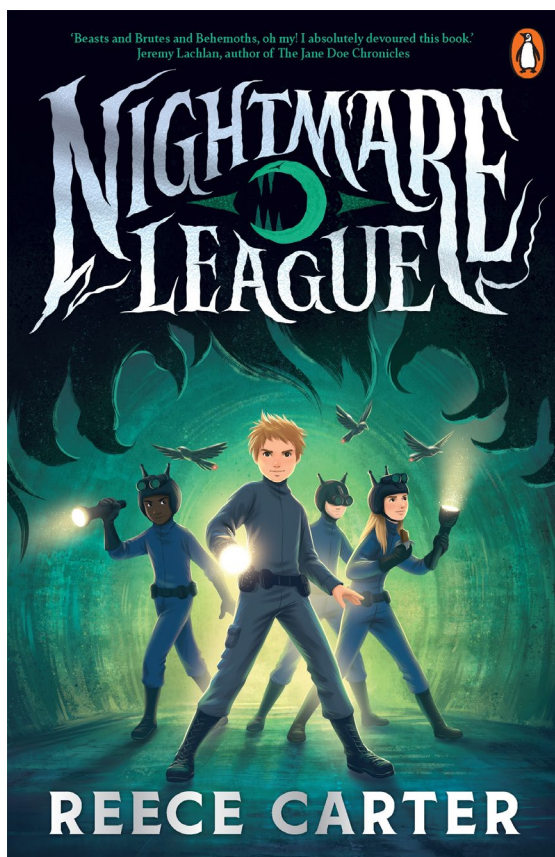




Teachers' Resources



PLOT SUMMARY

Maxwell Pidgeon thinks monsters only exist in nightmares.

Then he's invited to join the Nightmare League – a top-secret organisation that protects the world from the creatures lurking in the dark. As an agent-in-training, Max must prove he has what it takes to keep the monsters at bay.

There's only one problem: the League is hiding the truth about Max's missing dad. Can Max survive training and trust his new friends, or will he risk his life and the lives of others, to make his family whole again?

RECOMMENDED FOR (ages 8+; years 3 to 8)

CONTENTS

1. Plot summary	1
2. About the author	2
3. Author's inspiration	2
4. Pre-reading questions & activities	2
5. Writing style	2
6. Key study topics	3
7. Key Quotes	5
8. Questions & activities	5
9. Further reading	6
10. Order form	7

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

• Learning areas: English • Technologies • General capabilities: Literacy; Critical and creative thinking; Ethical understanding

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

• New fast-paced series by Australian author Reece Carter • Great for fans of action, mystery, codes and adventure.

THEMES

• monsters & mystery • secrets & trust • family, friendships & teamwork

PUBLICATION DETAILS

ISBN: 9781761355486 (paperback); 9781761355493 (ebook); 9781761625152 (audiobook).

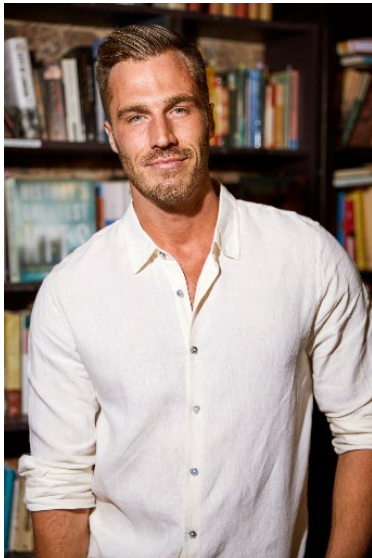
These notes may be reproduced free of charge for use and study within schools, but they may not be reproduced (either in whole or in part) and offered for commercial sale.



Teachers' Resources

Nightmare League by Reece Carter

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Reece Carter is the author of the bestselling *A Girl Called Corpse*, which was shortlisted for many awards, including the ABIA Book of the Year for Younger Children, the IBBY Ena Noel Award and the Aurealis Award. It was also a Dymocks Book of the Month. Reece is currently living in Sydney.

[Author photo Simon Fitzpatrick]

AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

Nightmare League began with a simple mission. I wanted to write a mystery that would hook readers from the first page and not let go until the end. It had to have twists and turns. Clues and code breaking. Gadgets and gizmos. I've spent a lot of time meeting students across the country, and I always ask what kind of story they would like to read next. My job was to write it.

There was just one problem: I didn't know what that story might be. I hunted for inspiration until, one day, I stumbled across a secret that changed everything.

Beneath the streets of real-life Melbourne lies a hidden web of underground tunnels. As people go about their days, very few of them know that below their feet are damp drains, abandoned corridors and shadowy passageways. *What might be down there?* I wondered. *What danger could be lurking in the dark?*

I had an idea. Now, I just needed a hero.

At eleven years old, Max Pidgeon is certain that he has a sixth sense for danger. A knack for sniffing out dodgy characters and shady goings-on. When it leads him to the tunnels, he discovers that they are crawling with dangerous monsters, and that the only thing protecting his city from harm is a top-secret defence and intelligence force known as the Nightmare League. Max's adventure begins when he's recruited to join the League as an agent-in-training. But what happens after that? You'll have to read to find out . . .

PRE-READING QUESTIONS & ACTIVITIES

1. Look at the cover of the book. What do you think the story will be about? Which elements make you think this?
2. Which design elements give you the strongest hint about what the book might be about?
3. How have the cover designer and the illustrator used typography, placement of illustrations and colour to communicate a sense of excitement?
4. Would the cover be as effective if a different font had been used for the title? Why or why not?
5. Look at the quote on the cover of the book. Based on this, what do you think the book will be like? Does it sound like a story you will enjoy?
6. Based on the blurb on the back cover of the book, draw and design your own cover illustration.

WRITING STYLE

Questions and activities

1. How would you describe Reece Carter's writing style?
2. How does the author use language to ensure that the reader will be engaged in Max's experience?
3. Often, authors will attribute certain tics or word choices or clothing options to characters to help develop and round them out for the reader. Pick two characters from the story and list how the author



Teachers' Resources

has done this for those characters. (For example, Prudence is snappy and eats Peppermint Crisps!)

4. Select a passage from the book that you particularly enjoyed. Now re-write it from a different character's perspective. E.g. You could pick another member of Q Unit like Jay or Prudence, or one of the older characters like Caprine or Director Clawfoot. You could even choose one of the monsters or even the Dread Walker itself! What changes about the story when it's told from someone else's viewpoint?
5. How has the author used sound throughout the story? Find a section of text where he's made good use of sounds that Max is hearing. How has this been emphasised in the text?
6. How has the author used worldbuilding to create tension in the narrative? Find examples of this at three different points in the story.
7. How does the use of imagery (including metaphors, and similes) help create suspense and tension throughout the story? Can you find examples of imagery in the narrative?
8. How has the author added to the worldbuilding of the Nightmare League by using invented language? Write a list of words that have been invented to describe the various elements that make up the world. E.g. the names of the monster, the places connected to the League etc.
9. How would the story be different if it had been a dual narrative told from Max's point of view and from Prudence's point of view? Would this change the tone of the story? Re-write the scene in the training arena from Prudence's point of view. (See page 148-154.)
10. How does the author use humour to offset the more serious element in the story?
11. What literary devices does the author employ to make the reader want to keep reading?
2. Do you think hoodwinking is an effective way to keep the secrets of the Nightmare League?
3. Max is worried about the way the League uses 'hoodwinking'. In groups of three or four, discuss what you think the difference is between:
 - lying
 - deliberately misleading someone
 - holding back information.

Can you find examples in the story for all three of these options? Create three examples yourself.
4. Do you think the League did the right thing in not telling Max about his dad?
5. The league is keeping a massive secret from the public about what is happening beneath the streets. Do you think they are justified in keeping this information to themselves?
6. Can you find a moment in the story when Max starts to trust his unit?
7. Why do you think Prudence has such a tough time trusting Max? Write a personnel file for Prudence and give her a backstory.
8. Why do you think Director Clawfoot trusts Bowen to choose the right people for his unit?
9. Choose three characters from the book. Ask yourself what each character is keeping secret. How do the secrets these characters are keeping affect the story?

Family, friendship & teamwork

Questions and activities

1. Plot the character arc for Max throughout the story. How is he different at the start compared to the end of the story? How has he grown and developed? Can you identify the moment or scene in which he has a realisation or crisis moment that changes his personal growth in the narrative? Describe that moment in a few sentences.
2. At first, Max suspects all members of the Nightmare League with keeping secrets. Can you find evidence in the story of characters trying to connection with Max? Are these attempts successful?

KEY STUDY TOPICS

Secrets and trust

Questions and activities

1. The Nightmare League has gone undetected for a long time. How have the leaders of the League ensured that this has been kept secret?



Teachers' Resources

3. Write a chapter from Jay's viewpoint while he's teaching Max to play the Fangenfur game. Add in how Jay is feeling about his new friendship with Max, whether he thinks Max is acting strangely and if he's worried about what's going on in the tunnels.
4. Do you think that Max and Prudence assume a lot about each other? Can you find evidence of this in the text?
5. What is the biggest thing that Max must learn in the story? (Apart from where his dad is.)
6. Max's goal is to find his dad. Do you think this motivation is enough? Has there been a time where you've had to do something brave to help someone in your family?
7. Bowen, Prudence, Jay and Max have very different personalities. What function do each of them play within the narrative?
8. Why do you think Max doesn't tell anyone about his true motivation from the start? How would the story be different if he'd told Q Unit about it from when he first joined? How would this have affected the tension throughout the story?
9. Max learns that Elmo Krunk and Rita Clawfoot used to be friends, but do you think this was really the case? Why do you think Rita and Elmo have such different outlooks on the monster issue? What has made them have such different motivations for the work they do?
4. Create a monster from the Abandoned Deep – give it a name, traits, abilities and motivations (if it's a Behemoth). Draw a picture of your monster and label any important details.
5. There's a central mystery at the heart of Nightmare League – the case of Max's missing dad. How has the author used elements from the mystery genre to explore this storyline?
6. A key mystery device is the red herring. Research red herrings in literature. There are several characters and situations in the story that aren't what they seem to be. Can you find red herrings in the story? How has the author used them to throw the reader off track?
7. Mystery novels often keep the reader busy, engaged in trying to work out the clues and sift the red herrings from the facts. Can you find examples of foreshadowing in the text? How has the author used this to confuse the reader (and Max) about what is really going on?
8. In small groups, choose a pivotal moment from the story and discuss how you would have reacted in that situation. For example, would you have gone to the corner of Merriwell and Drear to meet the secret agents? Would you have leapt onto the tram and gone to the Nightmare League headquarters?

Monsters & mystery

Questions and activities

1. Analyse what makes Max a good candidate for the Nightmare League? What skills does he possess that he can use as an agent-in-training? Does he have any qualities that will prevent him from being a successful agent?
2. Monsters are a common element in fairytales, fantasy stories and horror novels. Can you think of other creatures that appear in fantasy novels? What makes the monsters in *Nightmare League* different?
3. How is tension created in the story by using the different levels of monsters – Brutes and Behemoths. Look up the definitions of these words in the dictionary. Do you think they are appropriate labels for these creatures? Why or why not?

Ciphers & codes

Questions & Activities

1. Codes and patterns often play a big part in mystery novels. How has the author used this in *Nightmare League*?
2. Clawfoot uses ciphers and codes to communicate with, and train, agents. Research the Pigpen cipher. When in history was it first used to relaying important information?
3. Create your own Pigpen Cipher and send a message to a friend.
4. Develop your own secret code to use with your friends.
5. Research when codes and ciphers were used a lot in history.
6. During World War II, the Enigma machine was the cutting edge of coding technology. Research how



Teachers' Resources

the Allied forces broke the Enigma code and used the information they found to save lives.

them all names, personality traits, skills and backstories.

7. What would be the equivalent of the Enigma code in the world today?

6. Write a scene involving the original members of the Nightmare League finding the Abandoned Deep.
7. Use lemon juice to write a hidden message for a friend.

KEY QUOTES

1. *'What lurks in the dark, stays in the dark.'* (Page 56)

This is the motto of the Nightmare League. Do you think it's referring to just the monsters, or could it also be referring to something else, like the secrets it keeps? In groups, create other mottos the League could have used.

2. *'We're a unit, whether I like it or not. That's what units do.'* (Page 170)

What do you think this says about Prudence's character? Do you have to like someone to be loyal to them?

3. *'Trust. Nobody.'* (Page 200)

Read the scene on pages 199-200 again. On reflection, what do you think Krunk was trying to do by telling Max this?

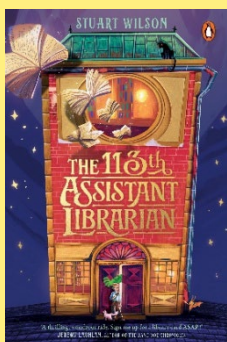
QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Look at Max's casebook entries. Create your own casebook and update it each day for a week. Have you noticed anything out of the ordinary? Did the act of keeping the casebook make you more observant and aware of the world around you?
2. Pick a few of the monsters from the book. Design spreads for these monsters as if they were entries in Clawfoot's *Encyclopaedia of Monsters*. Use design, illustration and text to complete your entries.
3. If you were an agent for the Nightmare League, what type of gadget would you want to receive from Einstein?
4. Research Albert Einstein. Find out why he was famous. Based on what you have found out, do you think it's an appropriate name for Einstein in the story?
5. Build your own Nightmare League Unit. Create four different characters to be a part of your team. Give



Teachers' Resources

Further reading from Penguin Random House



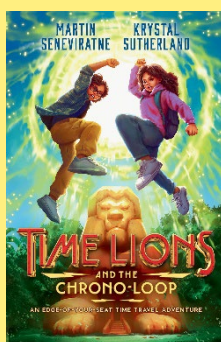
The 113th Assistant Librarian by Stuart Wilson

Oliver Wormwood is sure his new job in the library will be boring. Until he learns that books hold great power – and danger.

By the end of his first day, Oliver has witnessed a death, been frozen by a book, met a perplexing number of cats, and fought off a horde of terrifying creatures.

With only a mysterious girl called Agatha to show him the ropes, Oliver needs to learn fast . . . if he wants to live longer than the 112 assistant librarians before him.

[Teachers' Resources available.](#)



Time Lions and the Chrono-Loop by Martin Seneviratne and Krystal Sutherland

Twins Pearl and Patrick are no ordinary twelve-year-olds. They're geniuses who pull heists all over the world to further their scientific and historical research. Their criminal activity has made them a regular nuisance to both the CIA and MI6. But it's all been worth it. They've finally achieved their greatest triumph: time travel. Their first stop: ancient Egypt, where they even get to see King Tut!

When the twins' escapade attracts the attention of TIME (The Interdimensional Misconduct Enquiry), a secret organisation charged with maintaining the timeline, will they have what it takes to be recruited as agents, or will they be sentenced to one hundred years in the Eternal Abyss?



The Lost Defenders by Sam Summers

Jace Tanner has always been different – he can see monsters no one else can. As if fitting in at school wasn't hard enough! All he wants is to be normal ... and maybe make it through his final year of primary school without getting expelled!

But when you can see monsters, trouble follows you everywhere – and things are about to get worse. A lot worse. When strange happenings begin to unfold, Jace uncovers a secret world hidden behind museum walls and a mysterious curator who knows more than he's saying. Drawn into an ancient mystery, Jace soon realises he's not as alone as he thought.

But with a prophecy threatening to tear down the Veil that separates Earth from the Monster Realm, can Jace and his newfound allies come together, face their fears, and unlock their forgotten inheritance in time to save the world?

[Teachers' Resources available.](#)



Teachers' Resources

Order form

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
<i>Nightmare League</i>	Reece Carter	9781761355486	3–8	\$17.99		
<i>The 113th Assistant Librarian</i>	Stuart Wilson	9781761342257	4–8	\$19.99		
<i>Time Lions and the Chrono-Loop</i>	Martin Seneviratne and Krystal Sutherland	9780143779377	4–8	\$16.99		
<i>The Lost Defenders</i>	Sam Summers	9781761355059	3–6	\$17.99		
TOTAL						

NAME: _____

SCHOOL: _____

ADDRESS: _____

STATE: _____

POSTCODE: _____

TEL: _____

EMAIL: _____

ACCOUNT NO.: _____

PURCHASE ORDER NO.: _____

PLEASE SEND ORDER FORMS
TO YOUR LOCAL EDUCATION
SUPPLIER.