

Beginning Discussion Questions

(for teachers/librarians/parents/book clubs)

The list of following questions and topic starters are intended to open the opportunity for character motivation discussions, as well as to present a platform to discuss more general themes of facing obstacles/failure/difficult choices etc.

Chapter 1

1. How do you think all of the children ended up in the orphanage?
2. Why do you think the children in the orphanage did not want to be adopted by the man and woman who visited the orphanage that day? What kind of parents do you think this couple would be?
3. Why do you think Melissa, Michael and Annabelle became such close friends within the large group of children living at the orphanage? What do they have in common?
4. What do you think of Melissa's actions when she interfered with Eve's potential adoption. Would you stand up in that situation?

Chapter 2

1. What do you think is hidden inside Melissa's cuckoo clock?
2. What do you think Michael was feeling when he first became upset? Why?
3. Why would someone shoot arrows at the children? What do you think is their connection to this new strange land that they have travelled to?
4. What do you think the children should do next? What would you do?

Chapter 3

1. What do you think the woman Oskana was trying to accomplish when she first met the children? What about her makes you mistrust her?
2. Do you think the children have worked well together since arriving in Habitan? Why/why not?
3. What are your initial impressions of the three chickadees? Is their riddled advice helpful to the children? Who do you think sent the chickadees, if anyone?

Chapter 4

1. Why do you think all of the children dreamt of their families on the same night? What could their dreams mean?
2. Why do you think the children were sent away from Habitan and hidden on earth? Do you think this was a good decision? Why/why not?
3. Do you think the children will ever find their real parents? How will they feel when this happens?
4. Which child do you consider the leader of the group, and why?

Chapter 5

1. What is your opinion of the characters of the talking Heron, Papyrifera, and the rabbit Witaski? What have you noticed about each of their personalities? What are their strengths and weaknesses?
2. Which magical power that the children learned about do you think would be most valuable to you in your life? Why?
3. Why do you think that the character of the lynx, Kabtepwaw, is so serious? What is your impression of him and how he might help the children?
4. The personalities of the three animal guides are very different. What do you think the children can learn from each of them?

Chapter 6

1. Why do you think it was important for King Kabtepwaw to give the children this history lesson? What do we learn from our own history?
2. What was most surprising to you about Habitan's history? Does any of its history remind you of stories of earth's history?
3. Was there anything in Habitan so far that reminded you of things you have learned at school about Canadian Aboriginals? Describe.

Chapter 7

1. What did you think of this chapter; are the children really in danger?
2. Do you think the children worked well together? What could they have done differently?
3. What was the most surprising element of this chapter to you?

Chapter 8

1. Why do you think Witaski was tempted by Oskana's offer?
2. Many wild plants grow in Canada, and around the world. How can you know which plants are safe to eat, such as when the children ate the bugleweed?
3. What character(s) do you find the most intriguing/interesting at this point? Why?

Chapter 9

1. Do you think Melissa's mother will ever escape the spirit of the woods? Do you think she is aware of the children's return to Habitan?
2. If you were caught in quicksand, what would you do?
3. What is your opinion of the chickadees warning; what does it mean?
4. Who do you think the mysterious man is that Oskana sent to prison to befriend her prisoner Miyoteh. Why did Oskana do this?

Chapter 10

1. Why do you think the rebels of the Good live in such an unusual village? What do you think of all of the different animals/races living together?
2. What is your opinion of the character of Soskosi?
3. Where or when have you seen red poppies before?

4. Do you think the characters' have made any mistakes or errors in judgment so far? How?

Chapter 11

1. Do you know anything about Muskox? What do you want to know?
2. What do you think of the character of the children's grandmother, Queen Sahkita?
3. Do you think the children's grandmother is telling them everything she knows? Why/why not?
4. What do you think their grandmother was trying to teach the children with her talk?
5. What deal do you think Oskana struck with her prisoner Pihteyas? Who do you think Pihteyas is?

Chapter 12

1. Do you trust the character of Tipinawa? Why/why not?
2. Do you trust the returned princess Pihteyas? Why/why not?
3. Why do you think the children's grandmother sacrificed her own power to give it to the children instead (within the special swords)?
4. Who in your life has made sacrifices for you? Why did they do it, and how does this make you feel?

Chapter 13

1. Do you think Melissa used her three spell requests wisely? Should she have helped Witaski become a man? Why/why not?
2. Do you think Melissa's mother will be able to help the children? Why do you think so?
3. What do you think Pihteyas was up to when she 'tripped' into the children, causing them to loose the stone spell? Why would she do this?
4. What do you think Pihteyas gave Oskana in the ally? Why did she do this? Do you think she is wrong?

Chapter 14

1. What did you think of the children's new powers? Which power do you think is the most valuable, and why?
2. Why do you think the Tree of Understanding turned black and gnarled when Oskana touched it?
3. Why do you think Okimaw is loyal to Oskana? Why does he not realize how evil she is? Do you think he can change?

Chapter 15

1. Is there anything in the battle scene that you think could have changed if the children made different choices? What about the adults?
2. Why do you think Annabelle's mother made the choices she did? What did she not realize or not understand?
3. Why do you think Melissa jumped off the horse to return to the loosing battle? What was she feeling?
4. What do you think will happen next?

Chapter 16

1. That evening, once back in the settlement, what did you think of the advice Kabtepwag gave prince Michael? Did you agree with it, or if not, why not?
2. Why do you think Michael was having such a difficult time accepting the lynx's advice and comfort?
3. If you were there, what would you have done differently?
4. What do you think Queen Sahkita knows about her daughter Pihteyas' actions, and why do you think she is not confronting her directly about her lies?
5. Do you think Queen Sahkita really saw the future? If so, why did she not warn any of her family about what she had seen before the battle?

Chapter 17

1. Do you think that the decision to go find King Sohkitehew is the right one? Why/why not?
2. What did you think of the advice that Melissa's mother gave her regarding friendship? Do you agree? What do you think is the most valuable part of being a friend?
3. What do you think will happen when Oskana sneaks through the portal?

Chapter 18

1. Why do you think of King Sohkitehew? Do you think he really knows what they should do? Should the other royal family members have relied so solely on the King's guidance, or should they have followed their own judgment more?
2. Do you think it was a good decision to plant the Tree of Understanding on earth? Why/why not?
3. Why is prince Michael worried about what 'they have done'?
4. Have you ever faced a difficult choice, and then regretted your actions later?

Chapter 19

1. Do you think it was wise of the heron and the prairie dog to go off on their own to try to rescue the lost prince? Why/why not?
2. Do you think Okimaw understands yet what Oskana is capable of? Why not?
3. Who do you think the tribe woman Okisewatis is? What can she do to save Okimaw? Why do you think she wants to help him?

Chapter 20

1. Why do you think Oskana became afraid of her ally Okimaw and decided to try to destroy him?
2. What do you think Papamahoko is thinking?
3. Do you think Okisewatis can trust Okimaw? Why/why not?

Chapter 21

1. Do you think it was a wise decision to sever the portals? Why/why not?

2. Do you think trapping Oskana on earth is a good idea? Why/why not?
3. Do you think their plan will backfire? How?

Chapter 22

1. What do you think of Annabelle's comments? Why do you think she is upset with both her mother and grandmother?
2. Why do you think Papamahoko was so easily fooled by Oskana? Do you think this could happen in your life? How can you avoid negative people's influence on you?
3. Who do you think the two other men really are that are travelling with the escaped royal prisoner Miyoteh? Do you think they can both be trusted? Why/why not?

Chapter 23

1. What do you think this chapter means? What is the new truth you now know about Habitan, earth, and the portals?
2. The book talks a lot about consequences. What do consequences mean to you?

Chapter 24

1. What do you think of King Sohkitew's and Queen Sakhita's decision to keep some of their plans a secret from the rest of their family? What consequences are they now facing for this decision?
2. Now that Oskana has her powers back, what do you think she will do next? What does this mean for earth and Habitan?
3. What do you think will happen on earth now? What do you think the consequences will be of the main characters' actions?
4. What do you think are the overall lessons you can take away from this story?