



“Fabulously funny and bursting with magical surprises.”

Lucy Strange



WALKER BOOKS

The Lighthouse at World's End, Amy Sparkes

Discussion Guide

ABOUT THE BOOK

Concluding the story which began with *The House at the Edge of Magic*, Sparkes' latest novel, *The Lighthouse at World's End* picks up the story of Nine, Flabberghast and all the inhabitants of the House for a thrilling new adventure. With increasing suspicions around Flabberghast's sister, a locket of unthinkable power and the looming threat of some very old and very dangerous aunts, Nine must navigate even stranger worlds, trying to keep herself and her friends alive and just maybe discovering what really happened to her mother along the way.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Amy Sparkes studied English Literature and Theology at the University of Kent, and began writing after moving to Devon with her husband, six young children and an overactive imagination. Her books have appeared on CBeebies storytime and been shortlisted for several book awards, including the Roald Dahl Funny Prize and the BookTrust Best Books Awards for *Do Not Enter the Monster Zoo*. She runs author events for children, writing workshops for aspiring children's writers, produces the Writing for Children pages for bestselling *Writing Magazine*, and writes short stories for *Aquila* magazine. She co-founded the Writing Magazine Picture Book Prize for aspiring picture book authors.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION:

Before you begin, check who has read or who remembers the other books in the series and agree if you're all happy to discuss with spoilers. The finale is full of plenty more magic and intrigue to explore, building out from the previous book as Nine becomes ever more embedded in the magical world. There remain themes to explore around family and coercion, identity and loss, but equally plenty of opportunities to discuss comedy and narrative style, imagination and creativity, and plot and mystery.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Getting started:

What did anyone like about the book? Why? How was it similar to book one? How was it different?
Did it remind anyone of other stories?

1. Bewilda

"Well ... you ... um ... naturally, you have my thanks. Although, to be fair, sister I suppose I did save yours first." – p.205

What did the group think of the character of Bewilda? Who liked her? Who wasn't sure? Why? Did members think she was trustworthy? Did anyone change their opinion of Bewilda as the novel went on?

2. The power in a name

"It's a good name." Nine stroked the locket thoughtfully with her thumb. "But I'm Nine, and I think I'll always be Nine." – p.208

What does the name 'Bewilda' suggest? What does it mean that Nine's real name is also Bewilda? Are names important to the book? Can anyone remember any of the relatives' names and descriptions, e.g., Mortimer the Unwise? What is Flabberghast's? Is it fair? The characters suggest other names for Flabberghast – discuss as a group what you feel is more fitting for him. Can you come up with descriptions for the other characters? Nine? Eric? Bonehead?



3. Stargold

"When power destroys, power must be destroyed." – p.117

Why did Maurice the Rather Bizarre try to destroy all stargold? What is the price of that sort of power? Why has the author included this element in the story? Why does power need a price?

4. Things are not always as they seem

"We see what we think we see," said the witch silkily, as she stood up. – p.161

How does the author keep the reader guessing as to Bewilda's motives, and what is really happening? Discuss the narrative techniques she uses. Did anyone think they had worked out the truth before it was revealed?

5. The World Between Worlds

"The World Between Worlds may be vast and beyond your pitiful mortal imagination, but it can be a surprisingly small place when there are three witches such as us." – p.82

What is 'The World Between Worlds'? How would anyone describe it? What does it allow to happen, in the book? Why is it perilous? What might it be like to 'steer' a house between worlds?

EXTENSION: Creative writing – imagine piloting the house to a new world – describe the journey and your first impressions on landing in this new place. What will it be like? How will it be different from our world?

Will anything be the same?

6. Missing Magic

Nine knew how much Flabberghast missed his magic. – p.85

Why did Bewilda take Flabberghast's magic away? What might it be like to have had magic, and then lose it? Would it be worse to be Flabberghast, having lost magic, or Nine, having never had it in the first place? Why? How might Flabberghast feel at the very end of the book?

7. Aunts

"From dung we reach for stars," he whispered. *"Our family motto."* – p.119

Discuss Flabberghast's family – what are his aunts like? Can anyone think of other aunts in stories they've read or seen? How do they compare? How does Nine feel about Flabberghast's family? Are her feelings affected by her own story? What about Flabberghast's family motto – what does it mean? Does it explain how the family behave?

8. The lighthouse

"Forgotten on the fringe of the World Between Worlds, alone in the Dark Sea – oh, surely the most lonely, boring, wretched place in the realms!" – p.89

Why might the author have chosen a lighthouse as the place to activate the locket's power? What does a lighthouse suggest? Where do you find lighthouses? How would it have changed the story if had been somewhere completely different, like a castle, or a cave, or even a supermarket? Discuss the impact of setting in creating stories.

