

Reading Guide

BRUCE SMITH

LEGEND KEEPERS

THE PARTNERSHIP



Dear Educators,

Welcome to the roof of the world, that remote land above the trees where mountain goats are the largest mammal to roam. They live a peaceful, orderly life as they have for thousands of years in the Rocky, Cascade, and Coast ranges of North America. Nothing should bother them, right, except the occasional avalanche or predator. But all is not as idyllic as it seems.

“Things have been changing up here,” Spirit, the Goat Mountain band’s matriarch, confides in her daughter, Oreo. But she is not the first to notice. Thousands of years before, a Great Warming also threatened her ancestors.

How the goats survived is the stuff of legend—The Legend of Shining Mountain. Now it’s up to Buddy, an orphaned kid goat, to save the band.

But what threatens Shining Mountain is daunting, far more than a small goat’s courage and determination alone can overcome. Could sharing the Legend with an outsider from the human world help the mountain goats?

When twelve-year-old Garson’s love of science leads him to a chance encounter with Buddy at the Shining Mountain Glacier, she risks confiding in him. Their shared alarm over the changing alpine environment bonds these two protagonists in a story that transcends species’ barriers.

This classroom guide is intended to support the book. The discussion questions, exercises, and recommended reading are designed to enhance students’ understanding of the story’s significance. **Yes, this story is fictional, but our planet’s changing environment is not.** The future of Earth’s life is uncertain. We all can help save nature.

I know your students will be captivated by *Legend Keepers*’ characters—both human and animal. My hope is that they entertain and touch your students’ hearts. And maybe, just maybe, show them what is possible when hope and perseverance are on your side.

Bruce Smith

Bruce L. Smith, PhD
Author | Biologist | Science Writer

BEFORE & AFTER DISCOVERY

The main themes: Hope, perseverance, overcoming loss, finding one's purpose, climate change, protecting nature, and the importance of friendship and family

Before students read this book:

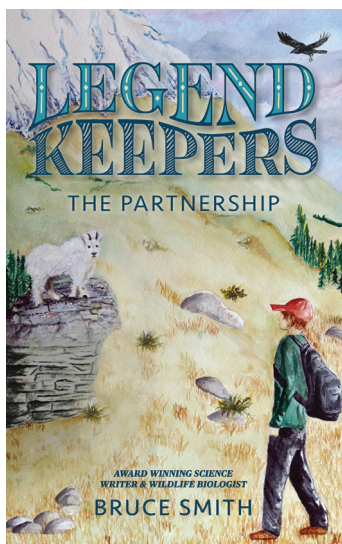
Have them look at the cover of *Legend Keepers: The Partnership*.

- What do you think this book is about?
- How do you think it will be like the first book, *The Chosen One*?
- How will it be different?

After reading this book, learn more about mountain goats, glaciers, and mountains:

Suggested book and website list:

- *Life on the Rocks: A Portrait of the Mountain Goat* by Bruce Smith
- *Mountain Goats (American Animals)* by Meryl Magby
- <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/facts/mountain-goat>
- *Mountains: Explore Earth's Majestic Mountain Habitats* by Charlotte Guillain
- *Mountains* by Seymour Simon
- *Icebergs, Ice Caps, and Glaciers* by Allan Fowler
- *The Secret Lives of Glaciers* by M. Jackson



After reading this book, learn more about climate change:

Suggested book list:

- *A Kid's Guide to Global Warming* by Glenn Murphy
- *How We Know What We Know About Our Changing Climate: Scientists and Kids Explore Global Warming* by Lynne Cherry
- *Kid's Guide to Helping the Planet* by Kai Brown

After reading this book, learn more about science fairs:

- *So You Have to Do a Science Fair Project* by Joyce Henderson
- *Janice VanCleave's Guide to More of the Best Science Fair Projects* by Janice VanCleave

BEFORE & AFTER DISCOVERY

Author's Purpose: Legend Keepers is entertaining, includes factual information, and will make you think about the lives of animals, the places they live, and how humans are affecting them. Why do you think Bruce Smith wrote the book? Are there several messages in the story? Ask students to keep track of their ideas about the author's purpose as they read. Revisit this once students' have finished the book and hold a class discussion.

Discussion Questions:

- How does the story's Great Warming relate to our world today?
 - Buddy believed that the Legend of Shining Mountain called her to find a new home for her band. Do you think that animals could have legends and traditions in their lives? Why or why not?
 - What things do Garson and Buddy have in common in their lives?
 - What personal traits were Garson's strongest? Buddy's?
 - What fears, handicaps, or obstacles did Garson struggle to overcome?
 - Could you have overcome the adversity that Garson faced? How?
 - Why do you think Garson didn't have friends?
 - Did someone in the story become his friend?
 - What does Garson miss most about his father being gone? Why?
 - How many turning points in the plot can you name?
 - Which three turning points were most consequential for Garson? Would you make the same choices Garson did?
 - Think of ways in which the story may have turned out differently at some of the plot's turning points.
 - What incidents in the story might make you think Garson has a special connection with nature?
 - Garson has a goal but beneath that he has a need that helps fuel his goal. What is that need and what is his goal?
 - What did you learn about climate change? Glaciers?
 - What was the story's main message or lesson for you?
 - What do you think will happen in the next Legend Keepers book?
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Curriculum Connections:

Ask students to find unfamiliar words and try to define them from the context of the story. Such words may include: topographic (p. 10), conifer (pp. 10, 44), matriarch (p. 17), krumholtz (p. 19), whorl (p. 41), orienteer (p. 42), altimeter (p. 42), magma (p. 47), glaciologist (p. 49), tundra (p. 65), moraine (p. 65), barometric pressure (p. 67), rebar (p. 68), hypothesis (p. 170), polygon (p. 174), Pleistocene (p. 179). Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards—Language: Vocabulary Acquisition & Use L. 5-7.4.

Ask students to write a paragraph on how the book's Epigraph by Graham Greene applies to the story of Legend Keepers. Correlates with Common Core State Standards in Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 4-7.1; Language: Convention of Standard English L. 4-7.1, 4-7.2; Knowledge of Language L. 4-7.3 After Garson leaves them, Buddy says to Roark, "I can't stop thinking about one word he said? Did I tell you this? He said if the glacier keeps melting, everything that depends on the glacier might change." (page 94) Ask students to write what they think Garson meant by this. Do they think Garson's message has application beyond Shining Mountain? Why? Correlates with Common Core State Standards in Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 4-7.1; Language: Convention of Standard English L. 4-7.1, 4-7.2; Knowledge of Language L. 4-7.3

BEFORE & AFTER DISCOVERY

Teacher Resources about Climate Change:

Schools for Climate Action <https://schoolsforclimateaction.weebly.com/>
National Center for Science Education <https://ncse.ngo/climate-change>

Youth-led or Youth-focused Organizations:

Fridays for Future <https://fridaysforfuture.org/>
Sunrise Movement <https://www.sunrisemovement.org/>
Extinction Rebellion Youth <https://xryouthus.org/>

BEFORE

AFTER