

# Mendacities learning guide

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# Mendacities: a learning guide

You've finished reading *Mendacities: a tale of secrets, lies, love—and a lighthouse*. What did you think of it? This learning guide will help you understand it better and to understand your own thoughts about the story. Let's unlock the secrets of *Mendacities*!



*Mendacity:* An instance of lying; falsehood; the quality of being untruthful; tendency to lie.  
Merriam-Webster dictionary

*Literary theme:* A universal idea, lesson, or message explored through literature.

LitCharts ([www.litcharts.com](http://www.litcharts.com))

We know from the title that *Mendacities*, generally, is about secrets and lies. But what do you think, specifically, is the universal idea or message of the book? Write it in a sentence, i.e., a statement of what the book is about. Then, in the boxes, below give three arguments for why you think this is the theme. Use specific incidents from the story to provide examples.

1

2

3

*Character:* One of the persons of a drama or novel.  
Merriam-Webster dictionary

All the main characters have a big problem with secrets and lies, but it's different for each. What are your observations about them? What motivates them to hold secrets and tell lies? How has this affected each one as a person and how has it affected others around them?

Felicity

Graham

Uncle  
Obie

Netty

Andreas

Petra

Liron

Justin

Jaz



*Fantasy:* Imaginative fiction featuring especially strange settings and grotesque characters.  
Merriam-Webster dictionary

*Mendacities* has some very light fantasy elements, in particular, the machine that captures peoples' dreams. You might be surprised to learn, however, that the idea for the machine, DREAM, comes from real life. There really *are* scientists developing machines to read dreams! [AsapSCIENCE](#) has a fun little video about it ([click here](#)). Obviously, we're very far from having machines like Uncle Obie's, but it's fun to speculate. Some people would even say it's *necessary* to speculate so that, through stories and conversations, we can not only envision different futures, but also explore the dilemmas we might face. Let's get into this a bit deeper. One day, when we have dream machines . . .

*What good  
uses might  
there be for  
such  
machines?*

*How could  
they be used  
for evil—  
and by  
whom?*

*Then: who  
should be  
allowed to  
use the  
machines  
and why?*

*What laws  
might be  
needed to  
govern their  
use and how  
could they  
be enforced?*

*What might  
be some  
moral and  
ethical  
dilemmas that  
laws alone  
wouldn't  
address?  
What impacts  
can you  
imagine?  
What would  
you do about  
them?*

Now that you've had a chance to think about this, have a discussion with your classmates. Listen carefully to those with ideas different from yours. Remember, this is speculation, so it's impossible for anyone to have correct answers! But we can learn a lot by exploring together.



**Symbolism:** Artistic imitation or invention that is a method of revealing or suggesting immaterial, ideal, or otherwise intangible truth or states  
Merriam-Webster dictionary

And speaking of dreams—as we all know, dreams are often full of symbolism (Nettie would surely have much to say about this!). Symbolism is something you often encounter in books, too, and *Mendacities* is no exception. Let’s have a look.

*How can symbolism help to tell a story? Give an example from a book or movie you know.*

*Much of *Mendacities* takes place in a lighthouse. Why? What does it add to the story?*

*Names can be symbolic. How could symbolic names help tell a story?*

In *Mendacities*, nearly all the main characters have double, or even triple meanings to their names (just like C. C. Rêve). What were you able to spot? Put on your detective’s cap and do a bit of research if you’re stumped! (Hint: also say the names out loud.)

*Felicity Faux*

*Oberon Fox*

*Graham  
Gupta*

*Nettie Quickly*

*Justin Case*

*Jaz Hanna*

*Andreas  
Popinoutopolis*

*Petra Potts*

*Liron Ichabod  
Am-Raphael*



*Setting:* Where and when a story or scene takes place.  
LitCharts ([www.litcharts.com](http://www.litcharts.com)).

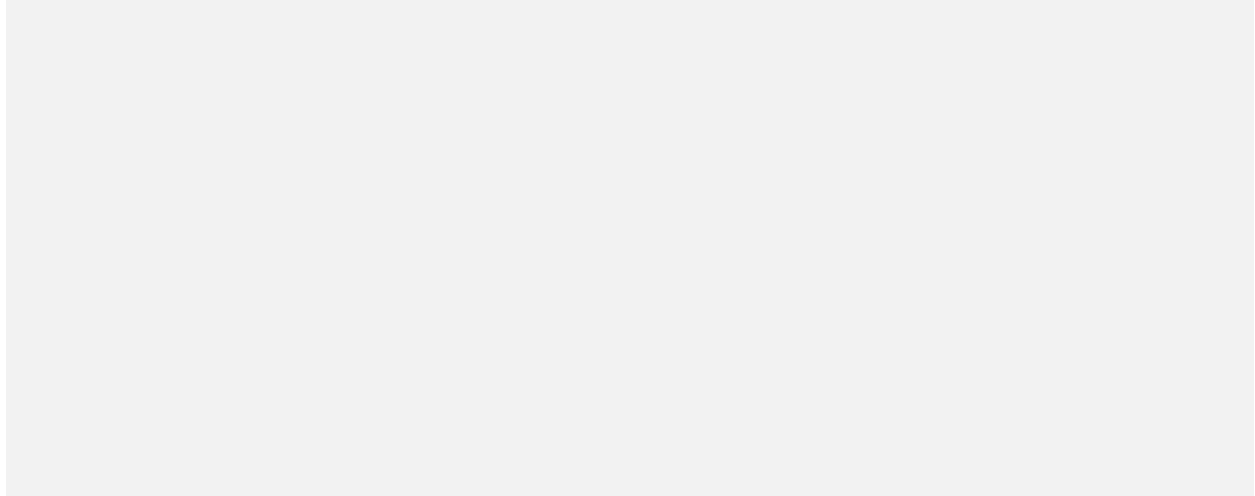
In a good story, setting isn't random; it helps to tell the story in some way. How does the setting on the Canadian west coast and on Bluff Island serve the story? Write your ideas, below.

A large, empty rectangular box intended for students to write their ideas about the setting.

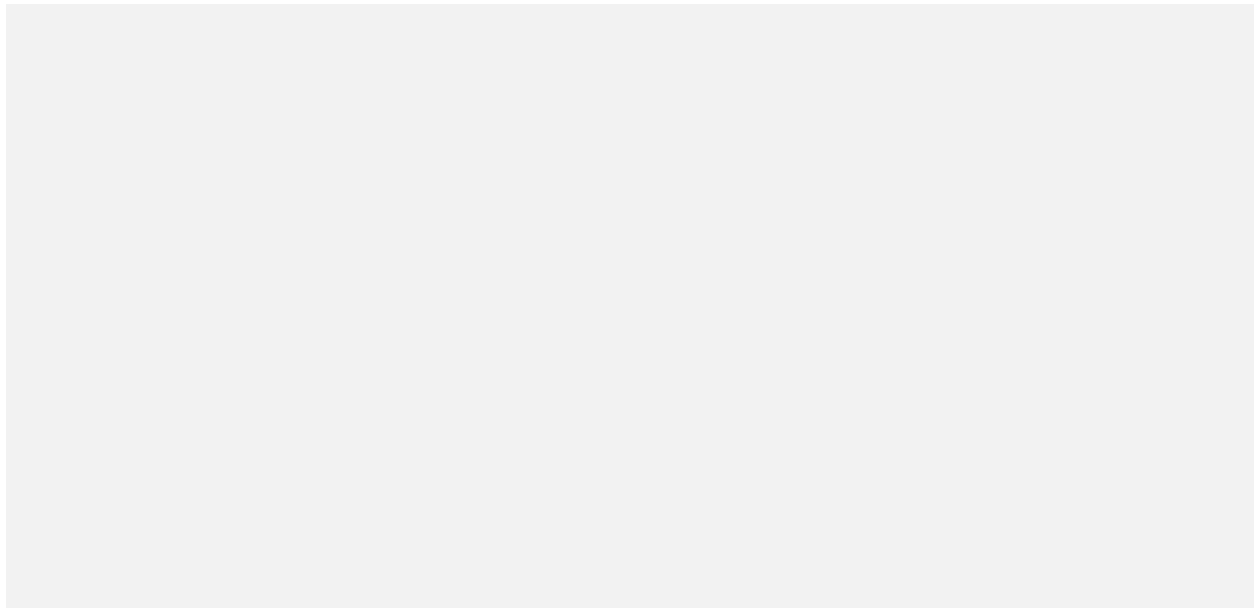


*Redemption:* The state of being kept from evil or of improving morally.  
Cambridge Dictionary

*Mendacities* could be said to be a *redemption story*. Explain why.



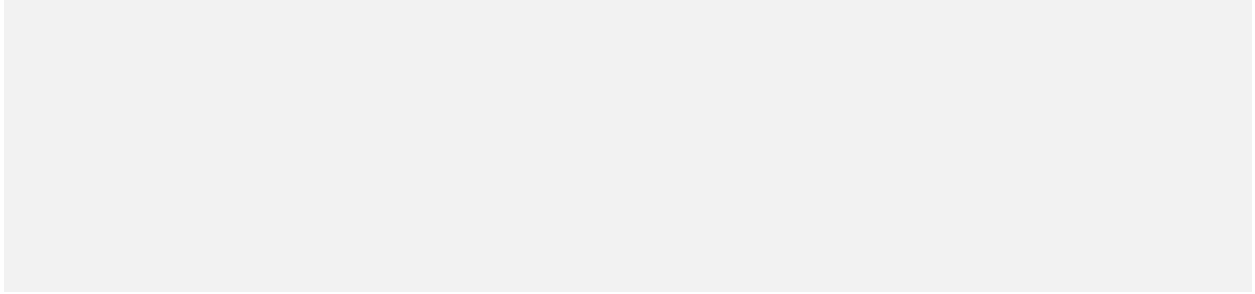
What did you think of Felicity's big decision near the end of the book? If you were in Felicity's shoes, what decision would you have made and why?



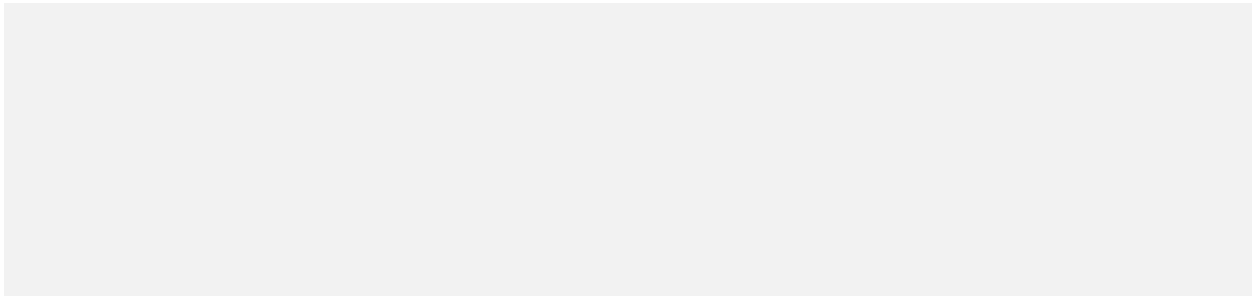
Privately (perhaps in your personal journal) write about what you have learned about your own secrets and lies—and what you want to do about it. *This is for your eyes only.*

## *Final thoughts:*

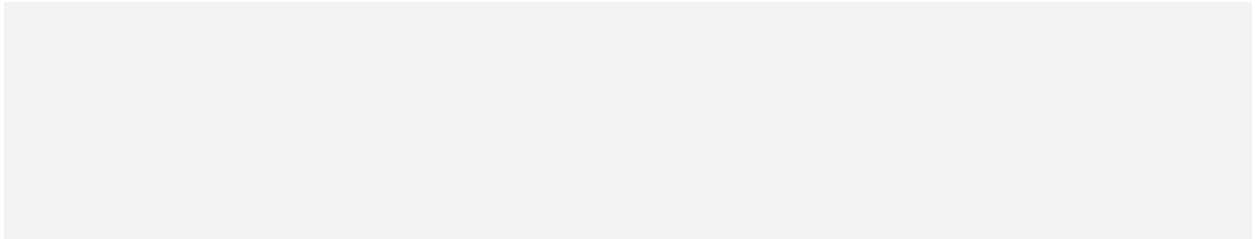
Who were your favourite characters and why?



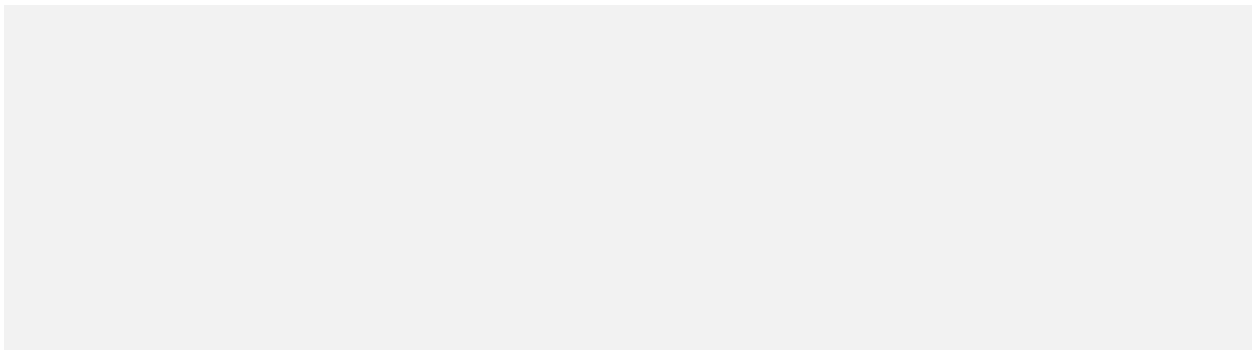
What were your favourite moments in the story and why?



What's a favourite quote from the book and why?



What were you left wondering about or pondering over after you finished the book?





*We lie loudest when we lie to ourselves.*

*Eric Hoffer*