

Kingdom Keepers: Disney After Dark Study Guide

**Kingdom Keepers: Disney After Dark by Ridley
Pearson**

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Plot Summary

“Kingdom Keepers: Disney After Dark” is a work of fiction written by Ridley Pearson and Dave Barry. The story begins with Finn Whitman waking up in Disney world. Finn is approached by an old man who claims to have known Walt Disney. The old man, Wayne, tells Finn that he has been chosen to help solve a fable known as the Stonecutter’s Quill but that all five of the new Disney Hosts Interactive (DHIs) must be present for the fable to be solved. Finn wakes from his dream and is baffled but takes Wayne’s advice and watches the moon to prove that the other experience is real.

Finn and his new friend Amanda seek out the other DHIs. This is not an easy task because they were all chosen from different schools and different backgrounds. Eventually Finn meets with the four other interactive hosts and together they must find clues left by Disney to save the park from a group of dark forces known as the Overtakers.

Despite their best efforts, the DHIs always “wake up” in the park after going to bed. They begin to meet at the same time on a nightly basis to learn more about the fable. The DHIs learn that they must always be together to solve the fable and to go to the park alone could be dangerous.

The DHIs begin to search for the clues left by Walt Disney. They must follow the elements mentioned in the fable – Sun, clouds, wind and a mountain in order to get all of the clues.

The DHIs soon learn that their real selves and their holographic selves have become intertwined. The Overtakers begin to exploit this fact and also cross over, causing the children to become ill or while in the park, be attacked by various creatures, characters and rides.

Finn begins to think that his friend Amanda might be a witch. In reality, Amanda’s sister has been bewitched by the evil queen Maleficent. Finn manages to free the girl shortly after obtaining the necessary items to solve the fable.

Wayne is secretive about what will become of the Overtakers, saying only that nothing gets killed in Disney World, not even evil. The ending is left unresolved.



Chapters 1-6

Summary

Chapter 1

Finn Whitman thinks he is dreaming. Finn stands in the middle of Disney World. The park is empty. Finn is sure he is dreaming but cannot understand why the dream is so strange and seems so real. An old man named Wayne approaches Finn. Wayne had been sitting on a bench near a large statue of Goofy. The conversation between Finn and Wayne is dreamlike in that it is confusing and cryptic. In the end, Wayne tells Finn that he and the four others involved in this new scenario must return to Disney World after dark. Finn wakes in his room.

Chapter 2

Finn is in the hallway of his middle school, talking to his friend Dillard. Finn tells Dillard about the dream. Dillard is not pleased that he is not one of the five people chosen to save Disney World.

Finn arrives late for class. His history teacher, Mr. Richardson lets Finn know that he is not pleased by his lateness.

“For the record, your notoriety pulls no weight in my class. I beg you to remember that when grades are issued. I find the idea of child actors tedious at best.” (Chap, 2, p. 17)

The background of Finn’s audition as a DHI – Disney Host Interactive – is recounted. Finn is not sure he wants to work at Disney World but Finn’s mother insists that it is a good job that could last for years. The money is good and the family will have lifetime passes into the park. Finn concedes.

On Finn’s first day as a DHI, he meets his four counterparts – Willa, Charlene, Maybeck, and Philby. The group discusses being shot for an interactive hologram and wonders what it will be like to be a DHI.

Chapter 3

Finn and Dillard are in gym class. Finn tells Dillard that he must ask the other DHIs if they have had dreams similar to his dream involving Wayne. Dillard tells Finn he has finally lost it. Finn notices a new girl whose father happens to work for Disney-MGM. Dillard protests that Amanda is a girl and he can’t believe Finn would talk to her.

Chapter 4



Amanda and Finn ride the monorail into Disney World. Finn had asked for Amanda's help in finding the other DHIs. This is an unusual step since Finn had no use for girls at his age.

"It wasn't cool for a girl to show she liked a boy any more than the opposite. Boys and girls seemed to spend a lot of time and energy trying to convince one another that they didn't exist." (Chap. 4, p. 24)

Amanda had agreed to get Finn into the park and to track down the DHIs to take their photos. Finn takes a picture of Charlene. As he is preparing to take a photo of Maybeck, Finn sees Wayne. Wayne points out a group of men in band uniforms. There is going to be trouble.

"Finn felt sick with fear. He'd blown it, entering the park without the proper authorization. His family would probably lose their comp tickets. He supposed his DHI might even be terminated." Chap. 4, p. 25

Finn eludes the band musicians long enough to reach Amanda at the Haunted Mansion. Finn thinks he has been caught but Amanda has a plan. The pair gets into line to go inside the Mansion. Once inside Amanda shows Finn a secret exit known as "the chicken door," for people who are too scared to continue going through the scary attraction. Finn and Amanda escape.

Chapter 5

Finn goes to see Brad, the man in charge of the technology for the DHIs. Finn pleads with Brad to give him information regarding the other hosts. Brad refuses. Finn attempts to tell Brad that the technology may be unsafe and that he needs to contact the others. Brad does not believe Finn until he starts to talk about the Overtakers and Wayne. Finn leaves without the information.

Finn and Amanda get onto one of the Disney buses. Finn looks up and sees that the bus driver is Wayne.

Chapter 6

Finn receives an unsigned note from Brad. The note contains the names of the middle schools attended by the other DHIs. Finn and Amanda skip out of lunch to go to Lee Middle School. They board a city bus to check out the first middle school. Finn becomes paranoid, thinking that the bus driver is staring too much.

Once at the school, Finn and Amanda show pictures of the other DHIs to the kids at lunch. Finn is recognized by some as being a Disney host. Finn learns that Charlene's last name is Turner. Amanda spots Charlene playing basketball.



Analysis

The beginning of the story starts out with Finn meeting Wayne at Disney World. The story is clearly a dream. The conversation between Finn and Wayne is so confusing that it is almost gibberish. The purpose of Finn's dream-time journey is unclear, although there is mention of a fable and two groups of people – the Imagineers and the Overtakers. Apparently, Finn is an Imagineer who is given the task of saving Disney from the Overtakers. At first Finn seems as equally confused as the reader. As the story moves forward, Finn seems to have some insight or inside information that is not apparent to the reader. Finn begins to take the confounding quest quite seriously.

Finn seems to be the typical middle school student with worries about classes and friends, despite his fame as a child actor. Finn's best friend, Dillard, is somewhat jealous of Finn's new adventure but also thinks his friend has fallen over the edge.

Finn meets the four other Disney Interactive Hosts – DHIs - at a shoot on the MGM lot. The four seem to have little in common, coming from various schools. Some worry that the technology necessary for turning them into DHIs may not be entirely safe. The group does their shoot and parts ways.

It suddenly occurs to Finn that the other four DHIs might be his counterparts in the mysterious quest. Finn manages to find help through a new girl at school, Amanda. Amanda has never met Finn but has a thirst for adventure and even risks getting into serious trouble for a quest she knows absolutely nothing about at the time.

Discussion Question 1

What does Finn's dream mean? Do you think the dream is real?

Discussion Question 2

Why is Dillard convinced that Finn has lost his mind? Is Dillard simply jealous of Finn's success?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Amanda agree to help Finn when she does not know the whole story behind the DHIs?

Vocabulary

Fable, stonecutters, Imagineers, Outtakers, fob, surroundings, trepidation, shimmer, bluish, finisher, audition, blurted, awed, majestically, eerie, severe, horizon.



Chapters 7-12

Summary

Chapter 7

Finn approaches Charlene. Charlene seems surprised and none too happy to see Finn. Finn asks about the dreams. Charlene pulls Finn aside and tells him to leave it alone. Charlene does not want to meet Finn. Finn tells Charlene it is important for them to go to sleep at the same time that night – 8:00 PM. Charlene reluctantly agrees. As Finn is leaving, Charlene tells him not to tell anyone about the dreams because it is not safe.

Chapter 8

Finn's mother confronts him about going to the park without getting prior approval. Finn lies but his mother does not believe him. Finn is grounded. Finn's mother brightens considerably when she learns that Finn went to the park with a girl.

Finn tells his mother he is going to bed at 7:15 PM. Finn's mother is suspicious. Finn goes to bed and waits to fall asleep.

Finn falls asleep and is transported to Disney World where Wayne is waiting for him. Wayne is not surprised to see Finn. Wayne tells Finn that the plan will not work unless all of the DHIs are present. Finn says he has found Charlene and will keep looking for the others.

Wayne asks Finn what he thought of the park as a child. Finn says he thought it was magic.

“But there are two sides to magic, yes? Good magic is what you're talking about. But there's other magic besides good magic.” (Chap. 8, p. 43)

Finn and Wayne get into one of the carts and begin to drive. Finn sees five or six shadowy figures pass in front of the cart. Finn grabs the wheel to prevent Wayne from hitting them. Finn sees things that Wayne cannot. The shadowy figures return. They are pirates, including Blackbeard. Blackbeard issues orders to Finn and claims that Finn belongs to him now. Finn refuses. Charlene and Philby approach but remain in the shadows. Finn gets into a confrontation with the pirates but manages to get away.

Charlene tells Finn that she and Philby met by accident in the park. Wayne says the group must be all together, that they were chosen for their special skills. The DHIs are supposed to help the people at the park discover if the Overtakers are real and if so, how to defeat them.

Chapter 9



Finn wakes up and rushes into the bathroom. He sees a burn mark where one of the pirates had tagged him with a laser. Finn's mother comes into the bathroom and sees the burn. Finn fabricates a story about being burned by a bully's cigarette. Finn lies and says he snuck out of the house until midnight. Finn is grounded.

Chapter 10

Finn is standing next to his locker talking with Dillard. Finn fills Dillard in on the events of the previous evening. While they are talking, Amanda approaches and says she has found Willa and Maybeck. Willa has agreed to meet Finn on a virtual role playing site. Amanda knows where Finn works and they will go to the store on their way home from school.

Finn has a wave of cold and nausea come over him and falls to his knees. Amanda catches him and tells him to think of something warm. Finn has no idea what has just happened.

Chapter 11

Amanda and Finn go to Crazy Glaze, the store owned by Maybeck's Aunt Jelly. Jelly tells the kids that her nephew, whose real name is Terry, is out back but is taking it easy for the day. Amanda and Finn approach Maybeck and speak to him. Maybeck is hesitant to speak. He only talks about how he cannot mess things up at Disney because he and his aunt need the money. Finn tells Maybeck what Wayne said about always traveling back to the park in their dreams. Maybeck reluctantly agrees to help.

Chapter 12

Amanda goes to Finn's house for dinner. After dinner Finn and Amanda go upstairs to log on to the Virtual Magic Kingdom website. Soon all five of the DHIs are present. They agree to meet in the park at 9:00 PM.

The group meets in the park as planned. Wayne takes them into the castle and introduces them to Escher's Keep – a maze of real and false staircases modeled after the work of M.C. Escher. The attraction was built but never opened because Walt Disney decided to keep it to himself. Wayne tells the group to memorize the staircases and everything he shows them in case they should ever need to hide. The group makes its way onto an elevator platform that takes them close to the stars. Wayne leads the group into a small room – Walt's secret hideaway. From its narrow window Finn can see all of the Magic Kingdom.

Wayne tells the group the story of the Stonecutter. The man wished he could be more powerful, first as the sun, then a cloud, the wind and finally a mountain. In the end, he realized that the stonecutter himself was the most powerful. Although Wayne knows the tale told to him by Walt, he does not know why Walt added "Quill" to the name of the tale or what it was supposed to represent; how it could be used to defeat the Overtakers.



“Wayne said, ‘The things in the story you need to focus on are the sun, cloud, wind, and stone. At least we’re pretty sure about that. Note the order. All four of these themes are seen repeatedly in the Magic Kingdom. Somehow they are meant to lead us to a solution, a way to defeat the darker powers that have begun to threaten the park.’” (Chap. 12, p. 74)

Wayne also explains that everyone had been feeling that bad things are coming although they cannot be pinpointed. Everyone before DHIs has failed to solve the fable.

Wayne leaves. The group appoints Finn as leader and divvies up the tasks to be completed.

Analysis

Finn connects with the other DHIs. Charlene and Maybeck are reluctant to take part in the quest until Finn explains that they will continue to cross over until the fable is solved. The pair reluctantly agrees to participate.

Finn continues to lie to his mother about his nighttime activities. Finn’s mother is angry but the appearance of Amanda helps to smooth things over. Finn’s father is not so easily convinced but Finn’s mother is pleased that Finn has chosen to bring a girl home. Finn’s mother thinks it is a good idea for Finn to have another friend other than Dillard.

Wayne is pleased to see all five of the DHIs present in the park that night. Wayne shares more information about Walt Disney and his penchant for mysteries and magic. Wayne instructs the kids to memorize everything he shows them from the staircase to the secret entrances, as if to tell them that he will not always be around.

The kids learn that there are places in the park where they are not visible. The interactive process has made them half hologram, half human. This puzzles the DHIs who will have to learn how to use this information to their advantage.

Wayne stresses the need to remember the order of the elements mentioned in the fable, sure that they are a large part of solving the riddle.

Discussion Question 1

Why do you think Walt Disney was so mysterious? Why did he share the fable with Wayne?

Discussion Question 2

What do you think the Stonecutter's Quill fable means? How can it affect the park?



Discussion Question 3

Do the DHIs have any choice when it comes to agreeing to solve the fable? What might happen if one or more refuses to participate?

Vocabulary

Embossed, silhouette, tentatively, apprehensively, something, urgent, athleticism, artistry, impassively, gasped, summons, animator, admonished, misstep, moat, Frontierland, Encampment, projection.



Chapters 13-19

Summary

Chapter 13

The group meets at the encampment overlooking Tom Sawyer's Island. The DHIs notice their complete invisibility for the first time and realize why Wayne said the encampment is the perfect hiding place.

The tent is crowded so Maybeck's legs are visible outside. Philby reminds everyone to be cautious:

"Let's not forget," Philby pointed out in a whisper, "that though we may be invisible, we can hear each other. That means we can also be heard." (Chap. 13, p. 79)

Finn asks Maybeck if he has learned anything about the servers that control the holograms. No one can understand why they all got sick and fainted at the same time. The only link so far is the thunderstorm and the fact that the servers had gone down for a few seconds.

Maybeck explains: "Some of these imaging techniques have never been tried before. That's what makes it look so cool, right? It's, like, totally new stuff. The DHI servers clearly control our holograms, but why they could affect us as humans is really weird. In crossing back over we must take something of our DHIs with us. We don't see it, we don't feel it, but it's there." (Chap. 13, p. 80)

The DHIs hear a noise outside the tent. A woman's voice says she feels them and that they don't belong there. The boys get a glimpse of green skin and realize that the woman is Maleficent from *Sleeping Beauty*. The girls are scared and close their eyes. A cold chill runs over all of the bodies. Maleficent issues another warning but puzzled by the visual absence of her prey, moves on. Finn says he thinks they just met an Overtaker.

Chapter 14

The DHIs meet up at an interschool event known as the Wide World of Sports. It is held at a large arena. Finn talks to Amanda who seems upset because Finn is not giving her details of what has been happening in the park. A pale girl stares at Finn. Finn approaches her. The girl says Finn is her favorite DHI.

The group talks about the events from the previous evening – meeting Maleficent and feeling the cold. Maybeck surmises that they should be careful in real life as well. After all, if they can transfer between worlds it is possible that the Overtakers can, too.

Chapter 15



Finn tells his parents that he is going to bed early. Finn's parents are suspicious. Finn's father tells Finn if he plans on sneaking out again, he will be grounded for life and they will take away his computer – no more email or gaming. Finn's father also talks about several burglaries that have taken place in the area recently. If Finn and his friends are out roaming around, they might get blamed for the crimes even if they were innocent. Finn promises to stay in and goes to bed.

Finn wears street clothes and boots to bed. Finn is anxious because he has trouble falling asleep. Shortly after 8, the pale girl, Jez, arrives to congratulate Finn on coming in 3rd place in soccer. Finn begins to panic about the time. Just then, Amanda arrives. Finn's mother offers cookies. Finn desperately thinks of a way to get rid of the girls and eventually convinces everyone he is sick.

Chapter 16

Finn finally makes it to the park. The group is waiting for him. The first stop is the attraction titled "It's a Small World." It is the attraction with the biggest sun, so it makes sense to go there first since the sun is the first element mentioned in the fable.

As the group walks through the attraction, it becomes apparent that some of the small wooden dolls are moving. The song they sing gets louder, almost deafening. The dolls begin to approach the group. The kids run and jump into one of the boats but learn that the mechanical tracks will prevent them from getting away. A doll bites Finn and draws blood. The dolls increase in number and soon there are almost a hundred chasing the DHIs. Dolls begin to climb into the boat and bite whoever is closest. Meanwhile Finn begins to hum the famous tune. Willa joins in and they begin to sing:

"There is just one moon and one golden sun—

And a smile means friendship to ev'ryone—"

Finn realizes that smiling at the dolls will make them stop. Maybeck thinks Finn is crazy and refuses to smile. The rest follow Finn's lead and soon the dolls return to being inanimate objects, floating in the water.

Chapter 17

Finn goes to Jez's car wash as promised. Rumors had begun to spread that "It's a Small World" had been vandalized and would be closed for months. Finn meets up with Amanda and Dillard. Amanda asks Dillard to go and get sodas so she can speak to Finn in private. Amanda is angry because Finn won't tell her anything. Amanda tells Finn that continuing to try to solve the fable is stupid because someone is going to get hurt. Finn tells Amanda about the dolls. The pair stands and watches the car wash and ensuing water fights. Maybeck arrives and has a water fight with Jez.

A woman pulls up in a dark SUV. Jez approaches the SUV and speaks to the woman who is apparently her mother. Amanda notices that the woman is wearing a ton of



makeup and white gloves. Both Finn and Amanda think it's very strange. Finn realizes that perhaps wearing those things is necessary if your real skin color is green.

Chapter 18

The DHIs meet in the park that night. They go in early because of the increased security. They discuss the events of the night before and seeing Maleficent at the car wash.

Maybeck hands out 3-D glasses to everyone. Finn explains that Walt had told Wayne he planned to put things into a new perspective. Finn thinks 3-D glasses will help them to find the clue that they missed the previous evening. Maybeck, Charlene and Willa will return to It's a Small World while Finn and Philby check out the clouds at Splash Mountain. The group agrees to meet at the secret apartment at 10 PM. If the majority of the group has to escape they should use the remote located in the apartment. No one is sure if everyone will be transported back to their beds.

Chapter 19

Finn and Philby go to Splash Mountain. The boys climb into the water and begin to make their way through the ride. The water is cold and the going is tough, particularly when it comes to the drops. About halfway through, the ride starts up and the singing begins. The boys begin to panic because the biggest drop of all is coming up. They try to get to a log boat to save themselves. Finn remembers that they are nothing but light. So, they cannot drown. Finn pulls Philby into the boat.

At the last set of clouds, Finn finally sees a clue. The letters FME are spray painted onto the clouds and are only visible with the glasses.

Analysis

The group begins to come together. The realization that they are sometimes invisible is cool but also slightly frightening to them. No one is sure what the parameters are regarding their half-human, half-hologram status. Although they cannot be seen, they can be heard. As Maleficent said, she can also feel them.

There is a great deal of concern regarding Maleficent as she appears at the car wash. It is unknown if Jez plays any kind of role. Maybeck is secretive about wanting to leave the park to keep a date and one can assume that the date is Jez. The fact that Jez has infiltrated the group very quickly mostly likely means that she is involved or is being used to get information.

Finn's assumption regarding the 3-D glasses was correct and the group is well on its way to uncovering the clues.



Discussion Question 1

What is the status of Amanda and Finn's relationship? Why is Finn withholding information from Amanda?

Discussion Question 2

If Jez's mother is Maleficent, does it mean that Jez is also involved with the Overtakers? How can the DHIs be sure that Maleficent has crossed over?

Discussion Question 3

What great discovery does Finn make regarding water and light? How does it help Finn and Philby?

Vocabulary

Oddly, penetrating, outnumbered, make-believe, teepee, terrace, plausible, candidates, Mayan, Audio-Animatronics, eerie, Fastpass, tension, panoramas, lemmings, plunged, flutter.



Chapters 20-24

Summary

Chapter 20

The group goes to the apartment to see if Maybeck has used the remote to go home. Along the way, the pirates arrive and begin to chase the DHIs. The pirates get confused in Escher's Keep and end up falling into the moat. When they arrive at the apartment, the group sees the remote. Suddenly they remember that they had planned to meet at the teepee if they got separated. Back at the teepee, the group realizes that something must have happened to Maybeck. Maleficent appears outside and asks if they are missing something.

"Maleficent's voice sounded like slowly cracking glass. 'You should have stayed away while you had the chance.'" (Chap. 20, p. 115)

Charlene screams and runs outside the teepee's entrance. Maleficent can see Charlene and grabs her t-shirt. Charlene continues to run and gets away. Willa runs after Charlene.

Maleficent calls Finn by name and says he will have to deal with her now. The wicked queen throws sand on Philby so she can see him. Finn knocks her down so he and Philby can run. Philby trips but gets up and runs to the water. Finn also trips. Maleficent turns herself into a crow and tries to catch Finn. Finn jumps into the water and is attacked by a giant eel. Philby commandeers a boat and goes to help Finn. The eel lets go and Finn is safe.

Finn cannot help but wonder how Maleficent knew his name.

Chapter 21

Amanda and Finn go to see Maybeck. Amanda invents a ruse to distract Jelly while Finn tries to get to Maybeck. Jelly hears Finn and catches him trying to get to Maybeck's window. Finn had already been in the room and noticed that Maybeck is in bed and will not wake up. Jelly tells Finn that he has a fever but nothing else, just some kind of sleeping sickness. Finn tells Jelly to wait until she hears from him the next day before taking Maybeck to the hospital. Jelly is suspicious and does not want to trust her nephew to a boy.

Chapter 22

Amanda and Finn leave Crazy Glaze. Along the way a mini-bike careens toward them. It is clear that the biker is intent on crashing into them. Amanda and Finn detour into a skate park and make many tricky maneuvers. The biker continues to gain on them. Finally, Amanda and Finn develop a plan to clothesline the biker. The biker dumps the



bike just short of being injured. As they ride away, Amanda yells out some words in a foreign tongue, stopping the biker in his tracks.

Chapter 23

Finn is distracted at dinner. He cannot stop thinking about Maybeck, about the clues, and Amanda's mysterious behavior. Finn avoids having much conversation and asks to be excused from the table. As Finn stands up, his legs turn to rubber and everything around him runs at slow speed. Despite his protests, his parents send him to bed.

Chapter 24

Finn wakes on a park bench and soon sees Philby in the crowd. The boys go to Wayne's apartment and talk about Maybeck. Wayne is surprised to learn that the boys know about Maleficent. Finn and Philby also mention the pirates and other attackers.

"The pirates don't matter much. But you must underestimate nothing, no one. Conviction is the better part of intent. Few battles are won by strength alone. Cunning and knowing your resources can help you overpower the most powerful." (Chap. 24, p. 129)

After brainstorming for a bit, it is decided that Maybeck is probably being kept at Space Mountain because it is the loudest ride. No one would hear Maybeck if he cried out. Finn and Philby get ropes from the firehouse and proceed to climb down through the dome of the attraction. Finn realizes that he can walk through walls. Finn finds Maybeck and unties him. Maybeck says he is fine aside from being hungry and thirsty. Maybeck confesses that he did have a hot date with Jez. On the way, Maybeck felt very cold and suddenly could not move.

Analysis

Maybeck's attitude gets him into trouble. It is uncertain at first if Maybeck just ditched the group for a date or if he was in trouble. The kids don't know each other well yet, so it is difficult to tell. It is soon learned that Maybeck has been captured. Maleficent is a formidable foe. Finn is scared because Maleficent knows his name. The events that take place in real time prove that the Overtakers can follow the DHIs anywhere.

Amanda's role in the story becomes more interesting when she throws a spell at the biker in the skate park. It is clear that she is also keeping secrets from Finn and most likely has a bigger role in the quest than previously thought.

Jelly is suspicious of Finn's behavior. She seems incredulous that Finn expects her to put Maybeck's wellbeing in his hands. Still, the reader can surmise that something about Finn will make Jelly trust him.

Maybeck's confession regarding Jez only strengthens the supposition that the girl is somehow involved in the Overtakers' plot.



Discussion Question 1

If the park was closed, how did Jez manage to get in? Why was Maybeck so secretive about meeting the girl?

Discussion Question 2

Why do you think Wayne lacks information regarding the Overtakers? Do you think Wayne is withholding information?

Discussion Question 3

Finn asks Jelly to trust him. If you were in Jelly's place, what would you do?

Vocabulary

Manicured, corridor, ordeal, budge, throne, gruff, interconnected, improbable, clunky, avast, inverted, aft, amid, plumes, nook, rustle, raspy.



Chapters 25-29

Summary

Chapter 25

The kids decide to go to the park as actual guests on a busy Saturday. Willa and Charlene ride the Winnie the Pooh ride. One girl spots the first letter of a clue. Suddenly, rain begins to come from everywhere. There are no other passengers even though the line outside was long. The girls are locked inside a room and the water is rising fast. The girls manage to pull on a pipe which releases the doors. The girls leap out of the car and run.

Chapter 26

The DHIs meet on the VMK website every night. Finn and Philby decide to tackle Thunder Mountain for the next and last clue. Then the group can take the clues to Wayne.

Finn's mother tells him they need to have a talk. Finn is worried. Finn's mother has noticed the grimy and wet clothes Finn has left behind. Finn berates himself for not thinking of it. Finn tries to get out of telling his mother the truth but finally gives in. His mother looks completely confused. She credits him with creativity but knows it cannot be the truth. Finn says he will have to end it once and for all.

Finn and Philby go to Thunder Mountain and begin the trek from the beginning to the end of the ride. As with the other rides, they cannot leave the track or they will be spotted by the security cameras. Just over halfway through the ride the boys spot the last clue. Suddenly the air turns cold and they know that Maleficent must be nearby.

A giant T. Rex comes to life and begins to charge at Finn and Philby. Once again, Philby refers to physics class and points out that there is a turn in the tracks. The dinosaur will not be able to make it. Philby is right and the dinosaur falls, snapping its leg off at the knee. The boys escape.

Chapter 27

The group goes to a restaurant and tried to figure out the clues. After trying for a while, Maybeck sneezes and the clues fall into place. They read: "My First Pen." The DHIs will take the information to Wayne before visiting "One Man's Dream," a museum at Disney-MGM.

Wayne congratulates the group on solving the fable. He agrees that Walt's first pen is in the museum however, the kids cannot take the pen out of the museum because while they are not real the pen is, so it cannot travel through doors. Maybeck becomes angry



and asks why Wayne can't solve the problem. Wayne says his job was to assemble the DHIs – it's their problem to solve.

A group of men is heard outside. The DHIs have been spotted. They begin to panic because the remote is in the apartment. Wayne brings out a duplicate remote and tells everyone to gather together.

Chapter 28

The group is on a train discussing how they might get into "One Man's Dream." Amanda pipes up from the seat behind them. Finn hadn't really spoken to her since the incident in the skate park. Amanda tells them that Jez has been following them. Amanda convinces the group to let her help distract the guards at the museum.

Finn manages to get inside the museum and enters the theater to watch a film about Walt Disney's life. Finn hides and comes out after everyone has gone. Finn takes all of the pens and pencils he can find along with some plans for the park. Willa sounds that the security guards are coming. Finn hides and the guards believe there has been a false alarm and leave.

Finn feels the cold again and gets pulled toward an exit door. The cold seeps through the door and ice forms on the floor. Once again, the security guards run in Finn's direction. Finn manages to run and collides with Amanda. It was Amanda that had caused the cold. She wants to explain, but Finn runs away.

Chapter 29

The kids meet at the park for a not-so-scary Halloween party. Each is dressed in costume. Jez sees Finn and asks him to go into the Haunted Mansion. Before Finn can reply, Charlene arrives and says Finn had promised her the first ride. Amanda approaches Finn who ignores her. Jez leaves.

The kids stand and talk. Suddenly Amanda collapses followed by Charlene. Jez is spotted talking to a witch – probably her mother. Finn bets that they are going to the Pirates of the Caribbean. The group votes and follows the witches.

Analysis

The kids are close to solving the fable. In fact, they believed they have solved the fable but Wayne says they cannot stop now. Maybeck continues to be angry and wants to know why Wayne can't "un-design" them and let them go. No one wanted to be a part of the quest any longer. They soon realize that they have no choice but to "borrow" Walt's first pen and try to figure out the rest of the plot so that the Overtakers don't win.

There are Overtakers everywhere during the Halloween party. They are hard to spot because everyone is in costume. Jez tries to get Finn inside the Haunted Mansion. Finn tries to find a way out because it is clear that something very bad would happen to him if



he went with the girl. Jez jokes about putting a spell on Finn. Later, Amanda repeats her warning about Jez, that she is an evil witch. Amanda is about to say something very important to Finn when she collapses. Apparently, the Overtakers have found a way to affect humans as well as DHIs.

Maybeck wants out and argues about going to the Pirates of the Caribbean. However, if the kids want to know what Jez and her mother are up to, they have to follow them.

It is still unseen what part Amanda plays. The readers are left with questions, including the fact that Amanda might be a witch.

Discussion Question 1

What is Amanda's reason for being at the museum when Finn escapes?

Discussion Question 2

What do you think Walt Disney meant by the plans?

Discussion Question 3

How is Amanda involved in the fable and the presence of Jez?

Vocabulary

Absorbed, yelled, slumped, institutionalized, pillar, plaza, monorail, interjected, warily, mumbled, lame, monitors, coincidental, scholar, blurted, brownout, goosebumps.



Chapters 30-34

Summary

Chapter 30

Finn, Philby and Maybeck enter into a mock-up battlement. Throughout their journey, they see models of pirates – the same ones that had attacked Finn on the first night. As they walk through the interior they notice that the jail cells had been recently refurbished. This is where the Overtakers planned to stow the employees of the park after they had been captured. Then the Overtakers would be in charge. As the boys continue forward they feel an arctic blast of air and know that they are getting closer.

The boys walk into a forced perspective hallway. Maleficent appears behind them and throws up a fence of electrified light. Jez also emerges. Maleficent says she wants the pen. She lets Maybeck and Philby go – she only wants Finn. Finn says he knows that she is the leader of the Overtakers.

“She cackled an edgy laugh. ‘Me? Head? False compliments will get you nowhere with me, young man. I am but a humble servant to she who lives within. My powers are so small and insignificant. Do not waste your breath. I’m an errand runner, that’s all.’”
(Chapter 30, p. 175)

Maleficent tells Finn to give her the pen. Finn plays stupid to no avail. Finn soon realizes that Maleficent needs the pen but cannot touch it. Finn thrusts the pen into Maleficent’s face and the witch falls, stunned. Finn forces Jez to remove the fence and let him go. Maleficent tells Finn they will meet again.

Chapter 31

The group meets with Wayne. Finn tells him the story about Maleficent and Jez. Wayne thinks about what Maleficent might do with the plans she stole from Finn. Apparently, the pen is equally important as the plans to the Overtakers’ plot. Wayne says Finn must retrieve the plans:

“We’re going to use her own tactics against her. If you manage to get the plans, she’ll come after you. She’ll want to stop you from getting them to me, especially now that she knows you have the pen.” (Chap. 31, p. 180)

Wayne tells the group to meet him at 9 AM the next morning.

Wayne picks up the kids, including Amanda, in a bus and drives them to a tunnel entrance near FrontierLand. Each kid is dressed in an employee outfit. Wayne gives them instructions. Maybeck will search the server room and the others will go to the cold food storage section. Maleficent likes the cold. Wayne tells them to get the plans and then return topside before running to save their lives. Wayne will handle Maleficent from



that point forward. Finn is ordered to do exactly as Amanda tells him. Finn notices a strange bond between Wayne and Amanda.

Chapter 32

Wayne takes the girls down into cold storage while the boys go to the control room. It was cold, giving them a sign that Maleficent was inside. Finn tricks Maleficent into opening the door. When she does, Finn can see that she has been drained of much of her power. Maleficent insists on getting the pens before she will help the boys. Finn tricks her again and Philby stabs her with the pens. Maleficent flies into a wall of computer equipment, causing showers of sparks. The boys grab the plans and run only to be stopped by the office manager. The electricity feeds Maleficent and she flies out the door, her sights set on Finn.

Chapter 33

The boys run full out for the exits. They play a shell game with the plans, throwing Maleficent off track. Finn runs off with the plans. When he gets outside he realizes that he has exited the wrong way. Maybeck is close behind. A group of kids surrounds Maybeck, thinking he is Aladdin. Finn tells Maybeck to sign autographs. The boys think they have escaped from Maleficent until Jez confronts Finn and demands that he turn over the plans. Jez snatches the plans away. Finn steals them back and knocks Jez to the ground. Finn and Jez begin to fight. Finn imagines himself as nothing more than a hologram. He manages to lock into Jez and the pair begins to spin around, sending off showers of light. The crowd roars in approval. As they separate, Jez transforms back into Jess, Amanda's twin and thanks Finn for saving her.

Finn runs toward Amanda. Amanda orders Finn to go down a trash chute to get to Wayne. Maleficent follows. At the bottom of the disgusting chute Finn jumps out. A group of people with Wayne traps Maleficent in a net. The kids and Wayne run to the bus.

Chapter 34

The kids and Wayne meet in the secret apartment. They look at the plans. Wayne hands the pen to Finn and tells him to do the honors. Finn releases one drop of ink onto the plans. The ink runs all over the plans illuminating new parts of the park no one had ever seen. Outside the entire park fills with lights and there is the most fantastic display of fireworks ever seen.

The group stands in the middle of the room, huddled together and cheering. Wayne presses the button on the remote.

Analysis

The group trusts Wayne implicitly and listens to his orders regarding the locating of the plans and the defeat of Maleficent. Finn is in the most danger as the leader and



Maleficent seems to have a great need for revenge against Finn. Finn is stunned to learn that Jez is really Jess, Amanda's twin sister. It finally explains Amanda's interest in the fable and why it was so important for her to be involved.

Although the fable has been solved, it is never clear if Maleficent or the Overtakers are defeated or what will become of the park. The author leaves space for a sequel.

Discussion Question 1

Why didn't Amanda tell Finn about her twin sister?

Discussion Question 2

How does Maleficent gain and lose power?

Discussion Question 3

What do you think will happen to the park now?

Vocabulary

Midst, menacing, Flamenco, festive, deserted, resounding, clang, reverberated, cordoned, turret, mock-up, battlement, pulley, mannequin, twilight, abounded.



Characters

Finn Whitman

Lawrence Finnegan Whitman aka Finn, is the main character in “Kingdom Keepers: Disney After Dark.” Finn is a 13 year old boy who is relatively average in every way, save that he is a child actor. Finn is talked into auditioning for a new role at Disney World. The role is to act as a Disney Host Interactive (DHI). The DHI will greet guests in the park and answer questions. What Finn does not know at the time is that his real persona and the DHI hologram will eventually become intertwined.

Finn finds himself embroiled in a mystery at the park. Amanda, a new girl at school, offers to help Finn solve the mystery. Every night when Finn falls asleep, he goes to Disney World and meets with an old man named Wayne. Soon, the other DHIs arrive and together they set out to solve the fable known as the Stonecutter’s Quill.

Finn finds courage he never knew he possessed and gains some good new friends along the way.

Walt Disney

Walt Disney is the genius behind Disney World and Disney Land. Disney started out as an animator and had a dream of opening an amusement park featuring characters he created. Along with his brother, Roy, Walt managed to accomplish his dream. However, he died before the park actually opened.

The fable is one used by Walt to lead a group of special people to solve the problem faced by the park – the fact that dark forces known as Overtakers, were determined to take over Walt’s creation and use the park for their own ends.

Wayne and many others show a devotion and reverence for Disney, a man considered to be a visionary and well before his time.

Wayne Kresky

Wayne Kresky is often referred to as “the old man.” Wayne is the DHIs' link to the fable and to the legacy of Walt Disney.

Isabella Angelo

Isabella Angelo aka “Willi,” is one of the DHIs and part of the team chosen to defeat the Overtakers.



Charlene Turner

Charlene Turner is one of the DHIs and part of the team chosen to defeat the Overtakers.

Terry Maybeck

Terry Maybeck is one of the DHIs and part of the team chosen to defeat the Overtakers.

Philby

Philby is one of the DHIs and part of the team chosen to defeat the Overtakers.

Amanda

Amanda is Finn's friend from school and one of the people who helps Finn figure out the quest at Disney World.

Dillard Cole

Dillard Cole is Finn's best friend.

Jez

Jez is really Jess, Amanda's twin sister who has been put under a spell by Maleficent.

Maleficent

Maleficent is the wicked queen from Sleeping Beauty. She is the main Overtaker that tries to capture and stop the DHIs from ruining her plans.

Symbols and Symbolism

Walt Disney World

Walt Disney World, located in Florida, is the brain child of famous cartoonist Walt Disney. Disney started out as an animator and had a dream of opening an amusement park featuring characters he created. Along with his brother, Roy, Walt managed to accomplish his dream. However, he died before the park actually opened.

In the story, many aspects of the park are mentioned including its attractions, such as Space Mountain, Pirates of the Caribbean, Frontier Land, One Man's Dream, It's a Small World, Tomorrow Land, and Thunder Mountain. The park in itself is designed to be magical with many characters, thrills, and exciting displays including Cinderella's Castle. People from all over the world visit Disney World year round to be a part of Disney's vision and family-based fun.

Overtakers

The Overtakers are a collection of evil characters intent on taking over the park. Just as Walt Disney recreated characters and stories that are hundreds of years old, the evil characters also live. Wayne explains: "If the hero and heroine go off to live happily ever after, then what happens to the villains, witches, sea monsters, and evil stepmothers?"

It is never mentioned who the head Overtaker is or the final plan they have for the park. Finn confronts Maleficent as being the head Overtaker and the evil queen said she was simply a servant.

The DHIs manage to find the clues, Walt's first pen and plans for the park which is the first big step in defeating the Overtakers.

DHIs

The DHIs are Disney Hosts Interactive - holograms used as tour guides in the park.

Virtual Magic Kingdom

The Virtual Magic Kingdom Website is where the DHIs meet online.

Holograms

The DHIs are actually computer generated holograms made of light.



Stonecutter's Quill

The Stonecutter's Quill is an Asian fable that Walt Disney uses to hide his secret plans.

Elements

The DHIs must follow the elements in order to find the clues to the fable.

Disney Characters

Disney World is filled with every Disney character imagined and created by Walt Disney and his successors, including Pooh, Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse, Goofy, Aladdin, Mulan, and more.

Worker Bees

Wayne refers to minions of the Overtakers as nothing more than worker bees.

Clues

The DHIs must use the Stonecutter's fable to locate clues throughout the park.

Settings

Walt Disney World

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Crazy Glaze

Crazy Glaze is the store owned and operated by Maybeck's Aunt Jelly. On several occasions, Finn visits the store to see Maybeck.

Virtual Magic Kingdom

The Virtual Magic Kingdom is an interactive website where the DHIs often meet to talk and to plan strategy for their next move in conquering the Overtakers.



Themes and Motifs

Magic

Magic is one of the main themes in the story. Walt Disney World is designed to embrace magic and share it with the world. Magic appears in many forms in Disney, from the characters in its movies to events in the park. When it comes to the story, magic is used in many other ways as well. First, there is technological magic that turns real. The DHIs are supposed to be photographed and projected as interactive hosts in the park. However, magic causes the people and the holograms to become intertwined.

There is also dark magic in the form of the Overtakers. They are the evil forces that want to overtake the park. Maleficent is one of the main perpetrators of the magic that tries to stop the DHIs from saving the park.

Disney

Walt Disney World, located in Florida, is the brain child of famous cartoonist Walt Disney. Disney started out as an animator and had a dream of opening an amusement park featuring characters he created. Along with his brother, Roy, Walt managed to accomplish his dream. However, he died before the park actually opened.

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Trust

Trust is a main issue between the characters in the story. The DHIs must learn to trust each other even though they are perfect strangers. Likewise, Finn and the others must learn to trust Wayne and his directions when it comes to defeating the Overtakers.

There are times when trust is breached. Finn's parents catch Finn lying about sneaking out although when Finn tells the truth, his mother doesn't believe him. There is also a major breach of trust between Finn and Amanda when Finn thinks Amanda might be a witch because she withholds information from him.

Styles

Point of View

The point of view used in “Kingdom Keepers: Disney After Dark” is third person omniscient. This point of view works well throughout the book as there are several components and underlying factors that would not be revealed otherwise. The story itself is rather complex and only third person omniscient would allow the reader to follow and understand the activities of all of the characters as well as the dangerous and deadly events of the plans of the DHIs to stop the Overtakers from taking over Disney World. It also allows for the reader to follow and understand actions and thoughts of other characters in the book as well as those events of which one single character has no knowledge.

While the first person point of view might have been interesting when coming from the characters in their time of confusion, third person conveys the entire story and not just the subjective opinions of the characters. It also permits the reader to take part in the journey and development of each character in the story, including Finn, Philby, Amanda, Willa, Charlene, and Maybeck.

Language and Meaning

The language and meaning used throughout “Kingdom Keepers: Disney After Dark” reflects on the times in a number of ways. It is clear that the people in the stories live in the modern age, as they speak of particular events and technology of the time as well as the newness of using holograms in the amusement park. Aside from tech jargon, the authors do not use a great deal of slang or any language that would date the work in a negative way.

The authors are not afraid to exercise their vocabulary although they tend to maintain a certain reading level for their young audience. There is a marked absence of sex, violence, and vulgarity throughout the stories and it is rare to see any use of profanity. This may be due to the fact that many of this is a young adult book.

It is easy to see the progression of the work, both in structure and language.

Structure

“Kingdom Keepers: Disney After Dark” is a work of fiction. The work is chronological in nature. It is comprised of 336 pages, broken into 34 chapters. The shortest chapter is 3 pages in length, and the longest chapter is 12 pages in length. The average number of pages per chapter is 9 pages.

The story begins with Finn Whitman waking up in Disney world. Finn is approached by an old man who claims to have known Walt Disney. The old man, Wayne, tells Finn he has been chosen to help solve a fable known as the Stonecutter's Quill. Finn meets with the four other interactive hosts and together they must find clues left by Disney to save the park from a group of dark forces known as the Overtakers.

The group defeats the Overtakers while going on a frightening series of misadventures. The authors leave the ending open, with the intent, perhaps, of publishing a sequel.



Quotes

For the record, your notoriety pulls no weight in my class. I beg you to remember that when grades are issued. I find the idea of child actors tedious at best.

-- Mr. Richardson (Chapter 2 paragraph 2)

Importance: This quote shows that while Finn is somewhat famous, he is still held accountable for his behavior.

There's a fable, a story, a puzzle of sorts that was left in case of a problem like this. It's called the Stonecutter's Quill.

-- Wayne (Chapter 1 paragraph 4)

Importance: This is the first mention of the mystery that Finn and the other finishers must solve.

It wasn't cool for a girl to show she liked a boy any more than the opposite. Boys and girls seemed to spend a lot of time and energy trying to convince one another that they didn't exist.

-- n/a (Chapter 4 paragraph 10)

Importance: Finn is stepping outside accepted behavior between boys and girls to get Amanda to help him find the other DHIs so he can ask questions about the dream.

She had to be as curious about this as he was. Could they possibly meet in the park in their dreams?

-- n/a (Chapter 7 paragraph 5)

Importance: This is the first meeting between Finn and Charlene. Finn wants to know if Charlene has information and is eager to find out what she thinks about the situation.

This is probably the weirdest thing I've ever done. And I've done some weird stuff," Finn said.

-- Finn (Chapter 8 paragraph 11)

Importance: Finn speaks to Wayne upon his arrival at Disney World. Finn finally begins to trust Wayne.

But there are two sides to magic, yes? Good magic is what you're talking about. But there's other magic besides good magic.

-- Wayne (Chapter 8 paragraph 27)

Importance: Wayne tries to explain that there is more going on in the park than meets the eye.



Wayne said, ‘The things in the story you need to focus on are the sun, cloud, wind, and stone. At least we’re pretty sure about that. Note the order. All four of these themes are seen repeatedly in the Magic Kingdom. Somehow they are meant to lead us to a solution, a way to defeat the darker powers that have begun to threaten the park.

-- Wayne (Chapter 12 paragraph 15)

Importance: Wayne finally reveals the nature of the Stonecutter's Quill and tells the DHIs that they must figure out the fable and how to use it to defeat the Overtakers.

Let’s not forget,” Philby pointed out in a whisper, “that though we may be invisible, we can hear each other. That means we can also be heard.

-- Philby (Chapter 13 paragraph 3)

Importance: Philby makes an important point. Although the encampment is safe from prying eyes, it is still possible to be heard and therefore put in harm's way.

Some of these imaging techniques have never been tried before. That's what makes it look so cool, right? It's, like, totally new stuff. The DHI servers clearly control our holograms, but why they could affect us as humans is really weird. In crossing back over we must take something of our DHIs with us. We don't see it, we don't feel it, but it's there.

-- Maybeck (Chapter 13 paragraph 3)

Importance: Maybeck begins to unravel the mystery of how all of the DHIs got sick and fainted during the thunderstorm. The DHIs take back part of their computerized selves once they return to the real world. This could be a large part of the danger faced by the kids.

What a shame you didn't listen and obey. I told you to stay away from here. Nasty children. Nasty little children.

-- Maleficent (Chapter 20 paragraph 9)

Importance: This quote is during the time Maleficent is mocking the DHIs. Maybeck has gone missing and Maleficent is taking delight in the fact that the Overtakers have gained a victory.

The pirates don't matter much. But you must underestimate nothing, no one. Conviction is the better part of intent. Few battles are won by strength alone. Cunning and knowing your resources can help you overpower the most powerful.

-- Wayne (Chapter 24 paragraph 19)

Importance: Wayne tells Finn and Philby to pay attention to everything around them and to be most wary of people like Maleficent, who seems to be calling the shots.

Maybeck's abduction had worn them out and frightened them to the point of not wanting to continue.

-- n/a (Chapter 25 paragraph 3)

Importance: The group takes a hiatus from their quest. Philby announces that a power station has been drained of its power which means the Overtakers have come over to the other side.