



# The Girl and the Witch's Garden

BY ERIN BOWMAN • A DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR READERS

## ABOUT THE BOOK

Mallory Estate is the last place twelve-year-old Piper Peavey wants to spend her summer vacation. The grounds are always cold, the garden out back is dead, a mysterious group of children call the property home, and there's a rumor that Melena M. Mallory—the owner of the estate and Piper's wealthy grandmother—is a witch. But when Piper's father falls ill, Mallory Estate is exactly where she finds herself.

The grand house and its garden hold many secrets—some of which may even save her father—and Piper will need to believe in herself, her new friends, and magic if she wants to unlock them before it's too late.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** If you could have any affinity, what would it be and why? If you had to choose solely between Piper's, Julius's, Camilla's, Kenji's, or Teddy's affinities, which would you prefer?
- 2** Many magi select an everyday item—specifically one with sentimental value—to serve as their amplifier. What personal possession would *you* pick to serve as your amplifier? Explain why this item holds value for you.
- 3** In many stories, witches typically have black cats, but Wolfe is white. Why do you think the author made this choice? Can you think of examples of other magical or mysterious cats from fiction?
- 4** Sophia has not been present for much of Piper's life. If you had been in Piper's shoes, would you have been furious to learn that your mother was fostering other children (p12)? Would you have chosen to stay at Mallory Estate as Piper did when Sophia tried to make amends at the close of the novel (p263-268)? If not, what might you have decided instead?
- 5** Piper and Teddy enter the fear portal in chapter thirteen. If you entered the same portal, what might you see? How would you attempt to beat your fears?
- 6** Piper's affinity for invisibility is foreshadowed by the author before the eventual reveal on p103. Provide examples of where this happens. Did the reveal surprise you or feel natural?
- 7** On p170, the first fate recites a riddle implying that limitless time would be a curse. Do you agree? If you were offered a sip of the elixir of immortality, would you take it? Explain.
- 8** Piper and her friends have to work together, using their unique affinities to beat the garden's three trials. Even still, magic can not solve *all* their problems. Why do you think the author decided to place limitations on their powers? In what instances did powers fail to help them, and how did the group handle these obstacles?"
- 9** When writing *The Girl and the Witch's Garden*, the author was influenced by many classics that she read as a child, such as *The Secret Garden*, *Harry Potter*, *Tuck Everlasting*, and *Matilda*. In what ways is *Girl* similar to these titles? In what ways does it stand on its own?
- 10** Piper and Teddy have a friendly baseball rivalry—she roots for the Yankees and he roots for the Red Sox. Is there something you and a close friend disagree about? How does this affect your friendship?
- 11** Piper eventually admits that “she wouldn't be saving her father if she convinced him to live forever; she'd be trapping him” (p231). How has her worldview changed between the start of the novel and this moment? How has *she* changed?
- 12** What do you think is in store for the League of Artifact Protectors after the story ends?