



# Discussion Questions & Activities

Key Stage 2

Themes: Grief | Friendship | Family | Covid | Afterlife | Greek Mythology

[Purchase \*The Lovely Dark\* >](#)



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Suitable for: Ages 9+

Subject Checklist: Literacy | Art, Design & Technology | PSHE

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## About the book

**Beautifully moving and breathtakingly original, this is a story of bravery and second chances, for readers aged 9+.**

When 12-year-old Eleanor Newton dies in an accident, she finds herself journeying down a mysterious river that takes her to The Underworld. She apprehensively embarks on her "afterlife" at Eventide House, a boarding school of sorts for children who have died.

The Underworld is captivating: always sunny and warm but also fractured. Strange things have been happening to Ellie since she arrived: she knows something isn't right, and she doesn't want to be there. She desperately wants to get back to the world of The Living to meet her new baby brother, even if it means being a ghost.

Can Ellie find a way out of the Underworld? And who – or what – will she be if she does?

*The Lovely Dark* is another breathtakingly original story from Matthew Fox, author of *The Sky Over Rebecca*. Set in the modern world, it features themes of life after a pandemic, mental health and grief, all handled with real lightness of touch.



# Activity 1

## Discussion Questions:

- Describe Justin and Ellie's relationship. How do they support each other in the book?
- Who do you think is speaking to Ellie through the walkman?
- What do you think the library symbolises and why do you think Ellie uses it as a place of refuge?
- What do you think of the adults and Mrs Caulke at Eventide House?
- Why do you think the book is called *The Lovely Dark*? Can you think of another adjective you could use?
- The author references some Greek myths in the book. Can you identify where these references are?
- What do you think the 'black cloud' represents?
- Can you think of any other books that explore the place between life and death?



# Activity 2

## Understanding Greek Myths

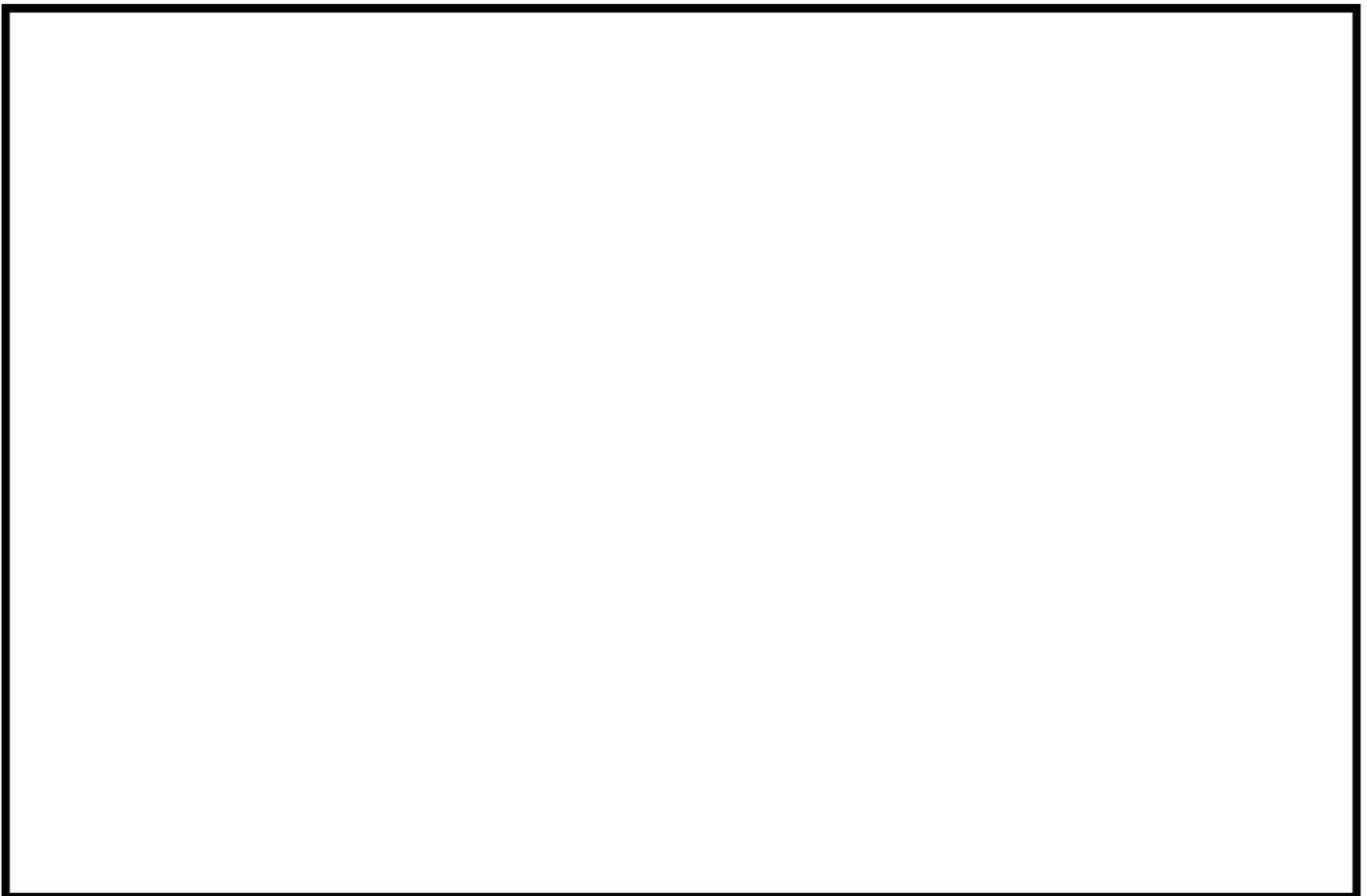
In the story, the author refers to several characters and stories from Greek myths including Charon and Cerberus.

In pairs, what can you find out about the original myths of Charon and Cerberus? How do these compare to their presentation in the book?

## Drawing the Underworld

In *The Lovely Dark*, the Underworld is a sunny place, contrary to lots of popular representations of the Underworld.

Using your imagination, what do you think the Underworld would look like? Draw your version of the Underworld below.



# Activity 3

Complete the wordsearch

E	T	M	O	S	A	I	C	O	E	F	E	E	H
V	S	B	K	T	U	L	A	E	O	S	E	U	O
E	O	L	O	R	A	N	H	D	C	A	R	N	M
N	M	N	O	N	O	H	A	U	L	F	U	D	D
T	O	N	E	R	S	R	D	E	U	T	A	E	N
I	I	T	A	R	D	L	E	C	R	E	L	R	D
D	E	H	R	A	S	R	S	A	N	R	E	W	C
E	C	A	U	H	E	H	W	A	B	L	R	O	C
H	K	R	A	L	D	U	M	N	R	I	A	R	B
O	E	L	N	A	A	K	I	M	O	F	O	L	I
U	D	U	O	D	L	L	R	L	T	E	L	D	F
S	A	R	U	A	D	A	A	N	H	A	A	V	I
E	S	D	W	I	A	N	H	D	E	N	U	F	A
B	S	U	R	E	B	R	E	C	R	R	E	A	D

Charon  
Cerberus  
Underworld  
Mosaic

Brother  
Hades  
Eventide House

Afterlife  
Walkman  
Mudlark

