



The Gateway, The Four-fingered Man

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Synopsis

Amelia has just arrived in Forgotten Bay, a sleepy small town on the coast. Her astrophysicist father and diplomat mother have taken over a decrepit hotel, which makes about as much sense to Amelia as her older brother James' sudden cranky mood. Everything about the Gateway Hotel gives Amelia the creeps, so she's more than happy to meet the energetic and hilarious Charlie, who shows no fear in the face of the mysterious and gruff caretaker Tom.

Nothing seems to add up about the staff or guests of the hotel, so when Amelia and Charlie witness Tom sneaking in and out of a guests' room, they know they have a mystery to solve. After taking on some sneaking themselves, they discover what Tom was looking for. Their guest Miss Ardman is keeping jewels in her room – wonderful, intoxicating jewels that make you happy just looking at them. Unfortunately, it does not make Miss Ardman happy to catch the kids in her room, as they soon find out!

None of the adults believe Amelia and Charlie about Tom's sneakiness, so when they spy him taking off towards his cottage with the jewels and Miss Ardman in hot pursuit, it's impossible not to follow. Tom's cottage is even messier than the hotel, but there are more important things to worry about. Miss Ardman is stalking Tom, ordering him to give up the jewels. It's only once she's pounced and taken them back that the truth emerges.

Miss Ardman is an alien, and the jewels are her eggs. Tom is the caretaker of the hotel, but also of the gateway, a portal underneath his cottage that leads to other planets. All aliens who wish to travel between galactic worlds must pass through the gateway. Even more concerning than this information is that Amelia and Charlie's parents know about the gateway, and are now employed by Gateway Control.

Welcome to the Gateway Hotel, where the intergalactic guests make every day an alien adventure!

Discussion Questions

1. Magnolia trees are mentioned throughout the book. What do they look like and are they significant? Explain.
2. Where is the book set? What clues are there?
3. Amelia referred to James at school and said that after “whatever it was happened,” they moved to the hotel. What do you think happened?
4. Why is the place called “Forgotten Bay”?
5. What could prevent internet access and cause all the electrical equipment to experience interference?
6. Your body indicates when things are not right by giving the feeling of uneasiness in your stomach. When have you felt this way? Write a paragraph about it and what you did to make the feeling go away.
7. What is meant by “a cat can look at a king”?
8. What did Ms. Slaviero mean about “balance to the forces” and the light side and dark side?



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9. Why was Amelia trying to “will herself invisible”? Have you ever wanted to be invisible? Why?
 10. Describe how the jewels affected Amelia.
 11. Amelia lost trust in her parents. How did it make her feel? How would you feel? What would you do?
 12. What are licorice ropes?
 13. Why did Amelia think that James was ridiculous?
 14. What is Occam's Razor?
 15. Amelia was enticed into the cottage by momentum. Explain how momentum feels to you, and in what situation you've felt this way.
 16. Why has the author used the word “stalk” to describe what Miss Ardman was doing to Tom?
 17. What happened when Miss Ardman uncloaked?
 18. James reacted to the situation in an unexpected way. Discuss.
 19. What is the description of a wormhole?
 20. Holo-emitters are used to cloak aliens. Describe how they work. Draw and label a diagram of one.
 21. What do you think a Krskn is?
 22. If Charlie plays with the holo-emitter in the middle of the hedge maze, what do you think will happen?

Discussion Questions adapted from Teacher' Notes, created by Cerberus Jones, with thanks to Hardi Grant Egmont