



CONSTELLATION CLUES

The Cipher of the Seven Stars

LEE REED



Reader's Guide

1. The Pleiades myths feature prominently in *Constellation Clues: The Cipher of the Seven Stars*. Look up at the Pleiades in the night sky or at a picture of the star cluster. Do you see a story of belonging or wanting to belong like in the ancient myths? If not, what story do you see?
2. The author chose the Pleiades as the star cluster to feature in the first book of the *Constellation Clues* series because it was important to ancient cultures around the world. What symbols share importance across the globe today?
3. Quinn's oldest sister, Georgie, uses her ingenuity and engineering prowess to create things to make Quinn's life better like the sky dome, the Silver Banana, and the firefly transport system and trellis. If you could invent something to make someone's life better, what would it be?
4. A theme of the book is that it can sometimes be hard to tell when other people feel different or left out. How did *Constellation Clues* broaden your thinking about being inclusive?
5. Many fiction books use space as a theme when tackling emotional subjects. Do you think that approach works? Why or why not?
6. Quinn calls herself an "artistic scientist." Talk about examples around you of where art and science come together.
7. When Quinn first analyzes the note left for Vivica for clues, she worries about judging people—especially Xavier—before fully understanding the evidence. Do you think our world is quick to judge? Why or why not?
8. Quinn uses the scientific method of forming and testing hypotheses as she solves the mystery. Have you ever tried that approach outside of science class or a lab? What worked and what didn't?
9. Quinn's dad likes to tell the Knight sisters that they are "Knights, not princesses" to encourage them to learn responsibility and teamwork. But Quinn worries that Vivica is taking the lessons too far when Vivica asks everyone to promise not to get help from their parents while they're solving the mystery of who is leaving threatening notes.

Should Vivica and Quinn have asked for help? Why or why not? What are some examples of when it's hard to balance being responsible or self-reliant with asking for help?

10. Quinn sometimes struggles with adults with good intentions doing things that make her migraines worse. Is it hard to tell someone that they're not helping? What are ways to try?
11. One clue to the mystery is that Quinn guessed that Kiki was speaking for a group of kids without their knowledge. Are there times when it is okay to speak for someone else if you think you can help? Or is it never okay?
12. Sometimes the Knight family finds it hard to equally support Vivica's and Quinn's dreams at the same time—in the book, Vivica missed an audition because the Knight family had to get creative to try to get her and Quinn to their different events at the same time. Did the Knights do the best they could? Would you have done it differently?
13. Hill Springs is a dark sky community. That means they're choosing to reduce their use of lighting at night to have darker skies. Think about the trade-off between technology and nature in your community—are there changes you think people should make to their use of technology in favor of nature? If yes, what are some examples? If no, why not?
14. Nurse R-J designed her office to “bring the happy places to you.” Where do you wish there were “happy places”? What would yours look like?
15. Think about the role the animals—Milky Way, Maisy, the fireflies, the possum—play in the book. What did these animal characters show you about elements of the story (plot points, other characters, themes, etc.) that the people characters didn't?
16. Mr. Heinz tries to preempt teasing by embracing a ketchup theme in his classroom and encouraging the students to call him Mr. Ketchup. Do you agree with his approach? Why or why not?
17. How would you describe the friendship between Vivica and Paisley and Kiki before the Harvest Dance? Do you think Vivica and Paisley will be friends after the Harvest Dance?
18. What did you think about Vivica saying this year was “her year” and she didn't want to be known as “Migraine Girl's sister”? Did she have a good point? Or was she being too self-centered?
19. At one point, Tiya is torn between her loyalty to Xavier and her concern for Quinn. What would you have done in her situation?
20. If Xavier could draw a superhero for you, what would your powers be?