



LEAGUE OF LIARS

ASTRID SCHOLTE

March 2022

ISBN: 9781760630799

Format: Paperback

Recommended for: 13+ years

Themes: Fantasy, mystery, thriller, courtroom drama, heists, magic and jailbreak

Applicable to learning areas: English language, literacy and literature

Summary

Ever since his mother was killed in a freak edem-based crime, seventeen-year-old Cayder Broduck has had one goal: to have illegal users of the extra-dimensional magic brought to justice. Cayder dreams of becoming a prosecutor and, when he secretly accepts an apprenticeship under the city's best public defender, he plans to learn every legal trick he can to one day dismantle defence arguments. Then he'll finally be able to make sure justice is served.

But when he meets all three criminals he is to defend, he finds they are teenagers, like him, and their stories are... complicated, like his. As their cases unfold, Cayder must race to separate the truth from the lies and uncover what really happened the night his mother died.

From the bestselling author of *Four Dead Queens* comes a heart-pounding mystery rife with secrets and danger, where nothing is as it seems...

A Word from the Author

'I had the idea for *League of Liars* one day when I was thinking about the villains in *Four Dead Queens* (no spoilers!) and the kind of prison they might end up in. It also got me thinking about the other people who would be imprisoned there and what had led them to committing serious crimes.

'As a law-abiding citizen, I wondered, what would drive me to want to break the law? I also wanted to explore the idea of what constitutes a crime and the lasting impact and stigma committing a crime can have on young adults.'

– Astrid Scholte

Suggestions for Classroom Discussion and Application

Literary Technique

- What effect did the handwritten note stating, '*If you're reading this, that means I succeeded...*' have on you? Did it intrigue you and make you want to find out more?
- How does the choice of font change the way you read the note?
- After reading the story guess who you think wrote the note – Cayder, Jey, Leta or Princess Elenora?
- Why do you think the author decided to use first person narration for Cayder's chapters but third person narration for Jey, Leta and Princess Elenora? In your answer consider the 'relationship' between reader and character in both forms. How do they differ? [Hint: consider the characters with something to hide and key plot twists in the novel.]
- Consider this extract from the text and answer the questions below:

Your pulse raced and then slowed. You felt every heartbeat, as though your body was counting down until the last, making each thump count. And although you were so thirsty, you could not keep down a single sip of water, as your body tried in vain to expel the poison. Your body flushed hot and then cold and colder still, until your teeth chattered and your bones shook. And then...nothing. A numbness washed over you like a wave from the ocean, carrying you out further from the shore. Further from your body. Further from life. Page 278

- Find examples of the following techniques in the extract: Second person, POV, Simile, Onomatopoeia, Repetition and Variation in sentence length.
- How did each of these elements work to build the tension and drama of Leta's description of dying?

World Building

- How does Astrid Scholte build the world of Telene in the novel's opening chapter? Consider the following: were some aspects of Telene similar to our world – either today or in the past? What aspects made Telene entirely original? Did mixing the familiar and original seem intriguing to you?

Genre

YA (Young Adult) novels typically feature a character's coming-of-age, explore emotional highs and lows (first love, family, and friendship issues) and fundamental themes such as death and good versus evil.

- With this definition in mind, do you think *League of Liars* is a typical YA novel? Give examples of characters, settings and events in the novel to prove your opinion.
- Which character do you think undergoes the most interesting 'coming of age' in your opinion? What events or people in the novel facilitated their change?

Discussion

- Family ties – both positive and negative – are explored in *League of Liars*. Compare and contrast Cayder and Leta's relationship with that of Princess Elenora and her brother. Analyse the child/father relationships between Cayder and Leta and their father, and Jey and Kema with their respective fathers. Do you think the absence of mothers in the story is significant?
- Do you think you would be tempted to use edem in Telene or would the threat of punishment be enough to prevent you?
- Consider these extracts from the text and discuss your answers to the questions below:

'Becoming a criminal is a choice,' my father would say. 'We either choose to accept the way things are or try to force fate's hand.' page 1

'They all have a story,' Graymond said with a sweep of his arms, raising his voice over the racket. 'Are you ready to listen?' page 20

To what extent do you think all criminals make a choice to break the law? Did Jey, Leta or Princess Elenora 'choose' their 'stories' or were they chosen for them. What broader message about our society and its criminal code do you think Astrid Scholte might be exploring in the novel?

'Over the past three weeks, I'd realised people made mistakes. People acted selfishly or recklessly or desperately or naively, but that didn't mean they were monsters who should be locked up for life. I realised this man's fate could have been my own.' page 356

Should people be sent to prison as punishment or for rehabilitation? How do you think the Regency of Telene would answer that question? How do you think the majority of Australians would answer that question? Compare and contrast the Telene prison system with that of our own?

'The legal system doesn't always favour the innocent.' Page 184

Do you think Graymond's statement might apply to our own system?

Predicting

- If there were a sequel to *League of Liars* what would you like to see happen when Cayder, Leta, Jey and Princess Elenora enter the veil?

Visual Literacy

- After reading *League of Liars* turn to the cover of the novel.
 - Consider the title and cover design. Why do you think the designer and publisher decided to use that particular mix of font, colour, composition and illustration?
 - What mood is evoked by the cover and is this an appropriate mood for the book you read?
- Devise an alternate title for the novel and design a new cover.

About the author

Astrid Scholte was raised on a diet of Spielberg, Lucas and Disney and knew she wanted to be surrounded by all things fantastical from a young age. She's spent the last fourteen years working in film, animation and television as both an artist and manager. Career highlights include working on James Cameron's *Avatar*, Steven Spielberg's *The Adventures of Tintin* and Disney's *Moon Girl and Devil Dinosaur*. She lives in Melbourne, Australia with her fiancé and two cats, Lilo and Mickey. Her debut YA novel, *Four Dead Queens*, is an international bestseller and award winner.

You can find Astrid posting about books, cats and Disney on Twitter and Instagram @AstridScholte

