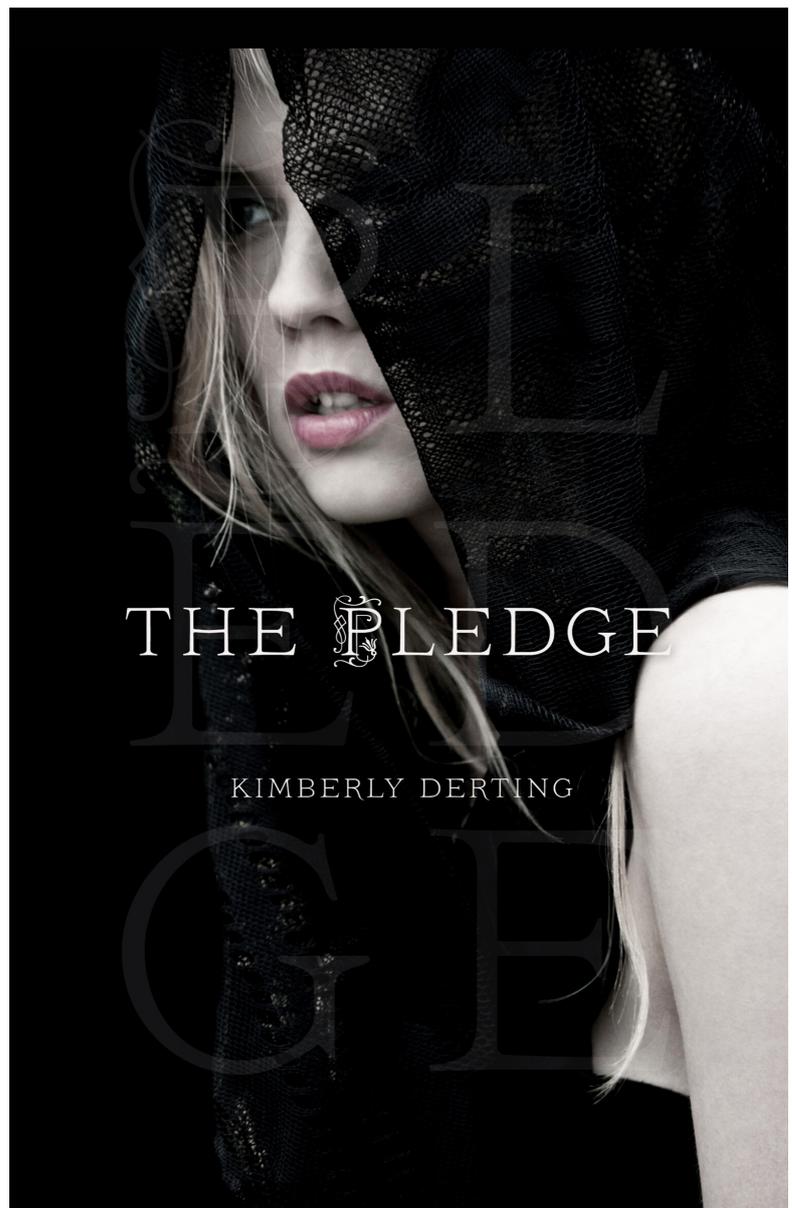


AN

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE FOR:

The activities in
this guide
align with
COMMON CORE
STANDARDS

The Lexile Level:
840L



ABOUT **THE PLEDGE**

In a country where a violent queen sits on the throne, language determines your social class. And any misstep, like looking the wrong person in the eye when they are speaking, can result in immediate execution.

Seventeen-year-old Charlie has been hiding a dangerous secret--that she can understand all of the languages. And now, she may be the key to saving her people....



**2013 YALSA Best
Fiction for Young
Adults selection**

ABOUT **KIMBERLY DERTING**

Kimberly Derting is the author of the award-winning young adult THE BODY FINDER series, THE PLEDGE trilogy, and THE TAKING trilogy. She has also co-authored the new picture book series CECE LOVES SCIENCE with Shelli R. Johannes. Her books have been translated into 15 languages, and both THE BODY FINDER and THE PLEDGE were YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults selections. She lives in the Pacific Northwest, where the gloomy weather is ideal for writing anything dark and creepy.

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

- IF YOU WERE TO MAKE A PLEDGE TO PROTECT SOMEONE OR SOMETHING ABOVE EVERYONE AND EVERYTHING ELSE, WHO OR WHAT WOULD YOU CHOOSE? WHY?
- HOW DOES LOYALTY DEVELOP BETWEEN FRIENDS AND FAMILY?
- HOW IS LOYALTY INSTILLED IN THE CITIZENS OF A COUNTRY?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Describe Charlaina's world—her friends, school, and work. How does it compare to your own? What are the similarities? The differences? What are the most compelling aspects of Charlaina's world?
2. Charlie's two best friends seem to compete for her attention. Find an example from this in the text. Is this always the case with three friends, or is it a gender issue? Who do you think has Charlie's best interests in mind—Aron or Brooklyn? Why?
3. If you had to choose three words to describe Queen Sabara, what would they be? How is her cruelty revealed to the reader? Do you think all people with power are corrupted by it or not? Explain
4. Explain how one slip of her secret, one mistake, could ruin or even end Charlie's life. How is language a source of power and control in the realm? What is the penalty for ignoring the rules?
5. Charlie's gift often seems like a curse. Why? Do you wish you had a special talent, such as having the ability to read people's minds? How do you think it would change your relationships? Do you think Charlie would give away her gift if she could?
6. What has Charlie's father done to protect his daughters? Why is the family especially protective of their youngest daughter, Angelina? What type of life is she expected to have in Ludania? Why?
7. Describe the clubs that Brooklyn and Charlie visit. Would you be willing to go with the added risk of the hand stamp or not? How does Brooklyn act at these places?
8. Compare the male characters in the novel—Aron, Max, and Xander. Which one is your favorite? Can you relate to any of them? Explain. What qualities make a great male lead character and possible love interest?
9. Despite the fact that it's against the law, Max speaks to Charlie in a language that she shouldn't understand. Why? How do you know when you can trust someone with your secrets? How about with your heart?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS, CONT.

10. How did the caste system develop in Ludania? Do you think there is any type of caste or class system in our own society? Why do you think castes exist at all in human societies? Even without a formal system, people like to put themselves above or at least compare themselves to others. Why do you think that is?
11. What pledge did Max make to Charlie? How is it tested the night of the "rallie"? Would you have helped Sydney or not? Why?
12. When the bombing starts, Charlie has one goal, and only one person to save. Who would you most want to protect in the world? Who would most want to protect you?
13. What does Charlie finally realize about the true identity of Max? What clues did she miss along the way? Does this make him more or less desirable to her? Why? What about to you?
14. What is Xander's true role? Why does Charlie doubt him? Would you doubt or believe him? What are the important facts that Charlie learns about the resistance?
15. How does the Queen treat those she wants information from? What are her powers and limitations? Who did the author make you believe was the Queen's captive at first? Who was it really? How did this add suspense to the story?
16. Who is the most surprising soldier of the resistance? Have you ever been surprised by a friend, similar to how Brooklyn shocked Charlie? Why didn't they share their secrets? How did Brooklyn get involved in the resistance? Why didn't she trust her own father? Is there anyone you should trust, but you don't?
17. What clues are revealed of Charlie's and Angelina's birthrights? What does Charlie find and how is she able to interpret its meaning? What artifacts are important in your family? In other words, what would you save first in a fire?
18. What must Charlie know about the Queen in order to protect herself? Who do you have to protect yourself from? How do you do it?¹
9. Describe Max and Xander's attempt to save Charlie. How does it backfire? Can you imagine learning that you are a royal? How would it shift everything you knew or believed?
20. How does the Queen manipulate Charlie into accepting her essence? In the end, what happens? Were you surprised? What makes a compelling ending to a story? What do you think will happen next between these characters and in the country of Ludania?

STANDARDS

Reading Standards for Literature Key Ideas and Details

RL 1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

RL 2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

RL 3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text. Craft and Structure

RL 5. Analyze the structure of a text, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text relate to each other and the whole.

RL 6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Speaking and Listening Comprehension and Collaboration

SL 1. Prepare for and participate in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Note: these are the anchor standards for reading and speaking and listening.

You may want to visit the Common Core Standards website (www.corestandards.org) to locate the specific standard for your grade-level equivalent.

POST-READING

ACTIVITIES

HISTORY

Research the caste systems in various parts of the world. How did they develop? Do they still exist today? What are the rules of the system and what happens to people who break the written and unwritten rules of their caste?

WRITING

Write a brand-new scene that was not included in the novel between two characters, or rewrite a scene that did occur. What would you change? You could also write a journal entry as if you were one of the characters in the book and explain an event through their point of view.



MUSIC

Create a playlist for the soundtrack of the movie. Choose which scenes you'd add music to and then decide on the music itself. In at least one sentence, explain why you chose each piece of music.

ART

Create a movie poster or collage that will inspire others to read the book. Use a large format, bold fonts, color, and an interesting design to entice the readers.

**"I LOVED VOICES, I ALWAYS HAD. WORDS HELD MEANING,
BUT VOICES HELD EMOTION."**

BOOKING AN AUTHOR VISIT

"We don't want that, Charlie. We don't want to fight, but we can't just go on like this. We deserve to choose what we want to be, who we want to be."

Dear Educator,

I enjoy doing interactive classroom visits that offer kids an exciting glimpse into how a professional writer creates stories. My goal is to spark a lifelong love of reading and writing! If you're interested in bringing me in to meet your students, shoot me an email at kim@kimberlyderting.com, so we can discuss further. Mention this study guide for a discount.



SIMON &
SCHUSTER

A CBS COMPANY