



EDUCATORS' GUIDE

THE CITY OF LOST CATS

TANYA LLOYD KYI



TANYA LLOYD KYI is the author of more than thirty-five books for children and young adults, including *Emily Posts* and *Me and Banksy*. She grew up with a racoon-sized tortoiseshell cat named D.C. (for Darn Cat), who would have felt right at home in *The City*. Tanya has worked in the past as a graphic designer, an editor, and a dishwasher. (She considers herself entirely qualified for that last one.) Her favorite color is blue, her favorite food is cheese, and her favorite book is *A Wrinkle in Time*.

When she's not telling cat tales, Tanya teaches at the UBC School of Creative Writing in Vancouver, British Columbia.

When Fiona wanders into an abandoned mansion down by the harbor, she discovers the house is full of stray cats (and two chaotic parakeets). Fiona feels a great deal of sympathy for the animals; she understands what it's like to need a safe home.

The mansion is threatened by a demolition team, but Fiona is determined to save "The City" and its residents. The cats, meanwhile, have their own plans. Cot (short for Cottonball Fluffikins Magnificent III, a name he refuses to acknowledge) has lived in the mansion for two years and is the self-proclaimed king. He's convinced the demolition effort has been organized by the recently arrived parakeets. Those birds have got to go!

Cot's feline rival, Piper, is sure she can intimidate the demolition team and force them to leave, if Fiona will simply stay out of her way.

And the parakeets . . . well, the parakeets just want to go home.

As the demolition team begins tearing down the house next door, Fiona looks for any help she can find — at the library, the butcher shop, and even at Municipal Hall. Can the efforts of one small girl and an assortment of animals stop a luxury condo development? Can they create something better in its place?

It's going to take some quick thinking on the part of Fiona, not to mention the cooperation of all the cats, to give *The City* a future.

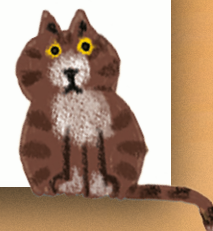
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. In the opening pages, Piper is startled by loud explosions in the sky. She races home, but once she's reached the safety of the mansion, she confronts the explosions. Does Piper think of herself as frightened or courageous? Would others see her the same way?
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1
2. On page 10, Cot falls from the railing to the floor below, damaging his dignity. Cot seems to think that appearances have a lot to do with leadership. Do you agree? What qualities do you look for in a strong leader?
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1
3. On page 14, Aunt Tanis calls Fiona "petulant." What's the difference between petulant and angry? Which do you think best describes Fiona in this section of the book? Is one of these emotions more useful than the other? Can you think of examples of times you might have felt either petulant or angry?
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.5
4. Throughout the first chapters of this book, Fiona searches for her destiny. Do you believe in destiny? How much of Fiona's story in *The City of Lost Cats* was determined by destiny, and how much by the actions of Fiona and the other characters? Were there any parts that relied on coincidence or fate?
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.1
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1
5. On page 48, Fiona decides to return home, despite telling Aunt Tanis that she was running away. She expects to find her aunt frantically searching for her. Instead, she finds a note telling her that Aunt Tanis has gone back to work. How does Fiona feel in this moment? Are there different ways she could have handled this situation? What might you have done?
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1
6. On page 59, Mickey and Nick meet with Dex about the demolition job. Does Dex seem trustworthy or untrustworthy in this scene? What details help you decide?
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.3
7. On page 67, there's a newspaper article about a housing shortage in the municipality. Do your friends live in different kinds of houses or apartments? How many kinds of housing can you think of? How should a city decide what kind of housing to build?
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.2
8. On page 82, Cot decides the birds are working with the excavator, also known as "The Beast." What makes Cot jump to this conclusion? Can you think of times in real life when people might make connections that aren't quite right? Have you ever jumped to a conclusion, then realized later that you were wrong?
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.3
9. On page 94, Fiona convinces Aunt Tanis that she doesn't need an escort to Dance Camp; she can ride her bike. But she doesn't say where she's riding. Where is the line between withholding information and intentionally lying? Do you think Fiona was right to hide her true plans from her aunt? Why or why not?
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1



10. On page 125, Mickey thinks he saw a Cat leaping toward the excavator. His brother Nick thinks Mickey was imagining things. Has anyone ever doubted one of your stories? If your sibling or your friend told you they'd seen a ghost, what sorts of questions would you ask? Is there any chance you'd believe their story?
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.3
11. On page 143, community members launch a quiet campaign, vowing to fight noise pollution in their city. What sorts of things contribute to noise pollution? Is this a problem in your neighborhood? If you were the mayor of your town or city, are there changes you would suggest? Do you think anyone would disagree with you? If so, why?
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.2
12. On page 170, Big Dog gives advice to Tarantino. When you're reading this scene, you can probably guess what's going to happen if Tarantino gives a snake to Fiona. You understand more than Tarantino does. This is an example of dramatic irony — a time in the story when the reader knows more than the character. Can you find other examples of dramatic irony in *The City of Lost Cats*?
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.5
13. On page 184 and 185, Cot tells the other cats that the parakeets are cooperating with the excavator. How does he convince them? Why do the cats believe him? Do you think this sort of thing could ever happen to people in real life?
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.3
14. On page 206, Piper takes drastic action and sacrifices herself. How have Piper's views on leadership changed through the course of the book? Do you think she makes the right choice in this scene?
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1
15. On page 243, Constable Bottum decides not to arrest Fiona and Mickey. Why? If you were going to create rules for protesters, what would those rules be? Can you think of any real-life activists who have used non-violent protest techniques?
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1
16. After the mayor arrives on page 253, she spends a lot of time listening to different people on the lawn of the old mansion. What does this tell you about the mayor's leadership style? Are there other times in this story when people should have listened more carefully to others? What about Fiona — is she always a good listener?
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.3
17. A few people adopt pet cats in the final pages of this book. Which characters in this book would make the best pet owners? What qualities do they have?
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1
18. By the final pages of the book, Fiona and Aunt Tanis have moved into a different kind of apartment. The land around the mansion is being used for affordable housing developments. What sorts of things do people need in order to feel safe and comfortable in their neighborhood?
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1



Follow-Up Activities



DESIGN YOUR OWN COMMUNITY

Fiona spends a lot of time drawing different versions of the mansion and thinking about what a great community might look like. When urban planners design communities, they consider all sorts of questions.

- Where will children play?
- Will there be pedestrian areas and space for cars?
- Is there space for nature?
- Will there be both businesses and housing?

If you were going to design your ideal neighborhood, what would it look like? Consider all the things your family and your neighbors might need, then sketch a picture or a map of your neighborhood. Write two or three paragraphs explaining your choices. Then, present your design to the class.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.2

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.5

STORYTELLING IN NEW WAYS

The City of Lost Cats includes posters, emails, and news articles. Sometimes, these elements show the reader things that have happened in the past. The lost cat posters, for example, show that the cats used to belong to families. Sometimes, the non-traditional story elements show what's happening in other areas of the city. While Fiona's busy cleaning up the mansion, the Old Dear has launched a community campaign against noise pollution.

Do you think you could tell a story using non-traditional forms, instead of just words? You might consider telling a story entirely in...

- Diary entries
- Email messages
- Text messages
- Notes on the refrigerator
- Emojis

It's not easy to tell a story when you can't use plain, ordinary paragraphs. But it can be fun! Once you have a rough draft, share it with a friend and see if they can follow the plot using your non-traditional forms. There might be things you can rewrite and revise, to make your story even better.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.5



REAL-LIFE ACTIVISTS

Fiona spends time researching activism and the ways that ordinary citizens try to make change in the world. There are many inspiring young people using non-violent protest methods to make their voices heard in the world today. Choose one of these figures to research and write about. You might consider:

- Helena Gualinga
- Vanessa Nakate
- Thandiwe Abdullah
- Autumn Peltier
- Xiuhtezcatl Roske-Martinez
- Theland Kicknosway

If you were going to design your ideal neighborhood, what would it look like? Consider all the things your family and your neighbors might need, then sketch a picture or a map of your neighborhood. Write two or three paragraphs explaining your choices. Then, present your design to the class.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.4

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.7

MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

The City of Lost Cats is told through multiple perspectives. Piper, Cot, Fiona, Tarantino, and Mickey all take turns telling their parts of the story.

Here's a writing activity you can do with a friend. Together, come up with two characters (one for each of you) and a big problem for them to tackle. Then, choose a form you'd like to work in — maybe emails or traditional letters. Each of you should begin by writing one email or letter to the other. Then, exchange notes and continue the story.

Can you reveal new things about your character each time you communicate? Can you make suggestions that will help solve the story problem? See if you can create at least three emails or letters each. What have your characters achieved?

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.4

