

The Magic Thief

By
Sarah Prineas

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When you are a homeless thief, you will do almost to get by—even steal from a harmless looking old man. When Conn picks Nevery's pocket and steals his locus magicalicus, Conn finds his world turned upside down. Instead of dying (when he touched the locus) or being arrested (when he was caught), Conn becomes Wizard Nevery's apprentice. Suddenly, Conn finds himself with a new home, being forced to go to school, and discovering his own magical locus. Together, Conn and Nevery try to discover why the magic is disappearing from the city of Wellmet before it is too late.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Sarah Prineas writes at her kitchen table, on a computer named Pip, in Iowa City, Iowa. Originally from Lyme, Connecticut (where Lyme Disease originated), she went to college in Minnesota, has a PhD in English literature, and has taught honors seminars at the University of Iowa. Married to John Prineas, a physics professor whom she calls a “mad scientist”, the couple has two children, two cats, a dog, and a collection of dragon action figures.

An author of adult fantasy stories, Prineas began writing THE MAGIC THIEF in 2005, after reading a letter in *Cricket* magazine requesting more fantasy stories. She began writing that night a discovered her short story was the first chapter of a book. In 2006, Prineas took the novel to the Blue Heaven novel workshop. By the end of the workshop, she had introductions to two agents. Within six weeks, Prineas had an agent and was editing THE MAGIC THIEF. Less than five months later, HarperCollins agreed to publish the series. Prineas has already completed the trilogy.

You can hear Sarah Prineas' name pronunciation guide at:

<http://www.teachingbooks.net/pronounce.cgi?aid=8612>

You can see a photograph of her kitchen table/writing space and one of her “mad scientist” husband's devices at: <http://www.sarah-prineas.com/about.html>

For a FREE Skype visit with your classroom, please e-mail the author at thiefofmagic@gmail.com for information.

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Her Live Journal address is: <http://sarah-prineas.livejournal.com/>

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AWARDS

- New York Public Library's "One Hundred Titles for Reading and Sharing"
- National Council of Teachers of English Notable Children's Book in the Language Arts (NCTE)
- 2009 E.B. White Read-Aloud Award Honor Book for Older Readers
- Booklist Top Ten Debut Novels for Youth 2008

OTHER BOOKS BY SARAH PRINEAS

- *The Magic Thief: Lost*. HarperCollins, 2009.
- *The Magic Thief: Found*. HarperCollins, 2010.

AUTHOR PROVIDED QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. THE MAGIC THIEF is a fantasy set in a world very different from our own, but similar in some ways, too. What sorts of things work differently in the Wellmet world? What things work the same? What things in Wellmet seem familiar? What things seem different?
2. Why do you think some fantasy novels create entire new worlds (called "secondary worlds") for readers to read about? What sorts of things might a writer have to think about when creating a fantasy world? What sorts of things would you put in a fantasy world, if you were a writer (besides dragons, of course)?

3. If you were a wizard's apprentice, what would your *locus magicalicus* look like? Think about its color, shape, size, weight, brightness, and what it might do if a pickpocket laid his thieving fingers on it.
4. If a wizard does the *embero spell*, he or she turns you into your *characteristic creature*, or the animal that is most like you. In *THE MAGIC THIEF*, the embero spell turns Conn into a skinny young cat with black fur, sparkling blue eyes, and a quirked tail. If the embero spell were done on you, what would your characteristic creature be? Draw a picture of it. Be sure to label the details!
5. Is Conn a bad person because he's a thief and lockpick? Why or why not?
6. What do you think Conn wants most in the world? What does he need most?
7. Which specific details created the setting (where the book happens) for you?
8. Who is your favorite character, and why? Would you want to meet this character in real life? Why or why not?
9. What do you think happens to Conn and Nevery after the book ends?
10. What is it about Conn—other than surviving his attempt to steal Nevery's locus stone—that makes the wizard decide to take him on as an apprentice?

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

1. Conn and Nevery saved Wellmet's magic, but it came back changed. They need you to create new spells to open locks, change forms, and make light. Include any actions, gestures, or intonations necessary to perform each spell.
2. Now that Conn is reading, he wants to make some bookmarks for the library. Create some magical themed bookmarks for students to use.
3. Nevery was banished from Wellmet. Create a wanted poster for when he was captured and banished from Wellmet or a poster trying to find him and bring him back to Wellmet. You get to decide any colors, designs, and incentives for citizens to help locate Nevery.
4. The environmentalists in Wellmet are producing a series of public service announcements focusing on the dwindling amount of magic in the city and ways to conserve it. Write and/or create a new announcement for the series.
5. Practice your vocabulary skills by creating a PowerPoint slideshow on magic or theft. No pictures can be used, and only one word or name may be used per slide. Develop a show to define your word or relate the word to current events.
6. Conn has decided that instead of telling Nevery about the meeting, he wants to show him. He has invited some friends over to show Nevery what happened. Write a skit of what happened from Conn's point-of-view. (Be sure to include all events and information *Conn* found important.) As time permits, perform your scenes for Nevery.
7. Pick a side on the importance or insignificance of magic in Wellmet. Write an editorial defending your opinion and include a supplementary editorial cartoon. Be sure to include information from the book to support your position.

8. When Nevery returns to Wellmet, the Better Business Bureau thinks that he is a new resident and gives him a pamphlet to Wellmet (highlighting businesses, activities, local attractions, and frequently asked questions). Create a copy of the pamphlet.
9. Conn needs a new locus magicalicus. Design a new one for him and describe how he located it. Be sure to consider size, color, and how he will wear it.
10. Both Conn and Nevery have to travel incognito. Design a series of costumes for the two and explain where and in what situations they will use them.
11. Help! Conn is trapped as a cat and Nevery isn't around to help him. Describe what Conn can do to return to normal. Create a map of his route for supplies or assistance using Heartsease as the starting location. Be sure to include a key and compass rose.
12. Create a new book cover for the book. Be as creative as possible. Include elements from the story you think are important, comments about the book, and awards it has won. Make the cover interesting, so someone will want to read it.
13. Although the magic has returned to Wellmet, no one wants to visit and tourism is down. The Duchess has requested your assistance and creating a travel brochure, poster, and/or advertising campaign to make travelers want to visit or move to Wellmet. As time permits, create a jingle and commercial to supplement the project.
14. Sarah Prineas has a very visual style of writing. Help her tell the story of THE MAGIC THIEF by animating your favorite part of the book or creating a graphic novel excerpt of your favorite scene. Share your creation as part of a book talk.
15. Practice using the runic alphabet. Write messages to your classmates and hide them around the library. Draw pictures of magical objects and include hidden messages in the picture. Create a runic primer for Conn (include key magical words, phrases, and explanatory pictures).
16. Sarah Prineas started this novel as a response to a magazine request for stories. Write your own submission for a magazine, newsletter, or online publication. Use Nebraska Access (<http://nebraskaccess.ne.gov/>) to supplement your library's current publications.
17. What do you think should happen next for Conn and Nevery? Create an outline for a sequel and write the opening scene of the story.
18. Conn has been asked to host Wellmet's *Magic Tonight Live* show, but he needs help with his opening monologue. Write and perform a three minute monologue introducing himself and his opinion/knowledge of magic. (Add any information not found in the book.)
19. Create a list of magic resources available in your library. Include information for each grade level and display the information as part of a class created bulletin board display.
20. Rowan needs help planning her lessons for Conn. Make a list of five important things to know in math, science, writing, grammar, current events, magic, etc. and recommend at least one lesson for each subject. Think about which lessons and activities you enjoy and learn the most from. Which ones do you think would be most effective for Conn? Why?

COMPANION BOOKS

- Black, Holly and Tony DiTerlizzi. *The Spiderwick Chronicles: The Field Guide*. Scholastic Inc., 2003.
- Buckley, Michael. *The Sisters Grimm: Fairy-Tale Detectives*. Amulet Books, 2005.
- Duane, Diane. *So You Want To Be A Wizard*. Dell Publishing, 1983.
- Funke, Cornelia. *Inkheart*. The Chicken House, 2003.
- Gaiman, Neil. *Coraline*. Thorndike Press, 2003.
- Jones, Diana Wynne. *Howl's Moving Castle*. Greenwillow Books, 1986.
- Levine, Gail Carson. *Ella Enchanted*. HarperCollins, 1997.
- Riordan, Rick. *The Lightning Thief*. Miramax, 2005.
- Rowling, J. K. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. Bloomsbury Pub. Plc., 1998.
- Stewart, Trenton Lee. *The Mysterious Benedict Society*. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2007.

INTERNET CONNECTIONS

Sarah Prineas Homepage

<http://www.sarah-prineas.com>

The Magic Thief Website

<http://www.magicthief.com>

EDoc Find Resource List

<http://www.edocfind.com/en/ebook/the%20magic%20thief%20found-1.html>

HarperCollins Teacher Resource Website

<http://www.harpercollinschildrens.com/books/Magic-Thief/?isbn13=9780061375873&tctid=120>

HarperCollins Kids Resource Website

<http://www.harpercollinschildrens.com/kids/gamesandcontests/features/magicthief/>

German Magic Thief Website (with games and activities)

<http://der-magische-dieb.de/index.html>

Washington State Department of Labor & Industries: History of Apprenticeship

<http://www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/Apprenticeship/About/History/default.asp>

Magic: The Science of Illusion

<http://www.magicexhibit.org/index.html>

The Magic Newswire

<http://www.linkingpage.com/>

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Can you find the magical names, places, and items?



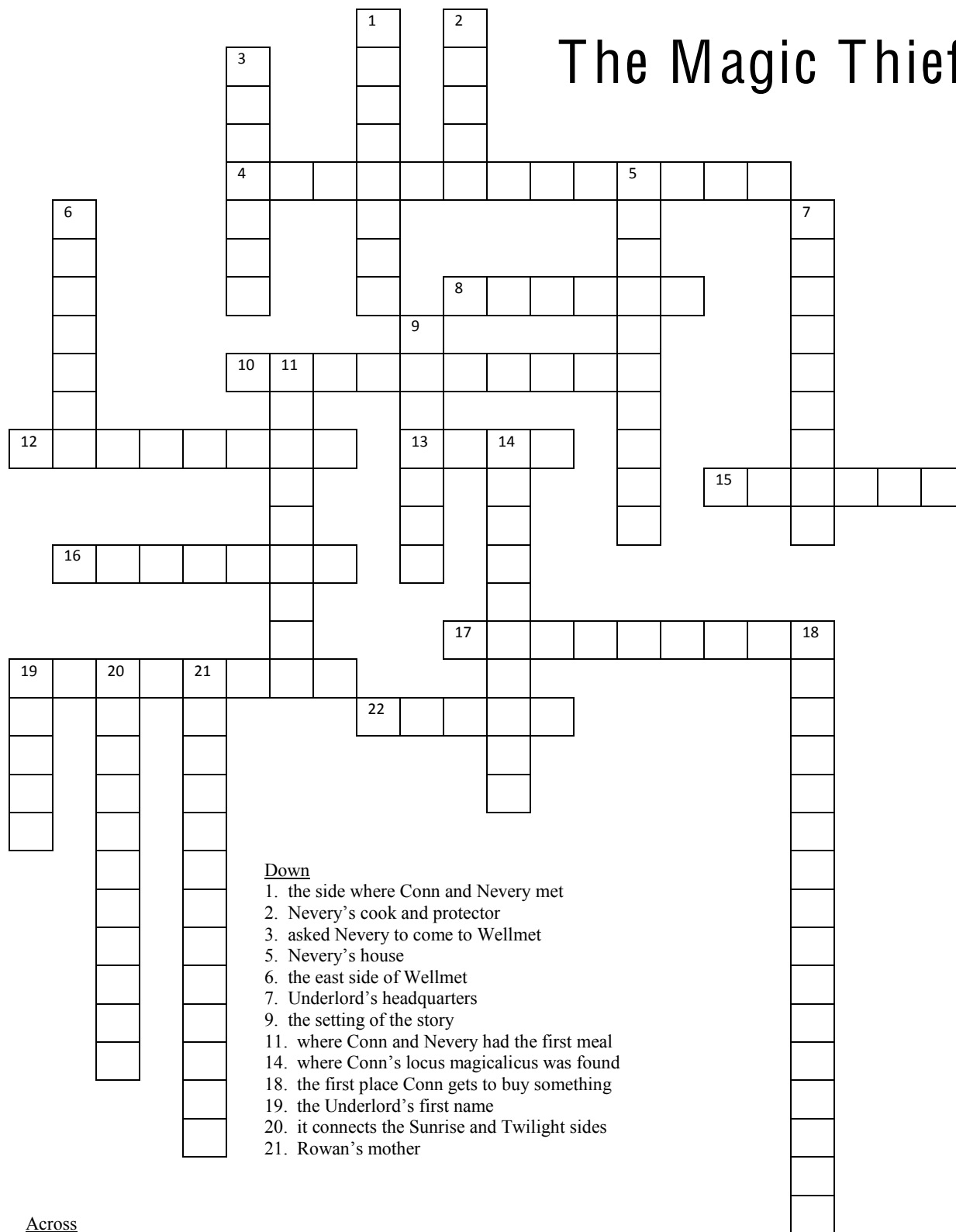
adosyncratichi
apprentice
click-ticker
Connwaer
ducal regalia
embero spell
grimoire
Heartsease

larpenti spell
lexicon
lockpick
locus magicalicus
locus stone
lothfalas
magical capacitor
magical levels

magister
Magisters Hall
master
minion
Nevery
philster
read
remirrimmer

rune
scrying globe
slowsilver
thief
tourmalifine
Wellmet
werelights
wormsilk cloth

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Down

1. the side where Conn and Nevery met
2. Nevery's cook and protector
3. asked Nevery to come to Wellmet
5. Nevery's house
6. the east side of Wellmet
7. Underlord's headquarters
9. the setting of the story
11. where Conn and Nevery had the first meal
14. where Conn's locus magicalicus was found
18. the first place Conn gets to buy something
19. the Underlord's first name
20. it connects the Sunrise and Twilight sides
21. Rowan's mother

Across

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 4. meeting hall | 15. Conn is supposed to call Nevery this |
| 8. wizard banished from Wellmet | 16. he is spying on Nevery |
| 10. largest of the wizard islands | 17. the magic users |
| 12. wizard helping the Underlord | 19. Conn's real name |
| 13. Conn's pet cat | 22. Conn's tutor |

