

# Serafina and the Twisted Staff

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## WRITING & DISCUSSION



**Title:** Serafina and the Twisted Staff  
**Author:** Robert Beatty

**Publisher:** Disney Hyperion  
**Audiobook:** Penguin Random House - Listening Library

**Genres:** Historical Fiction  
Mystery-thriller  
Fantasy

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History  
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**Websites:** robert-beatty.com

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The questions in this document can be used as writing prompts and/or group discussion prompts for *Serafina and the Twisted Staff*.

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#### COMMON CORE COMPATIBLE

*Serafina and the Twisted Staff* and its educational materials are well suited for **Common Core** curriculum.

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#### Educational Materials created for *Serafina and the Twisted Staff*

- Writing & Discussion
- Activities
- Vocabulary

Go to [robert-beatty.com/education](http://robert-beatty.com/education) for links to the PDF files, teacher testimonials, and other resources.

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## General Questions / After Reading the Book

1. Is *Serafina and the Twisted Staff* historical fiction, mystery-thriller, or fantasy?
2. Serafina is faced with an important decision about what path she's going to take in her life. What are her options and which one (or ones) does she choose?
3. What are the various reasons that compelled Serafina to run away from Biltmore in the middle of the book? And what are the various reasons that compelled her to come back?
4. What interesting perspective does Mr. Olmsted add to Serafina's life?
5. The main thrust of *Serafina and the Black Cloak* was "Who and What is Serafina?" What is the main thrust of *Serafina and the Twisted Staff*?
6. What has Serafina learned about herself and her place in the world? How does she acquire this knowledge?
7. Describe Serafina's characteristics, mentally and physically. How does she change through the course of the book?
8. What does Serafina's relationship with Essie reveal about Serafina's character?
9. Who did you think the old man was? Who did you think might be the owl? Were you correct in your predictions? When did you know for sure who was behind the troubles at Biltmore House?
10. This book is considered historical fiction, but it also contains elements of fantasy. List some of the elements that would fall into each category.
11. Describe Braeden's character. Has he changed during the course of the book? What do you think he will 'do' with his gift? Will he turn to the dark side or use it for good?

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12. Select two events in the book that represent two completely opposite moods, like serious and lighthearted or happy and sad. Identify specific phrases or words that set the mood for each event. Analyze each event carefully with a close reading and explain how different words influenced opposite emotional reaction, hence the different moods.
13. Does Mr. Vanderbilt like and trust Serafina in the story? Or does he mistrust her? What is your evidence, either way?
14. What is the difference in the way Rowena views animals and the way Braeden views animals?
15. A number of walking sticks, canes, and staffs were mentioned and described in the story. Why did the author do this?
16. Would you rather have the Twisted Staff or Braeden's power? Why?
17. In what ways do we sympathize with Serafina through the course of the book?
18. Besides Serafina, who is your favorite character?
19. What did you think about Lady Rowena's character at the beginning, middle, and end? Did your perception/knowledge of her change or did she change?
20. Which book did you like better? Book 1 or Book 2? Why?
21. Certain characters (such as Pa and Essie) spoke in strong Southern Mountain Dialect (Mountain Talk). Did you like the use of dialect or did you find it annoying and difficult to understand?
22. The idea of reflex and automatic reaction is a recurring element in the story. What are some of Serafina's reflexes? What are some of yours, both physically and mentally? Are reflexes good or bad?



## The Book's Themes (For General Information Purposes)

Here are some of the interrelated themes touched on in *Serafina and the Twisted Staff*:

1. One of the main themes of the story is encapsulated in the word “envision,” the idea of looking out into the future, imagining a goal, and striving toward it. This is encapsulated in Serafina striving to understand where she belongs, as well as her trying to envision herself as a mountain lion like her mother or a black panther like her father. It is also encapsulated in Mr. Vanderbilt’s vision for building Biltmore Estate, Mr. Olmsted’s vision of reclaiming Biltmore’s ruined farmlands and forest, Edison’s vision for electric lights across America, and the creative vision of the inventors of the machines that her pa fixes. Waysa tells Serafina, “Once you envision what you want to be, then you’ll find a way to get there.”
2. One of the main currents of the story is that Serafina is trying to figure out where she belongs, either in the house or in the forest, either night or day. By the end of the story, she figures that she belongs to BOTH the house and the forest, as well as to BOTH night and day. She decides she belongs wherever she wants to belong, without limitations.
3. One of the most important recurring themes of the story is that Serafina must stay strong and courageous even when she’s tired and frightened. This theme is encapsulated in the phrase “Stay Bold!”, which is what the catamounts say to encourage each other.
4. The existence and importance of reflex, or automatic reaction, is one of the elements in the book. Serafina observes it in herself when she’s playing with the wood rat at the beginning of the story; she has strong cat-like reflexes. She also notices that she has a reflex to protect her loved ones. She realizes that her enemy uses her reflexes against her to trick her into specific predictable traps. At the end to the book, she uses Uriah’s reflex to protect his daughter against him.
5. The importance of forests and forest conservation is one of the main thematic elements throughout the story, as represented in Serafina’s close relationship with the forest, her and Braeden’s connection to the forest’s wildlife, and in all the scenes and ideas related to Mr. Olmsted. We also see that the evil in the story (the bearded man) was the leader of the men who cut and ruined the forest for financial gain.



6. One of the other main themes of the story is the idea of “paths.” In Book 1, Serafina figured out who she was. But in Book 2, she has to figure out where she belongs, which path to follow. This theme is touched on at various points of the story in her internal thinking, in discussions with Waysa, and elsewhere. She realizes she has to examine the paths before her with both her mind and her heart, and do her best to choose the right path. The key concept here is that it should be a deliberate choice, not happenstance.
7. One of the other themes of the story is that we are not just what we are born. We are what we want to be. We are not limited by the past, but can achieve whatever we envision.
8. One of the main elements of the story is the idea of change and metamorphosis. This is encapsulated most strongly in Serafina’s desire and eventual ability to change into a black panther, but of course this is a metaphor for all the other changes she’s going through and will go through to become an adult. Children in particular, but adults as well, are often discouraged about where and what they are NOW in their life, when what they need to understand that life is a continuum over time. This is encapsulated in the line: “The question wasn’t just who you are, but who you will become.”
9. As with all of the Serafina novels, trust and friendship are key themes, encapsulated in Serafina’s friendship with Braeden and Waysa, as well as Mr. Olmsted’s friendship with Mr. Vanderbilt. The importance of family is also one of the key themes in the story, as encapsulated in Serafina’s relationship with her pa and her mother.
10. The idea of right and wrong is a key theme in both Serafina novels. There are various characters who have different points of view (such as Mr. Thorne, Lady Rowena, and Uriah—the antagonists), but for the protagonists of the story, there is true good and true evil, and evil must be fought.
11. The idea of working together is one of the new themes of Book 2. For example, for the first time in her life, Serafina asks for Mr. Vanderbilt’s help to fight her enemy (specifically to go up to the pine forest and free the animals).



## Theme-related Questions for the Classroom

1. What are some of the themes of the story?
2. Which theme do you think is the main theme?
3. What does the phrase “Stay Bold!” mean, how is it used in the story, and why is it important to Serafina?
4. “The question wasn’t just who you are, but who you will become.” What does this line mean and why is it important in the story?
5. “Once you envision what you want to be, then you’ll find a way to get there.” Who said this? What does this line mean and why is it important to the story?
6. Are there any truly evil characters in the book? What makes he/she evil?
7. The existence and importance of *reflex*, or automatic reaction, is one of the themes in the book. Write or discuss where and how reflex is touched on in the story?
8. What is the importance of the word “envision” in this story? How is it used? In what way is it important in the story? Name some characters and what they envisioned?
9. Friendship is one of the themes in the story. Have you ever had a close friend like Serafina and Braeden? What are the characteristics of a good friend in the book and in real life?



### Research Assignments

1. Research the work of Frederick Law Olmsted. What did he contribute to the world?
2. Research the Appalachian culture of the late 1800's. Include examples of lifestyles such as folk stories, music, food, and housing.
3. Research George and Edith Vanderbilt. Did they really have a Saint Bernard named Cedric? Can you find any of the facts that the author wrote about? Did they personally select gifts for the children of all their staff and host a Christmas party with a giant tree every year?
4. Research the high-tech new inventions incorporated into the design of the Biltmore Estate, such as the electric dynamo, synchronized clocks, fire alarm system, the elevator, and so on.
5. Research the impact the locomotive industry had on America in the 1800's. How does this effect the development of the setting for the Serafina stories? What connection in particular does Biltmore and George Vanderbilt have to trains?
6. Research the Cherokee people.
7. Research any piece of art or sculpture displayed in the Biltmore House.



### Additional topics for research

#### Wildlife

Luna Moth  
Plott Hound  
Wood Rat  
Chipmunk  
Rabbit  
Otter  
Fox  
Panther  
Coyote  
Mink  
Doe And Fawn  
Tree Frog  
Timber Rattlesnake  
Trout

#### Birds

Sparrow  
Wren  
Waxwing  
Hawk  
Owl  
Peregrine Falcon  
Chimney Swift  
Grouse  
Swan  
Cardinal  
Jay

#### Geography

Blue Ridge Mountains  
Appalachian Mountains  
Pisgah National Forest  
Smoky Mountains  
Craggy Gardens  
Craggy Mountain  
French Broad River  
Mount Pisgah  
Chimney Rock  
Waterfalls of Western NC  
Graybeard Mountain  
Black Mountains

#### Trees

Hickory  
Hemlock  
Oak  
Cherry  
Tulip  
Black Walnut  
Elm  
Spruce  
Birch

#### Biltmore Estate

Approach Road  
Biltmore's forest lands  
Breakfast Room  
Winter Garden  
Library  
Tapestry Gallery  
North Tower Room  
Italian Garden  
Conservatory  
Stables  
South Terrace  
Van Dyck  
Rose Garden  
Entrance Hall  
Grand Staircase  
Banquet Hall  
Louis XVI Room

#### History / Science

Frederick Law Olmsted  
Landscape Architecture  
Forestry  
The Cradle of Forestry  
Biltmore's Technology  
Early use of Electricity



## Chapter by Chapter Questions

### Chapter 1

1. Why do animals freeze in terror when death poses a threat? Would you freeze or run if attacked in the forest? What is the fight or flight reflex?
2. What does “boldness of heart” mean? Do you have a bold heart?
3. Why does Serafina practice prowling and pouncing on small animals of the forest? How is it “in her nature?”
4. Is Serafina a beast of ferocious power to the little wood rat? Or is she just a girl?
5. Explain why Serafina’s title “Chief Rat Catcher” makes her proud.
6. Serafina worries that her friend Braeden has forgotten her. Have you ever felt that way?
7. Why does Serafina worry that she doesn’t fit in with the people upstairs? Do you ever worry about whether you fit in?
8. What happened in the night sky that made Serafina look for the North Star?
9. Serafina questioned whether she would be able to recognize the onset of danger when it came, but at the end of the Chapter 1 her instincts told her otherwise. Summarize the events.

### Chapter 2

8. Describe the man who arrived in the horse drawn carriage. Use evidence (details) from the text.
9. What is the significance of the worn dark cloth that the man makes the dogs smell?
10. Serafina is faced with a fight or flight decision like the wood rat she caught in Chapter 1. What was her decision?
11. How does the attack scene at the end of the chapter make you feel? Include the descriptive adjectives from the text in your answer.



### Chapter 3

1. Describe the ‘feral’ boy, citing evidence from the book, who helped Serafina escape the attack of the hounds?
2. Do you think Serafina would have survived without his help? Explain your answer.

### Chapter 4

1. The author describes Serafina as “nothing more than a kitten tossed into the water.” What is happening to Serafina at this time and why does the author compare her to a kitten?
2. There is another animal migration happening as Serafina recovered from crossing the river. At first Serafina thinks they are fireflies. What are they? How do they help Serafina?
3. Who do you think is the mountain lion that appeared with Serafina’s mother?

### Chapter 5

1. Why do you think Serafina loved riding on her mother’s back? How did it make her feel?

### Chapter 6

1. How did Serafina and her mother spend time together? What was Serafina trying desperately to learn?
2. What does Serafina’s mother say to her that hurts terribly?
3. What are some of the internal conflicts revealed in this chapter?
4. Why was Serafina’s mother trapped as a lioness twelve years ago?



## Chapter 7

1. “IF YOU NEED ME, WINTER, SPRING, OR FALL, COME WHERE WHAT YOU CLIMBED IS FLOOR AND RAIN IS WALL” Can you solve the riddle? What does it mean?
2. What does the inscription on the sculpture of the angel in the old cemetery mean to you? “Our character isn’t defined by the battles we win or lose, but by the battles we dare to fight.”
3. What motivates Serafina to return to Biltmore House?
4. Try to write a riddle with advice for Serafina. See if a fellow classmate can figure it out.

## Chapter 8

1. Serafina carefully returned to the Biltmore House. Who or what was she hiding from?
2. Describe Mr. Vanderbilt’s physical characteristics according to the text. Do you think Serafina trusted Mr. Vanderbilt? Why or why not?
3. Who is Gideon and why is he Braeden’s best friend?
4. Why do you believe Serafina was uncertain about the new girl Braeden was befriending? Do you like her? When you first see someone, do you make assessments about them?

## Chapter 9

1. What can you determine about Serafina’s pa from the conversation he has with Serafina upon her return? How does he show his love for Serafina?
2. Why is Serafina uncertain about her friendship with Braeden? What can you infer about her feelings?
3. What does the expression, “*with bells on*” mean? Have you ever heard it used before?



### Chapter 10

1. Pa is talented at fixing machines. He is not talented at sewing dresses, but tried to make a dress for Serafina. What does this tell you about his character? About his love for Serafina?
2. Imagine Pa was a doctor, teacher, or something other than a mechanic. Rewrite the paragraph using the tools from a different occupation (job) to teach Serafina table manners.
3. What important information does Serafina draw from Braeden's note? How does the note from Braeden reassure Serafina that they are still true friends?

### Chapter 11

1. What did Essie Walker do to help Serafina?
2. Essie has been reading the book, "A Christmas Carol". What does Serafina learn from this? Who do you think Serafina thought Essie was referring to when she mentioned "Mr. Scrooge?"
3. Why is Serafina upset that she has black hair growing in? What does she have Essie do with them?
4. Serafina learns about "the old man of the forest" from Essie. How does Essie feel about the stories about the old man and how did Serafina react to those stories?
5. What connects Essie and Serafina? In what way are they alike and different? Do you think they have bonded and are now friends?



## Chapter 12

1. Why did Serafina “almost” feel sorry for the girl she sees with Braeden?
2. Lady Rowena Fox-Pemberton expects Serafina to call her “Lady Rowena.” Why?
3. Serafina is capable of sneaking undetected throughout the estate, but accidentally bumps into furniture and breaks a vase. Why do you think the author included this incident in the book? What **effect** does it have on the story? What **affect** does it have on the reader? Have you ever been blamed for something that wasn’t your fault?
4. How does Serafina show her courage upstairs in the house?
5. Why does Serafina think the palm trees in the Biltmore House are “wicked?”
6. What happens to a tiny key on Mrs. King’s key ring? Can you predict what will happen to the key next?
7. How does Serafina show her loyalty to Braeden at the end of this chapter?
8. Have you ever encountered an officious person like Mrs. King?

## Chapter 13

1. Detective Grathan interrogates Serafina and Braeden in a secret room within the library. How do the details of the setting establish the mood for this scene?
2. How does Mr. Vanderbilt handle the Detective during the interrogation? What does this say about his character?
3. What does the detective reveal when he asks Serafina and Braeden if they think “some sort of unnatural force” was involved in Mr. Thorne’s disappearance?
4. What does the fact that the detective has the clasp of the Black Cloak mean to Serafina?
5. What do you think Serafina really meant when she told the detective that she tracks down vermin?



## Chapter 14

1. Serafina predicts that the detective is not who he says he is. Who do you think he is?
2. What are some of the symbolic meanings of the many sculptures and paintings of great cats throughout the Biltmore House? How do these artistic symbols make Serafina feel?
3. Why do you think all the animals have been leaving the area?
4. Where were Serafina and Braeden “hanging” out when she told him the story of what happened to her the night the carriage arrived?

## Chapter 15

1. Why do you think the Chimney Swifts attacked Serafina? Was the house turning against her? Have you ever seen a Chimney Swift? Are they even real?
2. Explain what type external conflict would describe the battle between the Serafina and the Chimney Swifts?
3. Why did Gideon attack Serafina? How does it make Serafina feel? What would you do if you were in her situation?

## Chapter 16

1. Once again, Serafina is faced with a deadly outcome. How does she handle the fear of dying?
2. Why would Rowena lie about what happened to Gideon? Elaborate on your theory.
3. How do you think Serafina felt when Rowena yelled, “You don’t belong here!” ? Where had Serafina heard this before?



## Chapter 17

1. Why does the author go into detail about the scene with the mountain folk around the campfire? How did it make you feel inside? How did it make Serafina feel inside?
2. Serafina has a moment of realization about who she is and where she belongs while standing on the top of the mountain. What is it? What do you think she will decide to do next?
3. When Serafina is on top of the mountain, she sees her old wolf friend and his pack. What does it mean to Serafina?
4. What themes are prominent in this chapter? Include evidence to support your answer.

## Chapter 18

1. “If you need me, winter, spring , or fall, come where what you climbed is floor and the rain is wall.” What specifically does the riddle mean?
2. Serafina finds hundreds of cages and a small hut as she descends Graybeard Mountain. What do you think the cages are currently being used for and who do you think inhabits the hut?
3. Was this scene a little frightening and foreboding? If so, how did the author accomplish that? Cite evidence in the text.

## Chapter 19

1. What kind of cat does Serafina find in the first cage? What other types of animals were trapped in the cages? How does Serafina feel about those animals and why?
2. What advice did Serafina give the cat as she escaped? How does that advice relate to the various themes within the book?
3. “He seemed more like a ghostly haunt than a mortal man.” What does this statement tell the reader? Do you think Serafina should have started running sooner?



## Chapter 20

1. Why do you think the author capitalized the word, “Death” on page 159? What kind of figurative language is used to support this device? Is this an effective device?
2. What does the old man say to Serafina that motivates her to regain her strength?
3. What do we learn about the old man’s perception of Serafina?

## Chapter 21

1. Do you agree that this old man is “somehow controlling (the) animals?”
2. It’s time to solve the riddle with Serafina. What does Serafina decide the riddle means?
3. Who do you predict to be the “loud male voice” upon Serafina’s arrival at the place in the riddle?

## Chapter 22

1. Do you like the feral boy? How would you describe him? Does he seem trustworthy?
2. Serafina compares the whole world with light. What do you think about this analogy?
3. What does the simile “as hungry as a spring bear” mean?

## Chapter 23

1. Serafina’s half brother and sister, “the cubs”, do not have human names. Why do think the author did not give them names? What would you name them?
2. Where is Waysa from? What happened to his family?

## Chapter 24

1. What important life skill does Waysa teach Serafina?
2. Explain the two different paths from which Serafina must choose. What path does she decide to take and why?



## Chapter 25

1. The bearded man has several names. What do Waysa's people call him? Why is that symbolic to the story and/or theme?
2. What is the purpose of the Twisted Staff?
3. What major conflict is described in this chapter? How do you think it will be resolved?
4. Who started the "stay bold" expression? What does it mean and why is this important to the story?

## Chapter 26

1. Who does Serafina see as she returns to Biltmore House? Why is he important to the history of the Biltmore Estate?
2. What important lesson does Pa attempt to teach Serafina when she wakes him up upon her return?
3. Who passed away while Serafina was gone? Does this seem suspicious to you? Why or why not?
4. What happened to the wires in the fire alarm system?
5. Who do you think is the "rat" spying on Braeden? What is the significance of referring to him as the "rat?"

## Chapter 27

1. Were you correct in your prediction of who was spying on Braeden? What do you think the rat is looking for in Braeden's room?
2. What do you think of Lady Rowena's behavior in this scene? Compare and contrast Serafina and Braeden's reaction to her.
3. What do we learn about Peregrine Falcons? Have you ever seen one?
4. What does Braeden mean when he says, "friendship is more powerful than the strongest wire?"



### Chapter 28

1. Serafina related to the determination she saw in Rowena's character. How did this realization change Serafina's opinion of Rowena?

### Chapter 29

1. How are Kess and Gidean able to heal up and recover from such serious injuries so quickly and miraculously? Use evidence from text to explain your theory.
2. Serafina, Braeden, and Rowena make a plan to alert each other if something happens that is an emergency. What is the signal? Where do they plan to meet?

### Chapter 30

1. Serafina helps translate Braeden's refined English and her Pa's mountain talk during their dinner in the basement. What does the statement, "she felt like she didn't just belong, but like she was the glue that held the world together." What does that tell you about the changes happening to Serafina's character and her relationships?
2. How did Braeden and Serafina escape the rats?
3. What literary symbols (words that have dual meanings, play on words, etc...) can you identify in this chapter? Use examples to support your position.



## Chapter 31

1. What does Braeden's comment, "I swear, your curiosity is going to get you killed one of these days, Serafina" mean? What common phrase about curiosity does it remind you of?
2. Why is Serafina worried about seeing the guests of Biltmore House?
3. What do you think is significant about Serafina's realization that Mr. Thorne and Detective Grathan both stayed in the same room when visiting Biltmore House. Is there a direct connection?
4. What does Essie think of Detective Grathan? Does this change your opinion of his character?
5. Serafina ponders on how the dreams of determined individuals changed or created the world as we know it now. Who or which of those dreams mentioned interests you the most, why?
6. What does Serafina see Lady Rowena doing that could be either suspicious or helpful? What do you think she is doing? Does this change your view of Lady Rowena? Why or why not?

## Chapter 32

1. Where does Serafina think Gideon and Cedric have gone? Why does it make her sick to her stomach with worry?

## Chapter 33

1. Why do you think Mr. Vanderbilt trusts Serafina and responds to her requests immediately?
2. Is it typical of Serafina to ask someone like Mr. Vanderbilt for help? How is she changing?
3. How do people earn trust from one another? Do you think trust can be regained once it is lost?



## Chapter 34

1. Serafina felt, “a bout of hopelessness” during the big battle, why? How does she manage those difficult feelings? Would that strategy work for you?
2. Who do you think is the owner of “two hands and two knees” Serafina hears coming closer?

## Chapter 35

1. Did you predict who the crawling person was correctly? What made you pick the person you did. Go back and select evidence from the text to support your decision.
2. How does Serafina show her courage with a split second decision?
3. Why does the author capitalize the words, Twisted Staff?
4. How does the author create a sense of fear and creepiness in this chapter? Cite examples.

## Chapter 36

1. Waysa encourages Serafina with a reoccurring statement made throughout the book. What is the phrase? What does it mean to you?
2. Do you think Serafina will escape the cage? If so, how? How would you do it?
3. How does the author create a sense of entrapment and frustration?

## Chapter 37

1. Do you remember when Pa explained to her the qualities of metals to Serafina? Did you think at the time it might be handy knowledge in the story? What do you think now?
2. How does the exhausted Braeden get back to Biltmore House? Were you surprised by this? Why or why not?



## Chapter 38

1. What changes Mr. Vanderbilt's mind about Detective Grathan?
2. What do you think is Mr. Grathan's true identity?
3. What parts of this mystery are most puzzling to you? Why?
4. The author includes details about the carvings and sculptures around Biltmore House. How do they affect you as the reader?
5. Serafina spots a man in an old photograph with silver eyes. Who else in this story has been described as having silver eyes?

## Chapter 39

1. Mr. Olmsted tells a story about the history of Biltmore House. Summarize his story and explain why it is important to Serafina and Braeden.
2. What is the name of the antagonist in Mr. Olmsted's story? Who is the protagonist?
3. What is the main conflict in this historical tale?
4. What statement does the antagonist from Mr. Olmsted's story make that causes Serafina to get a "lump in her throat?"
5. Serafina realized that the Black Cloak was used to gather power from human souls. What does she realize that the Twisted Staff is used for?
6. What are three ways in which the house's architect, Mr. Hunt, tried to protect the house from fire. What are they?
7. What important documents are kept under lock and key? What clues can you recall from the story that might be helpful in unraveling the mystery from this point?



## Chapter 40

1. What does Serafina find in Mr. Grathan's room that makes her suspicious?
2. Why did Braeden take off galloping on his horse towards the garden, why? What do you think will happen next?

## Chapter 41

1. What did you think when Mr. Grathan warned Serafina about the Timber Rattlesnakes?
2. What dying proclamation does Grathan make to Serafina?
3. Has your opinion of Mr. Grathan changed?

## Chapter 42

1. What do you think it means when Rowena says, "...the Black One is here."
2. What is Serafina referring to when she says she has "eight to go, I guess" after Rowena admitted that she tried to kill her and Gideon that night on the stairs.
3. Rowena reveals who her father is. Were you surprised?
4. What statue flashes through Serafina's mind at the very end of the chapter? Why do you think she would remember that? How is the statue symbolic and related to the theme?

## Chapter 43

1. Why are they kidnapping Braeden?
2. Why is Rowena unable to control the catamounts with the Twisted Staff?



### Chapter 44

1. Serafina renamed the Italian Garden? Why?
2. How does she defeat the bear? How would you defeat a bear? Play dead? Climb a tree? Run fast?
3. Serafina comes to understand herself better and envisions herself in her catamount form. How does her new understanding of her past help her make the transition into a catamount?
4. As Serafina begins to see her place in the world, what happens to her to help her understand?

### Chapter 45

1. What happens to Rowena's power over the animals as Kess flies away with the Twisted Staff?
2. What major realization does Serafina make about Rowena?

### Chapter 46

1. Predict how Kess plans to do to recover the Twisted Staff from Rowena?

### Chapter 47

1. How close was your prediction? What is the most significant theme represented in this chapter? Why? Use evidence to support your position.
2. Do you believe people have the power to envision what they want to be and become it? Do you have a vision (or many visions) for yourself? What is it (are they)?

### Chapter 48

1. What happens to the creatures of the forest in the chapter?



## Chapter 49

1. How did Essie save the Biltmore House and everyone in it? Essie insists she didn't do it alone and explained what happened to Serafina. Summarize Essie's recount of events in your own words.
2. What does Essie believe happened to Rowena and Detective Grathan?
3. Serafina realized she was wrong about both Rowena and Detective Grathan. Have you ever misjudged someone based on how they appear?
4. What did Braeden give Essie and Serafina for Christmas?

## Chapter 50

1. Do you think things would have turned out differently if Rowena had taken a different path, one that veered away from her father's vengeance?
2. What do you think about the fact that they only found the body of one dead owl?
3. What does it tell you about Serafina that she attends the Christmas party, but wears her hair down instead of the popular fancy up-do?

## Chapter 51

1. What new invention of 1899 did Mr. Vanderbilt hand out to all the guests at the Christmas dinner?
2. The author includes a literary allusion when Mr. Olmsted read a poem to the children by the fireplace. What poem did he read and why is it symbolic?
3. What surprise did Mr. Olmsted have for Mr. Vanderbilt? Did you see that coming?
4. Braeden also has a major realization about his identity. What has he learned about himself?

# Serafina

and the Twisted Staff

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## WRITING & DISCUSSION



### Chapter 52

1. Serafina made a huge discovery about which path she should take in life. Do you believe you have the power to be anything you wish? Why or why not?
2. Who do you think is the black figure Serafina catches a glimpse of at the very end of the book? What do you think this means for the readers?