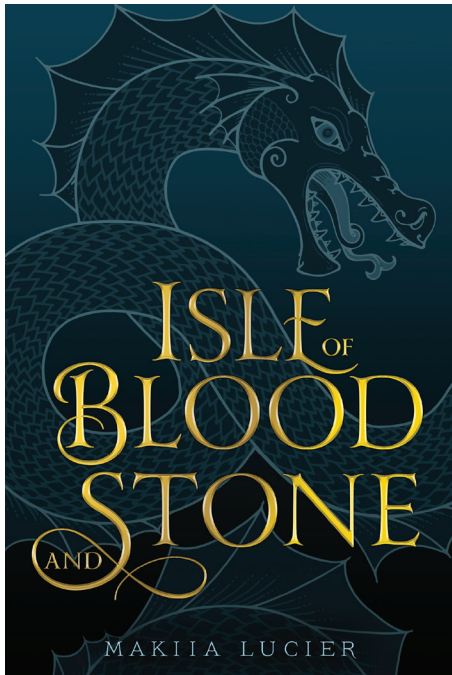


# Discussion Guide

# ISLE OF BLOOD AND STONE

by Makiia Lucier



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## About the Book

Lord Elias of St. John del Mar has never met his father, as he was presumably killed by spies from their neighboring kingdom Mondrago. When two copies of the same map are found, Elias recognizes it as his father's work, and sees it as a sign that he is alive. With the help of his close friends, Elias must find out the true nature of these maps, and learn what really happened on the day of his father's presumed death.

## About the Author

Makiia is the author of historical fiction and historical fantasy for young adults. She grew up on the Pacific island of Guam (not too far from the equator), and has degrees in journalism and library science from the University of Oregon and the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee.

Her debut novel, *A Death-Struck Year*, was called a “powerful and disturbing reading experience” by *Publishers Weekly*, and was a finalist for Germany's top book prize for children, the Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis. Her second novel, *Isle of Blood and Stone*, is an American Library Association Best Fiction for

Young Adults pick. It was inspired by her love of Indiana Jones movies and old, old maps. She lives with her family in North Carolina.

## Discussion Questions

- *Isle of Blood and Stone* includes themes such as friendship, family loyalty, and retribution. What themes can you identify? Pick one and explain what statement the author is making about that theme and how she conveys it in the text and develops it over the course of the novel.
- At the beginning of the story, the king asks Elias to perform a task, which he refuses. Why does he refuse? Why does he change his mind? What would you do in this situation? Why?
- In Chapter 6, Elias and Mercedes visit Master Mori, the barber-surgeon. What are some of the skills/talents required of a medieval barber-surgeon?
- What are some of the symptoms of leprosy? What happens to a citizen of St. John del Mar who displays these symptoms?
- In Chapter 8, Lord Silva tells Elias that “death can transform a man into a myth.” Who is he referring to and why? Do you agree with his statement? Why or why not?
- Elias and Mercedes share a similar goal—to solve the riddle of the princes. Compare and contrast the ways in which they go about achieving their goal.
- *Isle of Blood and Stone* is both a fantasy and a mystery. What are some of the fantastical and mystery elements of the story?
- How is Elias similar to other heroes of young adult literature? How is he different?
- Who is your favorite supporting character? Why?

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- In Chapter 13, Elias cites a law written in the Magdalen Sea Codes. What law does he cite? How did the sea captain break the law? What price does he have to pay?
- At the end of the book, the king makes a decision regarding the villain's fate. Do you agree with his decision? Why or why not?
- In the acknowledgments, the author states that the map of St. John del Mar was inspired by a real island where she grew up. Which island is it? What do you know about the island (language, location, historical importance, etc.)?

## Activities

### NOW I'M THE BAD GUY.

There are two main villains in *Isle of Blood and Stone*, one male and one female. Choose a scene where they make an appearance and rewrite the story from his or her point of view. How might the villains view the scene? What details might they notice, what thoughts might they have, and how might they feel about the outcome?

### WHERE IN THE WORLD HAVE YOU BEEN?

Geography isn't just about places on a map; it's about the people, culture, history, and landscape of those places. And every vacation or travel story provides an opportunity to gather information and describe those places. Read some examples of colorful, descriptive writing in the travel section of a newspaper. Then ask students to write their own travel stories about a place they've visited, either locally or farther from home, using vivid examples and descriptions to help readers fully imagine that place. (Source: *New York Times*, [learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/12/04/all-over-the-map-10-ways-to-teach-about-geography](http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/12/04/all-over-the-map-10-ways-to-teach-about-geography))

## Vocabulary

compass (p. 2)  
wimple (p. 3)  
charlatan (p. 11)  
navigator (p. 13)  
emissary (p. 15)  
vagabond (p. 15)  
dispersed (p. 17)  
disembarked (p. 18)  
peninsula (p. 29)  
parchment (p. 31)  
rhumb line (p. 31)  
compass rose (p. 31)  
cartouche (p. 31)  
mariner (p. 34)  
credence (p. 36)  
retribution (p. 40)  
hydrography (p. 42)  
cosmography (p. 42)  
geography (p. 42)  
apprentice (p. 43)  
astrolabe (p. 106)  
carrack (p. 183)  
ambassador (p. 199)  
flamboyant (p. 231)  
intricately (p. 247)  
immerse (p. 265)  
desolate (p. 284)  
stonemason (p. 332)  
brusque (p. 333)  
embossed (p. 389)

Guide written by Makiia Lucier, author of *Isle of Blood and Stone* and its companion, *Song of the Abyss*.