**Curriculum Guide for Educators and Librarians: Curse of the Lost Coin**

***The Haunted Chronicles***

**Age Level**: 9-13

**Themes**: Friendship, Responsibility, Consequences, Courage, Supernatural, Choices and Sacrifice

**Learning Objectives:**

Students will:

* Analyze character decisions and their consequences.
* Explore themes of courage, sacrifice, and responsibility.
* Understand story structure within a supernatural mystery.
* Develop creative writing skills through story extension activities.
* Engage in critical thinking about ethical choices in literature.
* Collaborate in group discussions and activities to deepen comprehension.

**Before Reading Activities:**

1. **Predicting from the Cover**  
   Show students the cover and title of *Curse of the Lost Coin* and ask them to predict:
   * What they think the story might be about.
   * What kind of "curse" might be tied to a coin.
   * How the coin might influence the characters in the story. Write down student predictions to revisit later.
2. **Vocabulary Preview**  
   Introduce challenging or thematic vocabulary words from the text:
   * Curse
   * Collector
   * Fate
   * Sacrifice
   * Mystery
   * Artifact  
     Have students write definitions and use the words in sentences. You can also create a matching game with the words and definitions.
3. **Exploring Themes**  
   Discuss the central themes of the book:
   * What does "sacrifice" mean?
   * Have you ever faced a difficult choice between something you want and its consequences? Ask students to share personal connections to these themes, which will help them engage more deeply with the book.

**During Reading Activities:**

1. **Character Tracker**  
   Have students track the main characters (Theo, Millie, Jacob) and their roles in the story. Ask them to note:
   * Key decisions the characters make.
   * Changes in the characters’ behavior as the story progresses.
   * How the curse affects each character differently.
   * What emotions the characters experience as the curse unfolds.
2. **Mystery Clues Map**  
   As students read, have them note key clues and details that help Theo and his friends unravel the mystery of the coin.
   * What do they learn about the coin’s origins?
   * How do they connect the coin to the forgotten town?  
     Use a chart to track these clues, which students can reference during discussions.
3. **Discussion Prompts**  
   Incorporate comprehension checks during or after reading certain chapters:
   * What is the significance of the town being "forgotten"? Why do you think no one talks about it?
   * Why does Theo keep the coin, even though it feels dangerous? How would you react if you found something similar?
   * Do you believe the coin’s power to grant wishes is worth the price it asks? Why or why not?

**After Reading Activities:**

1. **Theme Analysis**  
   Hold a class discussion or a written reflection on the major themes:
   * **Courage and Responsibility**: What do the characters’ actions teach us about taking responsibility for our choices?
   * **Friendship and Sacrifice**: How does the theme of sacrifice play out in the story? How does it affect Theo, Millie, and Jacob’s friendships?
   * **Consequences**: How does the book show that actions have consequences, especially with something as tempting as the cursed coin?
2. **Creative Writing Extension**  
   Students can write their own short stories inspired by *Curse of the Lost Coin*. Use these prompts:
   * Imagine you found a different cursed object with unique powers. What is it? How does it affect you and your friends?
   * Write an alternate ending for *Curse of the Lost Coin*. What could have happened if Theo made a different choice?
   * Write a letter from Theo to the next person who finds the coin. What advice would he give them?
3. **Group Debate**  
   Organize a classroom debate with the following prompt:
   * "Should Theo have destroyed the coin right away, or was he right to use it even if it came at a price?"  
     Divide the class into two groups—one supporting Theo’s decisions, the other opposing them. This encourages students to think critically about character motivation and the consequences of choices.
4. **Coin Design Challenge**  
   In small groups, students can design their own "cursed coin" with:
   * A unique symbol or series of symbols.
   * A special power it grants (and a price the coin demands in return).  
     Students can then present their coin designs to the class, explaining how it ties into a larger story.

**Cross-Curricular Activities:**

1. **Social Studies**:
   * Research the concept of superstitions and how they vary across different cultures. Have students explore how different societies have dealt with "cursed" objects or bad omens throughout history.
   * Investigate real-life abandoned towns and forgotten places. Why do some places become abandoned, and what stories or legends surround them?
2. **Art**:
   * Illustrate key scenes from the book, such as the discovery of the forgotten town, Theo finding the coin, or the climactic moments in the cemetery. This helps students visualize the events and share their interpretations with peers.
3. **STEM**:
   * Investigate the science behind "luck" and probability. Explore the psychological effects of believing in luck or curses and discuss whether there's any scientific basis for these beliefs.

**Guided Questions for Librarians:**

1. **Book Talk Prompts**
   * "What would you do if you found an ancient coin that could grant wishes—but at a dangerous price?"
   * "If you love mystery, spooky adventures, and friendship stories, *Curse of the Lost Coin* will take you on a supernatural journey full of eerie surprises!"
   * "Would you keep a cursed coin, or destroy it if it came with terrible consequences?"
2. **Book Display Ideas**
   * Pair *Curse of the Lost Coin* with other supernatural mystery novelettes or middle-grade horror books like *Goosebumps*, *Coraline*, or *The Night Gardener* to create an engaging "spooky reads" display.
   * Include QR codes or website links to additional activities and teaching resources available for the book (like Stacey Bottone's website).

**Additional Resources for Teachers and Librarians:**

1. **Discussion Worksheets**:  
   Create printable worksheets for students to record character analysis, predictions, and mystery clues during reading.
2. **Fun Fact Guide**:  
   Provide a fun fact guide about abandoned towns, ancient coins, or real-life mysterious objects from history that students can connect to the story.
3. **Interactive Reading Comprehension Activities**:
   * Host a class-wide trivia game or Kahoot quiz using questions from the book.
   * Engage students with puzzles or brainteasers related to the book’s mystery and themes (like an escape room activity based on solving the curse).

**Curriculum Tie-In:**

* **English Language Arts**: Plot structure, character analysis, and theme exploration.
* **Social-Emotional Learning**: Exploring decision-making, consequences, friendship, and sacrifice.
* **Critical Thinking**: Problem-solving through Theo’s journey with the cursed coin.