and defense.
11. What happens to Boris in the final scenes of *The Mysterious Abductions*? What are the other characters' responses to his actions? How would you have handled Boris?
12. What things in the book would you have done like the Brigade? What things would you have done differently?
13. Discuss the meaning of poaching and endangered species in the wild. Are any of the animals endangered species? Why is poaching wrong? How do both affect the environment?

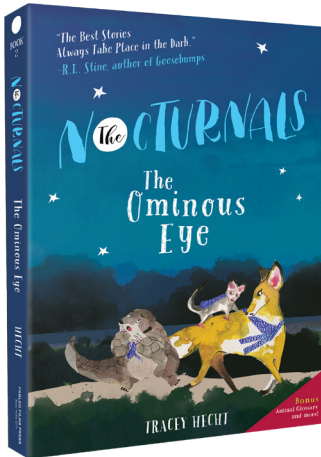
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# Nocturnals

## THE OMINOUS EYE BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS



1. Define the word “ominous” and discuss the qualities of mystery, horror and adventure. Does *The Ominous Eye* fit in these genres? What other genres would the novel fit? What genres would it not fit?

2. Tobin thinks the outline of the animal at the bottom of the crater is a dragon,

a creature he has heard about in myths. Dawn thinks that dragons are an “invention of storytellers.” Use books in the library or sites on the internet to find a dragon myth and discuss the roles dragons play in mythology.

3. Polyphema gains control over the animals. How is she able to do this? Why does she do it? How does each member of the Brigade respond differently to Polyphema’s control?

4. Polyphema is named after one of the most well-known cyclopes in Greek mythology, Polyphemus. He and his fellow cyclopes are described in *Bulfinch’s Mythology* as giants who have one round eye in the middle of the forehead. In Homer’s epic poem *The Odyssey*, Polyphemus becomes blind in his eye by the hero, Ulysses. Knowing this background information, do you think this is a good namesake for Polyphema? Why or why not? Use books in the library or sites on the internet to support your discussion.

5. How does Polyphema use Otto, the owl, to create further panic? Does her plan work? What role does Otto play in helping the Brigade discover the truth?

6. How is Dawn the voice of reason within the Brigade? How does the “beast” almost destroy these qualities in her? Does the dangerous situation strengthen or weaken Dawn as a leader throughout the story? How so?

7. Who is the real source of the destruction and mayhem in the valley? What clues help you discover that there is no “beast”? How does Dawn discover the real source? How does Dawn deal with Polyphema?

8. Discuss the concept of fear and what role it plays in the story. What do the animals learn about fear from Polyphema’s false story? What does Polyphema learn from the Brigade? Can you think of other animal fables with similar lessons?

9. If you were to pick one character from the book who is the most like you, who would it be and why? Who is the most unlike you and why? Which character from the book would you most want as your friend and why?

10. The Nocturnal Brigade wears capes when they set out to solve a mystery. What is the purpose of the capes? Do you think it makes the Brigade more courageous and brave? Can you think of other examples of stories where the characters wear special garments to help them feel brave?

11. What things in the book would you have done like the Brigade? What things would you have done differently?

12. Discuss the role humor plays in *The Ominous Eye*, both for you as the reader and for the characters. What characters do you find the most humorous? What part did you find the most humorous? How would the book be different without humor?

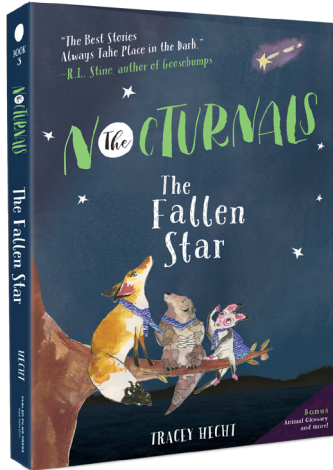
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# N<sup>The</sup>CTURNALS

## THE FALLEN STAR BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS



- Dawn, Tobin, and Bismark wear capes when they set out to solve a mystery. What is the purpose of their capes? Do you think the capes help the Brigade feel more courageous? What challenges do they encounter as they set out to solve the mystery of the fallen star?
- If you were to pick one character from the book who is the most like you, who would it be and why? Who is the most unlike you and why? Who would you most want as your friend and why?
- Dawn becomes alarmed when she, Tobin, and Bismark discover the enormous fallen star that has crashed into the valley. What is the difference between alarm and fear? Describe a time when you felt alarmed. How did you handle the alarming situation?
- Bismark wants to fight the star creatures. What is Dawn's plan? How is it different than Bismark's? Why does Tobin agree with Dawn? How does Dawn's plan lead to a satisfying conclusion?
- The Nocturnal Brigade embarks on a heroic adventure in *The Fallen Star*. At what point is it obvious that the Brigade has to solve a mystery? Do they plan their mission, or do they react as new clues develop? Which would you do?
- Tobin eats the poisoned pomelo fruit. How does he try to convince himself that he is okay? Tobin knows that he should tell his friends that he tasted the fruit. Why does he keep it to himself? What would you do in this situation? What leads to Tobin's confession? What was Bismark's reaction to Tobin's news?
- What is the purpose of the magic berry that Bismark has in his possession? Why is he conflicted about when to use it? How does Bismark decide when to use the magic berry? Did he make the best decision for the Brigade, himself, or both?
- Bismark says, "Everyone knows you can't trust anything that isn't perfect. That's why I only trust myself." No one is perfect. Describe Bismark's imperfections. Does Bismark trust the Brigade? Why does teamwork require trust?
- Aye-Aye Iris, a lemur, knows the secret of the fallen star. How does knowing the secret make Aye-Aye Iris feel important? Explain how Aye-Aye Iris prioritizes her own importance over the well-being of the other animals. Why is this not okay?
- Dawn tells Aye-Aye Iris, "It's our differences that make us unique." Describe the physical and personality differences of each member of the Brigade. How do the Brigade's differences make them stronger? What are Aye-Aye Iris's differences? Why is it important to accept everyone's differences?
- Think about what the Nocturnal Brigade did throughout *The Fallen Star*. What would you have done similarly? What would you have done differently?
- The Nocturnal Brigade rescues animals in need of help. List the animals they rescue in *The Fallen Star*. Which one is your favorite animal? Explain how your favorite animal was a victim of Aye-Aye Iris.

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# Nocturnals

## THE HIDDEN KINGDOM BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS



- At the beginning of *The Hidden Kingdom*, the Nocturnal Brigade hears a familiar sound, but they aren't sure what it is. Explain why they accuse Tobin of making the sound. How do they determine the source of the sound?
  - trouble for the Nocturnal Brigade as they attempt to solve the mystery of the drought?
  - Describe the tumbleweed that Dawn finds. What is the purpose of the tumbleweed as the story advances? What about the mysterious voices, churning ground, swirling tree bark, and disappearing water? How are these clues that something evil is the cause of the drought?
  - Discuss the false hope that the animals experience on their quest to solve the mystery. Even Dawn is confused by the strange events. How do the flowers give them hope again?
  - How is Bismark his own worst enemy when the Brigade comes face to face with King Kami, a chameleon? What is Tobin's role in saving Bismark?
  - Bismark says the fight between Tobin and King Kami is a "tongue-of-war." How does such wordplay make the plight of the Nocturnal Brigade humorous? In what other ways do the authors create humor?
  - Discuss King Kami's explanation for causing the drought. What is the moral of the story? King Kami creates havoc in the forest. How does he help the Nocturnal Brigade save the animals in the forest?
  - Think about what the Nocturnal Brigade did throughout *The Hidden Kingdom*. What would you have done similarly? What would you have done differently?
  - Fear is an underlying theme in the entire *Nocturnals* series. Compare and contrast the way the animals deal with fear in *The Hidden Kingdom*. How does the personality of each animal explain the way each animal confronts fear?
- What is Cora's condition when they find her? Dawn thinks she knows where a watering hole is, but Cora doubts that she can make the journey. Explain why Tobin ties the blue snake-skin cape around Cora.
- Dawn is the clear leader of the Nocturnal Brigade. Discuss the animals' loyalty to Dawn. What does such loyalty say about her leadership skills?
- Strength may refer to one's physical abilities, but it may also be a character trait. How does the drought affect the physical strength of the animals? Discuss how they call upon strength of character to solve the mystery of the drought. Identify individual strengths of Dawn, Tobin, and Bismark.
- If you were to pick one character from the book who is the most like you, who would it be and why? Who is the most unlike you and why? Who would you most want as your friend and why?
- Bismark says, "My greatness has put me in danger. That's all there is to it." (p. 45) He also says, "With my brilliant powers of detection, I will solve this mystery." (p. 51) What do these statements say about his personality? How does he cause

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