

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION GUIDE

Sophia Sprite and the Sasquatch Secret

*Discussion questions, vocabulary,
writing prompts, and activities for
grades 5 to 9*



BOOK 1 OF THE SOPHIA
SPRITE SERIES

AUTHOR

Brian Young

FORMAT

Novel, 29 chapters, about 72,000 words

GENRE

Contemporary fantasy and adventure

AGES

10 and up

THEMES

Belonging, grief, courage, evidence and truth,
prejudice, environmental stewardship

Free to copy and share for classroom
and library use.

BRIANYOUNGAUTHOR.COM · HELLO@BRIANYOUNGAUTHOR.COM

About This Guide

This guide is for teachers, librarians, homeschool families, and anyone leading a group of young readers through *Sophia Sprite and the Sasquatch Secret*. It includes a full synopsis, pre-reading activities, discussion questions organized into five reading sections, a vocabulary list, writing prompts, cross-curricular activities, and a short folklore and geography sidebar about the real Olympic Peninsula.

The questions move from literal recall toward inference, analysis, and personal connection, so you can pick the level that fits your readers. Everything in this guide may be photocopied and shared for educational use.

A NOTE ON SPOILERS

The section-by-section questions discuss the whole plot, including the ending. If students are reading at different paces, hand out one section at a time.

The Book at a Glance

Ages 10+

Grades 5 to 9

Fantasy / Adventure

Third-person limited

29 chapters

Series opener

Audiobook read by Bahni Turpin

Synopsis. Fourteen-year-old Sophia Sprite loses both parents in a rockslide and moves from Seattle to Elwha, Washington, the self-declared Bigfoot Capital of Washington, to live with a grandfather she barely knows. Richard Lumeth has spent fifty years trying to prove what he saw in the woods in 1976, and most of the town thinks he is a crank. Sophia expects misery. Instead, hidden among her mother's belongings, she finds a key that refuses to stay thrown away, a cloak that makes eyes slide off the wearer, and a whistle no one else can hear.

The whistle brings an eight-inch leprechaun named Declan O'Brien to her window, and then a seven-foot Northborn named Ashnaka, who calls herself Marsha's bonded sister. Sophia learns that her mother lived a double life as a bridge between humans and the Northborn, the ancient hidden civilization the world calls Bigfoot. With two new friends, the anxious and funny Lucas Fox and the fiercely logical Olivia Garcia, plus a sarcastic human-Northborn hybrid named Drenna, Sophia discovers that her mother's death was no accident. Kragorth, the oldest living Northborn, has spent centuries preparing a plan to make humanity destroy itself. To stop him, Sophia has to convince a divided Council, break into a hidden facility, and learn exactly what her mother's whistle can do, and what it costs.

Why it works in the classroom. The novel pairs a fast adventure plot with questions students actually want to argue about: Who decides who counts as a monster? What makes evidence convincing? When do secrets protect people and when do they hurt them? It models grief without wallowing, friendship across difference, and courage that admits it is afraid. The magic system has clear rules and real costs, which makes it a strong mentor text for world-building.

About the Author

Brian Young grew up in Utah, then spent eight years in Seattle hiking the trails of the Pacific Northwest, always keeping one eye out for Sasquatch. Those misty forests planted the seeds of the Sophia Sprite series. He is also the author of the Sacred Vein series, a historical adventure saga set in the American West. *Sophia Sprite and the Sasquatch Secret* is his first book for young readers. The audiobook is narrated by Audie Award winner Bahni Turpin. Brian lives in Chicago and welcomes mail from readers and classrooms at hello@brianyoungauthor.com.

A NOTE FROM BRIAN

I wrote this book for anyone who has ever felt like they didn't belong, until they found their people. That is the dedication, and it is also the whole idea. Sophia starts the story with nothing and nobody. By the end she has a grandfather who finally believes, two friends who followed her underground, and a seven-foot Bigfoot who loved her mother. None of that happened because she was special. It happened because she kept showing up, scared, and did the thing anyway.

If your class reads this book, I would love to hear what they argued about. Teachers and librarians can reach me at hello@brianyoungauthor.com. I do free virtual visits when my schedule allows, and I answer every letter.

Standards Connections

The questions and activities in this guide support the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts in grades 5 through 8 (and map to most state standards). Specific standards are listed with each lesson in the companion *Lesson Plans* pack.

STRAND	STANDARDS ADDRESSED
Reading: Literature	RL.1 (cite textual evidence), RL.2 (theme and summary), RL.3 (character and plot development), RL.4 (word meaning and figurative language), RL.6 (point of view)
Writing	W.1 (argument), W.2 (informative), W.3 (narrative), W.9 (draw evidence from literary texts)
Speaking and Listening	SL.1 (collaborative discussion), SL.4 (present claims and findings)
Language	L.4 (determine word meaning), L.5 (figurative language, nuance)
Cross-curricular	NGSS MS-LS2 (ecosystems), science and engineering practice 7 (engaging in argument from evidence), media literacy

Before Reading

Anticipation Guide

Have students mark each statement **Agree** or **Disagree** before reading, then revisit the list after finishing the book. The point is not to be right. It is to notice whether the story changed anyone's mind.

1. If something cannot be proven, it probably is not real.
2. Keeping a secret from someone you love is sometimes the kind thing to do.
3. Being brave means not being afraid.
4. People who do terrible things usually believe they are doing the right thing.
5. Humans are mostly a destructive force on the planet.
6. Revenge is a reasonable response when someone hurts your family.
7. You can forgive someone without going back to being friends.
8. Where you belong is decided by who your family is.

Quick Write

Choose one prompt and write for five minutes without stopping.

- Describe a time you were the new person somewhere. What did you notice first? What did you wish someone had said to you?
- Richard Lumeth has spent fifty years looking for proof of something nobody believes in. Is that admirable, foolish, or both? Explain.
- The town of Elwha calls itself the Bigfoot Capital of Washington. Why do you think people enjoy stories about creatures that might not exist?

Build Background

- **Map it.** Find Seattle and the Olympic Peninsula on a map of Washington State. Locate the Elwha River and Olympic National Park. Note how far Sophia moves and what kind of landscape she moves into (temperate rainforest, mountains, coastline).
- **Folklore check.** Ask students what they already know about Bigfoot or Sasquatch. Where do those ideas come from (movies, TV, family stories, the internet)? Keep the list; you will return to it with the sidebar on page 9.
- **Genre talk.** The book is contemporary fantasy: the real world with a hidden layer under it. Have students name other books or films that work the same way and predict what rules this world might have.

Discussion Questions by Section

Each section opens with a short summary for the discussion leader, followed by questions that build from comprehension toward analysis. Questions marked **Look closer** ask students to return to the text for evidence.

Section 1: Chapters 1 to 5

THE LAST ORDINARY DAY THROUGH WHAT MOTHER LEFT BEHIND

Where we are. Sophia's father catches a falling creamer with a hand that blurs faster than any human hand should, and then both parents die in a rockslide on a weekend trip. Straight from the funeral reception, Sophia rides four hours west with her grandfather Richard to Elwha, whose house is wallpapered with blurry photographs and footprint casts. Her new room is aggressively pink. At Elwha Middle School she meets Olivia Garcia and Lucas Fox, and runs into Grace Wilson, who decides on day one that Sophia is a target. Lucas's grandfather Bernard runs a Bigfoot research center, and on the walk home Lucas gives her a rule she will carry through the whole book: absence of proof isn't proof of absence. At home, in boxes labeled MARSHA, Sophia finds a trunk, a hidden key, and three strange objects: boots, a cloak, and a whistle.

- 1 The opening chapter is called "The Last Ordinary Day." What small details does the author include to make that day feel ordinary? Why might a writer spend time on the ordinary before everything changes?
- 2 In Chapter 1, Sophia's father's hand "blurs" when he catches the creamer, and he blames video games. Did you notice this detail the first time? How does the author plant clues without announcing them?
- 3 Describe how Sophia behaves at the funeral and in the truck with Richard. What is she feeling underneath? Find two lines that show her grief without using the word *sad*.
- 4 Richard's house is full of evidence nobody believes. How does Sophia react to it at first? What does the pink bedroom tell you about Richard, even though he never explains it?
- 5 **Look closer.** Reread Sophia's first day at Elwha Middle School. How does the author use Olivia, Lucas, and Grace to show three different ways people treat a newcomer? Which reaction felt most realistic to you?
- 6 Walking back from his grandfather's research center, Lucas says, "Absence of proof isn't proof of absence." Put that idea in your own words. Can you think of a time in history when it turned out to be true?
- 7 Bernard's father was a Black logger whose reports were dismissed. How does that family history shape the way Bernard and Lucas think about being believed?
- 8 When Sophia finds the boots, cloak, and whistle, what does she assume they are? What would you have done with them?

Impossible problems are regular problems wearing a disguise.

SOPHIA'S FATHER, REMEMBERED IN CHAPTER 7

Section 2: Chapters 6 to 10

THE TINY MESSENGER THROUGH A WORLD BENEATH

Where we are. An eight-inch leprechaun named Declan O'Brien arrives at Sophia's window and explains the whistle: volume equals range, intent equals precision. Sophia tries to throw away her mother's key and it keeps coming back. At school Grace's cruelty escalates and Lucas freezes instead of helping. Sophia finally blows the whistle, gently, and meets Ashnaka: seven feet tall, green-gold eyes, wooden beads, and her mother's bonded sister for twenty-three years. Ashnaka explains the Northborn, who have watched humanity for sixty thousand years, and offers Sophia a choice: have the memory erased, or step through the shimmer. Sophia steps through. Underground she meets the Council leader Kivara, the ancient mentor Torvak, and the HARE, a holographic system that builds entire landscapes. She learns the five clans and meets Rothgar, who makes it clear humans are not welcome. Ashnaka slips a portal key onto her wrist, and Torvak warns her about the price of being a bridge.

- 1 Declan is tiny, grumpy, and very old. How does the author make him feel like a real person rather than a cute sidekick? Find a line of his dialogue that does this.
- 2 The whistle's rules are simple: volume equals range, intent equals precision. Why do you think the author gave the magic clear rules? How does knowing the rules change the way you read later scenes?
- 3 The key keeps returning no matter how Sophia gets rid of it (including the garbage disposal). What does this running joke reveal about Sophia? About her mother?
- 4 In Chapter 7, Lucas freezes when Grace targets Sophia. Were you angry at him? Later we learn about the caving trip where he was stuck in the dark for twenty minutes, and his fear of letting people down. Does the explanation change your judgment of the moment?
- 5 **Look closer.** Reread Sophia's first meeting with Ashnaka in Chapter 8. Make a list of what Ashnaka does with her body and voice to seem less threatening. Why would a creature that size need to think about that?
- 6 Ashnaka gives Sophia a real choice: forget, or go. Why is it important that Sophia chooses? What would the story lose if she had been dragged through the shimmer?
- 7 The Northborn call themselves the Vorath, "the ones who remember." The world calls them Bigfoot. What is the difference between the name a group gives itself and the name others give it? Can you think of real examples?
- 8 Each of the five clans has a role: Stornath (warriors), Thornvale (healers), Ashwood (builders and technology), Valdris (records), Deephollow (artists). Which clan would you want to join, and what does that say about you? Which clan does the book seem to take least seriously, and is that fair?

- 9 Torvak talks about “the price of being a bridge.” Based on what you know so far, what do you predict that price will be?

Section 3: Chapters 11 to 17

LESSONS IN SHADOW THROUGH THE LEPRECHAUN’S BURDEN

Where we are. Sophia balances JV soccer and secret trips underground, where a bioluminescent cavern teaches her about making room for wonder. She overhears Gronak, leader of the warrior clan, and hears the name Kragorth for the first time. Olivia draws a diagram of what is visible versus hidden in Sophia’s life, and comes close to the truth. Sophia finds Grace crying alone. Richard tells her the weight of grief does not get lighter; you get stronger. Sophia meets Drenna, a human-Northborn hybrid with a sharp tongue, who takes her on a tour of the clans and gives her a map. Through Marsha’s journal, Sophia learns how her mother worked. She watches Rothgar follow Kragorth, and she and Drenna spy on Rothgar and his girlfriend Aytha. The Council suspends surface expeditions. Grace unexpectedly helps a freshman. Lucas and Olivia confide their own fears, and Sophia decides to trust them with the secret, summoning Ashnaka to prove it. On a tour of the Ashwood lab, Tessra hands Olivia a bag of “junk” parts. Lucas stands up to Rothgar. Finally Declan tells Sophia about the night Kragorth slaughtered his settlement in Ireland four hundred years ago, and admits he was the one who kept returning the key.

- 1 Sophia keeps playing soccer while the rest of her life turns upside down. Why do you think the author kept this thread? Find a moment where something from soccer helps her underground.
- 2 Richard says, “The weight doesn’t get lighter, you get stronger.” Do you agree? How is this different from being told that time heals everything?
- 3 **Look closer.** Olivia’s diagram divides Sophia’s life into visible and hidden. Make your own two-column version for Sophia at this point in the book. Then make one for yourself (you do not have to share it).
- 4 Drenna is half human and half Northborn and belongs fully to neither world. How does she use humor? Find a joke of hers that is also telling the truth about something painful.
- 5 Drenna says a hybrid is “literally a miracle. No cap.” Why does the author give the oldest civilization on Earth a character who talks like a teenager on the internet? What does that choice do to the mood?
- 6 Sophia finds Grace crying, and later Grace helps a freshman. How does the author complicate Grace without excusing her? Is it possible to understand a bully and still hold them responsible?
- 7 Sophia breaks the rules by telling Lucas and Olivia. Was she right? What makes a secret worth breaking?
- 8 When Lucas finally stands up to Rothgar, he describes courage as “being terrified and doing it anyway.” Compare this moment to the hallway scene in Chapter 7. What changed in Lucas?
- 9 Declan’s story of the massacre is told in his own voice, in a quiet scene, rather than shown as action. Why might the author have chosen to tell it this way? How did it affect you as a reader?

Declan admits he kept returning the key. Does knowing this change how you read the earlier joke? What does it tell you about how long he has been watching over Sophia's family?

Being brave means being afraid and doing it anyway.

MARSHA, REMEMBERED BY SOPHIA IN CHAPTER 18

Section 4: Chapters 18 to 23

THE LIFE SHE NEVER KNEW THROUGH NO WAY OUT

Where we are. After an attack in a dark tunnel, Sophia learns the full truth: her mother was a bridge between the species, and she died three weeks after naming Kragorth as a threat. Kragorth confronts Sophia directly and frames the fight as “hope or survival, love or logic.” Back home, Sophia realizes the music box has a second keyhole, and the key is the tiny charm on the necklace her mother gave her at ten. Inside is a micro-SD card and a letter. The evidence is overwhelming: Kragorth has built a network across all five clans and is developing a weaponized version of the HARE that can alter what people see and believe. Torvak's cabin becomes a war room. Ashnaka wants to move now; Torvak wants to prepare; Sophia proposes doing both. Lucas calls that night, wrecked by sitting across from his grandfather and saying nothing. In his own chamber, Kragorth looks at a child's drawing he has kept for three hundred years. At a Deephollow celebration, Sophia convinces Aytha to help. The emergency Council session follows: Marsha's recording of Kragorth planning her “accident,” then Declan's testimony. Kivara enters it into the record but demands physical proof. Gronak pledges Clan Stornath. The team breaks into the hidden facility, where Olivia's junk parts get them through military-grade illusions and they find a device targeting every major city on Earth. Lucas is captured; Sophia hands the evidence to Olivia and steps forward. Declan's flash sphere frees Lucas, and then Kragorth himself blocks the way. He admits to killing Marsha and dismisses Jerry as collateral damage. The friends scatter through the pillars and escape to the surface.

- 1 Marsha's letter was written months before she died and hidden behind a lock that only a necklace Sophia never wore could open. What does this planning tell you about Marsha? How does it change Sophia's grief?
- 2 Kragorth says the choice is “hope or survival, love or logic.” Is that a fair way to frame it? Which characters in the book refuse to accept that those are opposites?
- 3 **Look closer.** In the war room, Ashnaka argues for acting now and Torvak argues for preparing. Reread the scene. Whose argument did you find more convincing, and why? What does Sophia's “do both” answer reveal about the kind of leader she is becoming?
- 4 Lucas tells Sophia he needs someone to know what the secret is costing him. Why is it important that Sophia simply says, “I know. I see it,” instead of trying to fix it?
- 5 Chapter 20 opens inside Kragorth's own chamber, with the child's drawing he has kept for three hundred years. Why would the author show us the villain alone? Did the scene make you sympathize with him, understand him, or neither? Is there a difference?

- 6 Kragorth believes humans are destroying the planet and that the only solution is to remove them. Which parts of his argument are based on facts, and where does his reasoning go wrong? Practice stating his position fairly before you argue against it.
- 7 Aytha agrees to help but refuses to testify publicly “until I know for certain that Rothgar can’t be saved.” What is she weighing? Have you ever had to choose between loyalty to a person and loyalty to what is right?
- 8 Declan’s testimony to the Council is the first time he has told the full story in four hundred years. Why does Kivara say, “You are no longer alone”? What does it mean to have your story officially recorded?
- 9 Olivia gets the team through the barrier with parts Tessra called junk. Drenna calls her “a dangerous nerd.” What does the book suggest about paying attention, and about the people who get underestimated?
- 10 When Lucas is captured, Sophia gives the evidence to Olivia and steps forward anyway. Torvak would say the mission matters more than one person. Do you agree with Sophia’s choice? What would you have done?
- 11 When Sophia asks about her father, Kragorth answers “too quick, too smooth, like a door being shut.” What do you think the author is setting up? What questions do you still have?

Section 5: Chapters 24 to 29

THE COST OF TRUTH THROUGH BRIDGES

Where we are. The morning of the Council session, Drenna ruins breakfast, Olivia admits she has probably lost the scholarship she has planned for since sixth grade, and Aytha decides to testify about following Rothgar. Declan tells Sophia how Marsha literally tripped over him in the woods and was the first person in three centuries to ask what he was watching for. At the Council, the testimony lands, and the elders begin to vote for action. Then Kragorth blows the doors in. Torvak gets the HARE broadcasting to every Northborn community, and Sophia keeps Kragorth talking until he has confessed in front of his entire species. Olivia scrambles the device’s authorization code; Drenna cuts its power. Kragorth hits everyone with a mental attack of hallucinations. Drenna is immune; Lucas, crying and shaking, charges anyway and breaks Kragorth’s concentration. Declan, offered revenge, refuses it and chooses to live. Rothgar surrenders, and Aytha tells him love does not erase what he did. Kragorth kills two guards and seizes Kivara by the throat. Sophia aims the whistle at him alone and blows with everything she has; it drops him and drops her too, leaving a ringing in her left ear that may never fade. Ashnaka finishes the fight for Marsha. Kragorth is bound in nullifiers. In the aftermath, Torvak leaves and admits he had been preparing Sophia’s family for years. Kivara offers Sophia a future place among the Northborn. Sophia tells Richard the truth and summons Ashnaka to meet him. Grace shows up at the door, scared and sorry; Sophia tells her she is not crazy but does not forgive her. Life resumes, and Sophia chooses the forest.

- 1 Olivia says, “I just need a second to be upset about it before I go back to saving the world.” Why does the author include her lost scholarship in the middle of a world-ending crisis? What does it say about what counts as a real loss?
- 2 Sophia’s strategy against Kragorth is to keep him talking. Where did she learn that patience? How does the soccer idea of being “in the right place at the right time, doing the right thing” apply?
- 3 **Look closer.** Reread Lucas’s charge. The author tells us he did not break free of the mental attack. Why is it important that he was still terrified and still crying? How does this scene complete his arc from the hallway in Chapter 7?
- 4 Declan has waited four hundred years for revenge and then turns it down. He says, “I’m going to live.” Is this a victory or a loss for him? What does the book suggest about revenge?
- 5 Aytha tells Rothgar, “Love doesn’t erase what you helped him do.” The narrator adds, “Some broken things stay broken.” Is this a harsh ending for Rothgar, a fair one, or both?
- 6 The whistle saves Kivara, but it injures Sophia, and the ringing in her ear may be permanent. Why do you think the author gave the magic a price? How would the ending feel different if it had cost her nothing?
- 7 Sophia tells Kragorth, “There’s no winning here. There’s just... stopping.” What does she mean? Is stopping enough?
- 8 Torvak admits he prepared Sophia’s family for years. Sophia says, “You used me.” He says, “I prepared you. There is a difference.” Is there? Where is the line between guiding someone and using them?
- 9 Richard waited fifty years to be believed. Describe his reaction when Ashnaka kneels in his living room. Why does Ashnaka tell him Marsha was proud of his “stubborn hope”?
- 10 Grace apologizes and Sophia does not forgive her, but she does tell her she is not crazy. Why is that distinction important? Did the ending between them feel honest to you?
- 11 Sophia says, “I think secrets protect people. And I think they hurt people. Both things are true at the same time.” Find three secrets in the book and sort them: which protected, which hurt, and which did both?
- 12 The last chapter is called “Bridges.” List everyone in the book who acts as a bridge between two groups. What qualities do they share?

Themes and Big Ideas

Use these as starting points for Socratic seminars, essay topics, or theme-tracking journals. Each theme includes a line from the book students can use as an anchor.

Belonging is a choice, not a bloodline

The dedication reads, “For anyone who ever felt like they didn’t belong, until they found their people.” Drenna, the hybrid, says belonging “wasn’t about genetics. It was about choices.” Track every character who finds their people: Sophia, Lucas, Olivia, Declan, Drenna, even Richard.

Courage that admits it is afraid

Marsha: “Being brave means being afraid and doing it anyway.” Lucas: “Being terrified and doing it anyway.” Aytha: “Everyone feels fear. Strength is what you do with it.” The book keeps restating one idea in different voices. Why?

Evidence, belief, and being believed

Lucas’s “absence of proof isn’t proof of absence” sits beside Richard’s fifty years of blurry photographs and Olivia’s insistence on documentation. The novel asks what makes evidence convincing, and what it costs to be right before anyone believes you.

Who decides who is a monster?

Kragorth calls humanity a cancer. Rothgar calls humans a plague. Grace treats Sophia as a target. Sophia asks Kragorth, “Tell me again how you’re different from us.” The book keeps turning the word *monster* around to see who is holding it.

Grief and legacy

Sophia inherits objects (a music box, a whistle, a cloak) and, through them, a mother she never fully knew. Richard: “The weight doesn’t get lighter, you get stronger.” Grief in this book is not solved. It is carried, and it changes shape.

Secrets, truth, and the cost of each

Marsha’s secrets kept Richard safe and broke his heart. The Northborn’s secrecy kept them alive and made room for Kragorth. Sophia’s final answer is neither full revelation nor permanent hiding, but bridges.

ESSAY AND SEMINAR PROMPTS

- Kragorth's environmental argument contains real facts and a monstrous conclusion. Write an essay that states his claim fairly, identifies where the reasoning fails, and explains what the novel offers instead.
- Three characters refuse revenge or refuse to fully forgive: Declan, Aytha, and Sophia (with Grace). Compare their choices. What is the book's position on justice versus revenge?
- Choose one object (the whistle, the music box, the cloak, the key, the pink room) and trace it through the novel. How does its meaning change?

Vocabulary

Words are listed roughly in order of appearance with a student-friendly definition. Ask students to find the sentence where each word appears and decide whether the definition fits the way the author used it.

WORD	MEANING	WHERE TO LOOK
sympathy	feeling sorry for someone else's trouble	Ch. 1 to 3, the way adults look at Sophia
dismissed	treated as unimportant or untrue	Ch. 4, Bernard's father's reports
trauma	lasting harm from a frightening experience	Ch. 4, Lucas's story about the cave
compressed	squeezed into a smaller space	Ch. 3, the school hallways
precision	exactness; hitting exactly what you aim for	Ch. 6, the rules of the whistle
intent	what you mean to do; purpose	Ch. 6, "intent equals precision"
bonded	joined by a deep, formal connection	Ch. 8, Ashnaka and Marsha
holographic	made of projected light that looks three-dimensional	Ch. 9, the HARE
bioluminescence	light produced by living things	Ch. 11, the cavern
hybrid	the offspring of two different kinds	Ch. 13, Drenna
intermediaries	go-betweens who act for someone else	Ch. 19, Kragorth's network
ideology	a system of beliefs that guides actions	Ch. 19, Marsha's overview file
preemptive	done before something happens, to prevent it	Ch. 19, Kragorth's plan
sympathizers	people who agree with a cause without joining it	Ch. 19
methodical	careful, orderly, step by step	Ch. 19, how Kragorth works
discredit	to make people doubt something or someone	Ch. 19, what the Council may do

WORD	MEANING	WHERE TO LOOK
fabricated	made up; faked	Ch. 21, the accusation against the evidence
testimony	a formal statement of what someone witnessed	Ch. 21, Declan before the Council
incontrovertible	impossible to argue against	Ch. 21, what Kivara demands
defector	someone who leaves a group to join its opponents	Ch. 22, Aytha
vindicate	to prove that someone was right all along	Ch. 19, Lucas on the phone
contingencies	backup plans for things that might go wrong	Ch. 19 and 26
complacent	too comfortable to notice danger	Ch. 25, Kragorth's accusation
hallucination	seeing or hearing something that is not there	Ch. 22 and 26, the device
nullifier	something that cancels or makes powerless	Ch. 26, the restraints
tribunal	a court or group that judges	Ch. 26, Kivara's order
coexistence	living together peacefully	Ch. 25, Kragorth rejects it

WORDS WORTH A CONVERSATION

Genocide appears in the second half of the book as the name for what Kragorth plans. Define it plainly (the deliberate destruction of an entire group of people) and be ready for students to connect it to history. The novel treats the word seriously and never shows it carried out. Declan's testimony about the massacre of his settlement is told in his voice, without graphic detail.

Bigfoot, Folklore, and the Real Olympic Peninsula

The legend. Stories of large, hair-covered beings in the forests of the Pacific Northwest are older than the United States. Many Indigenous nations of the region have their own names and accounts; the word *Sasquatch* is usually traced to a Halkomelem (Coast Salish) word, popularized in

Why it matters in the book. Richard Lumeth, Bernard Fox, and the whole town of Elwha are built on this folklore. The author uses it to ask a serious question in a fun costume: What do we

English in the 1920s. The name *Bigfoot* came later, from newspaper reports of large footprints in Northern California in 1958. The famous shaky film of a walking figure, the Patterson-Gimlin film of 1967, is mentioned in the book when Lucas's grandfather sits down to watch a documentary about it.

The place. The Elwha of the novel is fictional, but the Elwha River is real. It flows north out of the Olympic Mountains to the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Between 2011 and 2014, two dams on the Elwha were removed in the largest dam-removal project in United States history to that point, and salmon returned to stretches of river they had not reached in a century. The Olympic Peninsula is home to one of the largest temperate rainforests in the world, with Douglas fir, western hemlock, and Sitka spruce that can top 250 feet.

do with claims we cannot prove? Richard's corkboard, Bernard's research center, and Olivia's cameras all answer differently.

For discussion.

1. Why do you think a small town would brand itself the Bigfoot Capital? What does the legend do for Elwha's economy and identity?
2. Richard is mocked for fifty years and turns out to be right. Does that mean we should believe everyone who claims to have seen something strange? What would Olivia say?
3. Kragorth's grievance is about forests burned, rivers poisoned, and species lost. The real Elwha River is a story of a river being repaired. Does that real story support or undercut Kragorth's claim that humans "are incapable of learning"?

MINI-RESEARCH

Have students choose one real topic from the sidebar (the Elwha dam removal, the Hoh Rain Forest, the Patterson-Gimlin film, Coast Salish accounts of wild beings, or the Neanderthal genome) and prepare a two-minute report that separates what is documented from what is speculation. This mirrors exactly what Sophia has to do with her mother's evidence.

Writing Prompts

Narrative

1. **The letter back.** Marsha's letter to Sophia ends, "I love you. I always loved you, just the way you are." Write Sophia's reply, after the events of the book. What does she want her mother to know?
2. **Another door.** Ashnaka offers Sophia a choice: forget, or go. Write the first chapter of the story in which Sophia chooses to forget.
3. **Richard's journal, 1976.** Write the entry Richard might have written the night of his sighting, before the Northborn blurred his memory.
4. **Drenna's tour.** Drenna promises Sophia "the most unhinged tour of the underground you've ever seen." Write that tour in Drenna's voice.

Argument and analysis

5. **Who is the bravest character?** Make a claim and support it with three pieces of textual evidence. Define what you mean by *brave* before you begin.
6. **Hope or survival.** Kragorth says you must choose between hope and survival, love and logic. Argue that the novel proves him wrong, using at least one moment where a character uses both at once.
7. **Secrets.** Using Sophia's line that secrets both protect and hurt, write an essay evaluating one secret in the novel. Was keeping it the right call?

Informative and creative

8. **Field guide entry.** Write a page for a field guide to the Northborn: appearance, clans, technology, laws, history. Cite chapters for every claim, the way Marsha organized her files.
9. **Design a clan.** The five clans have roles, values, and aesthetics. Invent a sixth clan. What do they do, what do they believe, and how do the other clans see them?
10. **The rules of the whistle.** Design a magical object for a story of your own. Write its three rules and its cost, then write a scene where the cost comes due.

Activities and Projects

Richard's evidence board

In groups, build a corkboard (real or digital) for a claim about the novel, such as "Torvak planned everything" or "Grace is changing." Pin quotes, page numbers, and connections. Present the board to the class and let them play Council: convinced, not convinced, or need more proof.

Visible and hidden

Using Olivia's diagram as a model, create a two-column portrait of any character: what the world sees, and what is true underneath. Extend to a real historical figure for social studies.

Map the two worlds

Draw a map of Elwha and the Northborn complex beneath it: Richard's house, the school, the soccer field, the Sasquatch crossing sign, the shimmer, the Central Hall, Torvak's cabin, the sealed tunnels. Label where key scenes happen.

Mock Council

Stage the emergency Council session. Assign roles: Sophia, Declan, Ashnaka, Kivara, Gronak, and Kragorth's supporters. Each side prepares an opening statement and must respond to the evidence presented. Debrief: what made testimony convincing?

Soundtrack of the whistle

The whistle produces a sound humans cannot hear. Have students pick or compose a piece of music for five key moments and justify each choice with a line from the text. Pairs well with the audiobook: play Bahni Turpin's reading of a scene and discuss how a narrator's voice performs tone.

Found family tree

Sophia's family at the end of the book is not the one she started with. Draw her family tree twice: Chapter 1, and Chapter 29. Include Northborn, leprechauns, and friends. Write a caption explaining who earned a place and how.

CULMINATING PROJECT MENU

Students choose one: (a) a persuasive speech to the Council arguing for or against revealing the Northborn to humanity; (b) a graphic-novel adaptation of one chapter with a note explaining what had to be cut; (c) a podcast episode in which Richard and Bernard are interviewed about being right after fifty years; (d) a scientific report evaluating the "evidence" for Bigfoot using the standards Olivia would apply.

After Reading

Whole-book questions

- 1 Return to the anticipation guide. Which of your answers changed? Which moment in the book changed it?
- 2 The title promises a Sasquatch secret. By the end, which secret turned out to matter most?
- 3 If the book has a villain who thinks he is a hero, does it also have heroes who doubt themselves? Which characters doubt themselves most, and does doubt make them better or worse at what they do?
- 4 Sophia's whistle leaves her with a ringing ear. Torvak leaves. Declan leaves. Grace is not forgiven. Why do you think the author chose an ending with loose threads instead of a clean victory?
- 5 The last line of the dedication is "until they found their people." Who are Sophia's people at the end? Who are yours?
- 6 Book 2 is titled *Sophia Sprite and the Banshee Bargain* and moves the story to Ireland. Based on Declan's plans and Kragorth's strange answer about Sophia's father, what do you predict?

Resources and Contact



Listen to Chapter 1 free

About fifteen minutes of the audiobook, read by Audie Award winner Bahni Turpin. No sign-up. A good way to open a unit or model fluent reading. brianyoungauthor.com



Get the book

Paperback from any bookstore or library wholesaler (Ingram), paperback and hardcover on Amazon. The ebook releases November 23, 2026. books2read.com/SophiaSprite1

Ordering for schools and libraries

- **Paperback ISBN:** 978-1-7341794-1-5. Available through Ingram, so any bookstore or library wholesaler can order it.
- **Ebook:** Available to libraries through OverDrive and Hoopla beginning November 23, 2026.
- **Audiobook:** Narrated by Bahni Turpin. Release details at brianyoungauthor.com.

Author visits

Brian offers free virtual visits (about 20 to 30 minutes) for classrooms, libraries, and book clubs as his schedule allows: a short reading, how the book came to be, and plenty of time for questions. Write to hello@brianyoungauthor.com with your dates, grade level, and group size. Classes that write letters get letters back.

More free materials

A **Book Club Kit** (icebreakers, a three-meeting plan, a quiz, and activities) and a **Lesson Plans** pack (five standards-aligned lessons with student handouts) are free to download at brianyoungauthor.com.

THANK YOU

Thank you for bringing this book into your classroom or library. If your students have questions for me, or opinions about Drenna's breakfast, I want to hear them. Brian Young, hello@brianyoungauthor.com

Sophia Sprite and the Sasquatch Secret, copyright Brian Young. This guide may be reproduced for educational and library use. Cover art may not be altered.