

The Morrigan's Curse by Dianne K. Salerni

Discussion Questions and Activities

Common Core Learning Targets:

1.3.5.A Determine a theme of a text from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenge ; summarize the text.

1.3.5.C Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text.

1.3.5.D Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent.

1.3.5.E Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem.

Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss Jax's growth as a protagonist over the course of *The Eighth Day*, *The Inquisitor's Mark*, and *The Morrigan's Curse*. He started as a character that things happened to (passive) and ended as a character who made things happen (active). What characteristics in Jax changed? What things about Jax remain the same?
2. What are Addie's main character traits? What is her biggest problem and most important goal? What changes do you see in Addie over the course of the story? What are her most important acts and which ones best demonstrate growth?
3. Compare the mistakes made by Addie in this book (trusting Bran Llyr, suggesting they visit her foster home) to Jax's mistakes in the first book (giving information to Terrance online, lying to Riley about the Donovans). Discuss what each character hoped to accomplish with his/her actions and the unforeseen consequences of that choice.
4. At the end of Chapter 4, Jax speculates that the Morrigan is trying to eliminate Riley and/or Evangeline. If one or both of them had been killed by the wyvern in *The Inquisitor's Mark* or the flood in *The Morrigan's Curse*, how might their absence have affected the outcome of events in the climax of this book?

5. If Jax, Riley, and Evangeline are at the GOOD end of a continuum while Bran and Griffyn and the Morrigan are at the EVIL end, where do characters like Sloane and Kel fall? What about Addie and the three Donovans?
6. Discuss Addie and Evangeline's relationship as sisters. How does Addie describe Evangeline? How does Evangeline describe Addie? Find quotes. When are the sisters at odds? When are they in agreement? How realistic is their relationship, based on your own experience with siblings?
7. How important is Stink to the story? In which events is his presence crucial? Who wants their own pet brownie now?
8. In *The Inquisitor's Mark*, Uncle Finn was on the side of the villains. He held Addie captive, took her blood for experimentation, used unpleasant means to try to "cure" his daughter, and conspired with Ursula Dulac to eliminate the Emrys girls and the eighth day. How does he try to redeem himself at the end of *The Morrigan's Curse*? Do you think his actions make up for past crimes?
9. At the beginning of Chapter 36, Addie still wanted to destroy the Eighth Day Spell and had the power to do so. Before the end of the chapter, she defies the Morrigan and refuses to do it. What changes her mind? Analyze the conversation between the Morrigan and Addie. Where did the Morrigan go wrong?
10. Discuss the evolution of Jax's relationship with Riley—from the beginning of *The Eighth Day* through *The Inquisitor's Mark* and to the end of *The Morrigan's Curse*.

Activities

1. Trace the sightings of the Girl of Crows throughout the series. List the crucial events that take place in her presence. ~~ *For the teacher, the Girl of Crows appearances in order: 1) at the pyramid in Mexico, 2) at the fall of Oeth-Anoeth, 3) in Central Park when the wyvern trashed the Dulac building and the Llyrs rescued Addie, 4) on Madoc's island when the Llyrs create the hurricane, 5) on the road during the hurricane/flood, 6) in Vermont when the Llyrs killed the oracle, 7) at the storage unit when Jax unsheathes the Sword of Nuadu, 8) in the climactic street battle, 9) on the water tower with Addie*
2. With characters moving through brownie holes, viewing the same event from different perspectives, and skipping over days, the chronology of the story is not easy to follow. Have students create a timeline of events in order, starting from the beginning of *The*

Morrigan's Curse (or possibly the end of *The Inquisitor's Mark* when the Llyrs rescue Addie).

3. Research the real legends of the Four Treasures of the Tuatha Danaan: The Sword of Nuadu, the Stone of Fal, the Spear of Lugh, and the Cauldron of Dagda. Create a chart describing their history, their legendary powers, and any changes the author made to their powers when writing *The Morrigan's Curse*. Draw each item.
4. Create a script, comic book, or short story that imagines a scene not included in the book. It could be something referenced but not seen – such as the airplane battle during Addie's escape from New York, the capture of Addie by the Dulacs, or Evangeline preparing her attack spells before meeting the Llyrs – or it could be a scene totally invented by the student.
5. Choose any character in the series that is inspired by legend: Arthur Pendragon, Merlin Emrys, the Lady of the Lake, Myrddin Wylit, the Morrigan, or any of the Knights of the Round Table referenced in the series. Research this character and use a Venn Diagram to compare the legends to how the author portrayed her character in the books.
6. If students have previously done some of the activities suggested for *The Inquisitor's Mark*, they can use the new information in *The Morrigan's Curse* to update the previous project:
 - a. The Good, Evil, Neutral chart can be expanded to include new characters.
 - b. The categorization of magic talents can be applied to new talents introduced in the third book – and adjusted or added to as needed.
 - c. The rules for use of brownie tunnels can be revised to include any new information learned by Jax and Dorian.