

AN EDUCATOR'S  
GUIDE TO  
**LEGEND OF THE  
STORM SNEEZER**

*by Kristiana Sfirlea*

**Common  
Core Standards  
6th-8th  
Grade**


**DISCUSSION  
QUESTIONS!**

**CLASS  
ACTIVITIES!**

**SNACK  
IDEAS!**







# ***Before You Read***

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## **About the Book:**

**13-year-old Rose Skylar** sneezed a magical storm cloud at birth, and it's followed her around ever since. But when "Stormy" causes too many disasters, Rose is taken to an asylum for unstable magic in a haunted forest whose trees have turned to stone.

Guided by time traveling letters, Rose teams up with her future selves and her (maybe) imaginary best friend, Marek, to save her storm cloud and solve the mystery of the specters and the stone trees.

**But will they find what killed the ghosts before what killed the ghosts finds them?**

## **Takeaway Value:**

**Wrapped in a package** of magic, spooks, and time travel, *Legend of the Storm Sneezers* is a story about adapting to challenging circumstances, dismantling stereotypes, having compassion and turning it into action, and embracing the transition from child to teen.

Rose and Marek are a fresh, cheerful, and humorous alternative to conventional heroes, engaging readers with their unique perspective and broadening their concepts of diversity.



# Discussion Questions

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## Entries 0-2

Rose and Marek have unusual magical abilities: Rose has a storm cloud that follows her around and Marek creates and controls shadows. In literature, what do thunderstorms and darkness usually represent as metaphors? Giving examples from the text, explain how Rose and Marek live up to or alter these representations.

## Entries 3-5

Rose says that, *"Sometimes it felt like Shadow Boy was straining at the corners of her imagination, trying to get back to her."* Based on her recent thoughts and actions, what is Rose's view on imaginary friends? Are they important to her? Does she believe they're real? How does this affect the way she interacts with her world? Give both explicit and inferred examples from the text.

## Entries 6-8

When Rose thought Marek was imaginary, she wasn't angry with him for leaving her. But now that she knows he *is* real, how does her attitude towards his absence change? Is there part of her that wishes he had been "all in her head"? Using supporting evidence from the text, explain why or why not.

## Entries 9-11

Rose has the opportunity to ask about Heartstone Asylum's secret operation, but she declines, choosing instead to discover it on her own terms. What does this say about her as a character? Giving examples from the text, how does the author develop her point of view?

## Entries 12-15

Compare and contrast Sephone and Aiden's relationship with Rose and Marek's. How are they similar? How are they different? Compare and contrast Sephone and Aiden's approach to interviewing Silas with Rose and Marek's. Who came away more successful? Why do you think that is?

## Entries 16-18

Analyze this paragraph:

*"An artist had drawn...Amber bowed at her father's feet, the flat of his sword resting on her shoulder...[T]hey'd captured her essence down to the wave of her hair and the solemn crease of her brow...Dad's expression was more peaceful than Rose had ever seen it, and Momma's smile in the background was all softness and wisdom. This was the Skylar name prevailing against the odds. This was a family cutting ties with the past and reaching for tomorrow. Reaching for a future that she wasn't part of."*

What is the central theme of this paragraph, and what details does the author use to convey it?

## Entries 19-21

1) Rose and Marek choose to respond to Gormonger with compassion instead of judgement. Analyze the following exchange:

*" 'Is this what you came for? To punish me for all I've done?' the Warg snarled weakly.*

*'Punish you?' Marek caught Rose's eye. 'Oh, we're going to do something much worse than that.'*

*'Much, much worse,' she agreed.*

*He crouched by Gormonger and smoothed a hand across the Warg's ghostly cheek... 'We're going to rehabilitate you.' And the mirror came down like a gavel."*

What is the significance of the word "gavel," and why do you think the author chose this particular imagery?

2) Marek says, *"Everyone notices who saves them when the sun is shining. They take for granted the ones who keep them safe while they sleep."* Who are the "obvious" heroes in your life? How do you thank them for what they do for you? Who are the "less obvious" heroes in your life? What are some ways you can show



appreciation for them, too?

## Entries 22-25

Describe the two major Incidents that have happened with Rose's soul signia. How do these Incidents forward the plot and and shape the characters' motivations for saving her storm cloud? Which characters want to save Stormy and which seem reluctant? Why do you think that is?

## Entries 26-28

Sephone is convinced that she is the "Chosen One"—the hero responsible for saving the world—but Rosadox wants her to see herself in a new way: as part of a team instead. What are some other examples of "Chosen Ones" in stories? Do you think it's right to give one person so much responsibility? Why or why not?

## Entries 29-31

1) Recalling examples from previous chapters, how did the author foreshadow the identities of the Sinner and the Saint?

2) Marek says, *"It's amazing how easy it is to go wrong even while fighting for what's right."* Have you ever done something wrong even if you were doing it for the right reasons? How did it turn out? In retrospect, can you think of a better way you could have done it?

## Entries 32-34

What does the unicorn cupcake paperweight represent to Rose and her relationship with Malachy? How is that relationship being tested?

## Entries 35-37

1) Analyze the following sentences:

*"Shadow Boy kept coming, flattening everything in his path. He was a rolling boulder, an invincible rock that nothing could chip, nothing could harm, nothing could—"*

What figurative language does the author use to hint at Marek's fate?

2) Bullies are often bullied themselves. Giving evidence from the text, how has Gormonger allowed the opinions of others to shape the way he views himself? In what ways have Rose and Marek helped him change those views?

## Entries 38-41

Rose sacrifices her storm cloud to take Malachy's punishment and save his life. Marek sacrifices his life to save Rose from a revenant. How are these sacrifices similar? How are they different?



# Class Activities

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## Creative Writing:

- 1) Aiden Waverly enjoys writing poetry about his life as a sidekick. Write a poem about your favorite sidekick or hero. Serious or silly!
- 2) Rose's favorite book in all the worlds is the legendary collection of legends, *Blackout's Tales*. Pretend you are Blackout and write a short story featuring a legend of your own making.
- 3) Rose writes letters to her future self—and sometimes her future self writes back. Write a letter to your future self. Ask questions that you're hoping to know the answers to. When you've finished, put it somewhere safe and choose a date to open it in the future.

## Moonsfrost Eve Party:

Celebrate the end of the book by hosting your own Moonsfrost Eve party! Have everyone wear blue and dress up like lunatics and serve edible moonstones and Blue Moon milkshakes (see *Snack Ideas*).

You can also host a Poetry Night and/or Story Hour featuring the poems and legends from your creative writing assignments as part of the party!





# Snack Ideas



1) Chocolate dipped strawberries, for Rose and Marek's favorite snack.

2) Red velvet cupcakes with cream cheese frosting, for Rose's favorite birthday dessert.

3) Heart-shaped jelly biscuits, like the ones eaten during Rose and Marek's Story Hour:

- Roll refrigerated biscuit dough flat on a cutting board
- Use a heart-shaped cookie cutter to cut dough into heart shapes
- Spread dough heart with favorite jam or jelly
- Place another dough heart on top of the first and pinch edges
- Bake according to biscuits' original instructions

4) Blue Moon ice cream milkshakes for Moonsfrost Eve.

5) Edible moonstones for Moonsfrost Eve. (Make any kind of candy using a ball-shaped candy mold.)

5) "Lightning Fizz" punch. Pour a two liter of citrus-flavored pop in a bowl. Sprinkle a *small* spoonful of Pop Rocks over it. Once the fizz dies down, add lemon sherbet.

# About the Author



**Kristiana Sfirlea** knows what it means to get in character. She spent five years volunteering as a historical reenactor and trying her best not to catch her skirts on fire as a colonial girl from the 1700s (leading cause of death at the time next to childbirth).



Working at a haunted house attraction, she played a jumping werewolf statue, a goblin in a two-way mirror, and a wall-scratcher—so if she's standing very still, growling, checking her reflection, or filing her nails on your wall, be alarmed. Those are hard habits to break.

Inspired by bookmobiles around the world, Kristiana dreams of the day she can run her own mobile bookstore. Or haunted house attraction. Or both. Look out, world—here comes a haunted bookmobile! (And this is precisely why writers should never become Uber drivers.) She loves Jesus, her family, and imaginary life with her characters.

*Kristiana would love to hear from you! Connect with her through email at **KristianasQuill@yahoo.com**, on Twitter and Instagram **@KristianasQuill**, or on her website **www.KristianasQuill.com**!*





# ***Passion Behind Work***



**Growing up** with a severe undiagnosed medical condition called *gastroparesis*, most of Kristiana's childhood was taken up with ER, hospital, and doctor visits, medical testing, anxiety, and worry.

During these painful experiences, she acquired a vibrant sense of humor and writing became her escape. In time, escapism took a backseat, and her writing evolved into a way of processing the lessons she was learning.

She began *Legend of the Storm Sneezer*.

Most people think of storms as representing evil, but *Legend of the Storm Sneezer* turns this symbolism on its head, demonstrating how bad things can be used for your good. Through her stories, Kristiana wants to reach out to kids and teens who are going through any kind of struggle and give them laughter and hope.

**Want to schedule a  
virtual author visit?**

***Contact Kristiana at  
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