

Educator's Guide

RECKLESS

THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

- ❖ Family
- ❖ Loyalty
- ❖ Fairy Tales

Ages 10 & up

“A new adventure into a magical place where the dark side of fairytales holds sway...readers are pulled into thrill of the story.”—*SLJ*



THE STUNNING NOVEL FROM THE AUTHOR OF
THE INKHEART, *DRAGON RIDER*, AND *THE THIEF LORD*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. After combing the study for clues to his father's disappearance, Jacob Reckless finds a sheet of paper with his father's handwritten sketches, symbols, equations, and a note which states, "THE MIRROR WILL OPEN ONLY FOR HE WHO CANNOT SEE HIMSELF." Consider the complexities of this statement. In what ways does it foreshadow the events to come in the lives of the Reckless brothers?
2. Compare Jacob and Will. In what ways are the brothers similar? How are they different?
3. In *Reckless*, fear both motivates and incapacitates Jacob and Will. Consider how they deal with their fears. Do they acknowledge them? Are they able to turn to others for help? What are the consequences of their reactions? Who are the people you seek out to assist you when you are afraid?
4. Describe Jacob. What makes him such a dynamic character? Is he the type of person you would want to befriend? Why or why not?
5. In the Mirrorworld, Fox remains Jacob's faithful companion. "It had been five years since Jacob had freed her, and the vixen had not left his side since. She guarded his sleep, warned him of dangers that his dull human senses could not detect, and she gave advice that was best followed." Consider Fox's friendship with Jacob. What role does she play in his life? What does she get from their relationship? Do you find the relationship to be balanced? Why or why not?
6. *Reckless* contains a number of characters who exhibit a variety of strengths. Who most impresses you with their strength? Explain your choice.
7. After entering the land of the unicorns, Jacob observes the color of their hides and thinks, "Of course they weren't white. Why were things in his world always whitewashed?" Explain Jacob's frustration regarding how our world chooses to rewrite events. Can you think of other examples where history has been rewritten to make it more palatable?
8. Considering Jacob, Will, Clara, and Fox's perspectives, in what ways is *Reckless* a story about things that have been lost? What do each of them find along the way?
9. Though Jacob and Clara unwittingly drink Larks' Water, Fox seems unwilling to forgive either of them for their actions as a consequence of their seemingly innocent mistake. What can readers infer from this strong reaction on the part of Fox?
10. Jacob's mission to save Will leaves others in peril, including him. Do you agree with his actions? Why or why not? Can you offer Jacob an alternative solution for saving his brother?
11. In *Reckless*, the Dark and Red Fairies are portrayed as immensely powerful, yet subject to their emotional states. What makes this a dangerous combination? What are some specific consequences of their actions? In what ways are their behaviors similar to those of the human characters in the story?
12. Using the phrase, "This is a story about..." supply five words to describe *Reckless*. Explain your choices.

CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS: READING, WRITING, AND RESEARCHING

As a pre-reading activity, have students complete an anticipation guide structured in the following manner:

Before Reading	After Reading	Statements
		Relationships between siblings are always complicated.
		There are consequences for every action an individual takes.
		Fear always causes irrational behavior.
		Technological advances always enrich our lives.
		Sacrificing yourself for someone you love is always a good idea.

Instruct students to complete the guide by placing a “+” sign in the box next to the statements for which they agree, and a “0” next to those for which they disagree. They must commit to agreement or disagreement—there are no conditional responses. Students should be assured that there are no correct or incorrect positions.

Once students have had the opportunity to complete the guide, the teacher reads each statement aloud and instructs students who agree to show it by standing or raising their hands. Each student should be permitted to provide their rationale for agreeing if they wish.

Making Meaning by Exploring the Story’s Setting

In *Reckless*, the story’s dynamic parallel worlds help set the stage for the characters as the action unfolds. Offer students the opportunity to explore the integral role the novel’s diverse settings play in the book by completing one of the following:

- Consider the variety of settings for *Reckless*; why is each of

these places important? Using the descriptions provided in the book, illustrate the four places you believe to be most important to the story. In addition to the illustrations, include a short explanation of the significance of each, and why you believe it is important.

- For Jacob Reckless, much of the appeal of the Mirrorworld is the action and adventure he finds in a world where fairy tales and legends are not just stories to be shared at bedtime, but rather, a real world to be discovered and explored. Working as a small group, consider the major cities in the Mirrorworld described in the novel; much of the day-to-day life in these cities harks back to a time long ago in our world. Using the richly detailed descriptions provided by Funke, use these points to explore and investigate which historical period in our world most closely matches that of the Mirrorworld. After determining a specific time and place, create a detailed chart which compares the two. Make sure to consider specific factors which bring about change in both of these times.

Figurative Language Scavenger Hunt

At the beginning of *Reckless*, Funke states, “The night breathed through the apartment like a dark animal. The ticking of a clock. The groan of a floorboard as he slipped out of his room. All was drowned by its silence. But Jacob loved the night. He felt it on his skin like a promise. Like a cloak woven from freedom and danger.” These opening lines are a fine example of how the author infuses her story with rich, figurative language. In order to take figurative language to the analytical level, students must be given the opportunity to determine the reason for an author’s choice of figurative language and its effect on the audience. Begin by having students practice discovering and identifying figurative language. Model the following lesson.

1. Give students a variety of magazines from which to choose so that they may explore advertisements and cut them out.
2. Explain to students that figurative language is not just used in fictional text. In fact, it is used frequently in the copy of advertisements. Have students find a pre-determined number of examples of figurative language (similes, metaphors, hyperbole, and personification) in the copy of advertising text.
3. In order to fully analyze the figurative language, students must **LIST** them.
 - **L – Label** (What type of figurative language did you find?)
 - **I – Identify** (Quote the actual figurative language written in the text.)
 - **S – So what?** (So what’s the big deal with this language?)
 - 1) What makes this language effective in this ad?
 - 2) Why not choose a *different* type of figurative language? Why wouldn’t something else work better?
 - 3) Who is the intended audience?

- 4) What effect does this figurative language have on the audience?
- 5) Is this an appropriate effect?
- 6) What is the overall purpose of this ad?
- 7) How does using the device help or hurt the ad’s overall purpose?

- **T – Talk** (Share your analysis with the others in the class in order to model analytical thinking.)

Finally, place students in small groups and assign each group a specific chapter of *Reckless* to analyze for examples of figurative language. Allow them to creatively display their findings.

Comparing Fairy Tale Characters —Create a Digital Diagram

Because of the rich tradition of sharing fairy and folk tales throughout the world, some of the fairy tale characters referenced in *Reckless* may be familiar to students from prior reading or study. Have students create a Character Comparative Analysis by using the library and internet as resources to research a fairy tale character featured in *Reckless* who also appears in other stories. Have students find at least two different sources where the character is found, and have them create a Venn diagram which details the similarities and differences between the way the character is portrayed in these different versions. Next, have students summarize their findings by creating a Glogster digital poster (www.glogster.com) to share with classmates.

Host a Literary Banquet

Begin by having students write a poem from a character's perspective. The poem may focus on the character's personality and role in the story, a major theme, or a major conflict experienced. It must demonstrate the changes the character made throughout the story. While composing the poem, consider:

- Poetic device, form, and diction
- Must be textually accurate
- Poem must have a clearly defined voice
- Spelling and grammar must be correct
- Most, if not all, of the poem must be memorized

After students have crafted their poems, plan a literary banquet where each dresses in a costume that enhances his poem. At the banquet each student will perform his poem. Also, the food and drink should have a strong connection to *Reckless*.

Considering Character: Host a Mock Trial

After reading *Reckless* as a class, students will brainstorm "crimes" committed by characters from the novel. Have groups of students work together to act as the prosecution or defense for the selected characters, while also acting as the jury for other groups. Students will use several sources to research their case, including the novel and internet resources on judicial proceedings and roles of the members of a trial. All the while, students will be writing a persuasive piece to complement their trial work. Additional teaching resources for literary mock trials can be found at www.readwritethink.org.

Considering Character—Create an "I AM" Poem or a Biopoem

The purpose of this strategy is to help students demonstrate knowledge of a character by following written prompts to complete a poem about the individual. Students can be given the prompts to follow on a worksheet or alternatively, students may create an original slideshow using PowerPoint or Movie Maker.

"I AM" POEM

FIRST STANZA:

I am (name the character)
I wonder (something the character is actually curious about)
I hear (an imaginary sound the character might hear)
I see (an imaginary sight the character see)
I want (something the character truly desires)

SECOND STANZA:

I pretend (something the character actually pretends to do)
I feel (a feeling about something imaginary)
I touch (an imaginary touch)
I worry (something that really bothers the character)
I cry (something that makes the character very sad)
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

THIRD STANZA:

I understand (something the character knows is true)
I say (something that the character believes in)
I dream (something the character might actually dream about)
I try (something the character really makes an effort about)
I hope (something the character actually hopes for)
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

BIOPOEM

Line 1: First name
Line 2: Three traits that describe the character
Line 3: Relative of _____
Line 4: Lover of _____ (three things)
Line 5: Who feels _____ (three things)
Line 6: Who needs _____ (three things)
Line 7: Who fears _____ (three things)
Line 8: Who gives _____ (three things)
Line 9: Who would like to see _____ (three things)
Line 10: Resident of _____
Line 11: Last name

Essential Quotes Analysis

The language that an author uses in his work is essential to getting across the intended meaning. Select four quotes from *Reckless* that seem to signify key ideas that the author hopes readers will take away from the text. These might be quotes spoken by characters or might be taken from the narration, and page numbers should be included with the quotes. Have students develop a chart with the following four columns:

- Quote
- Page Number
- Relevance to the Novel
- Intended Meaning for Readers

The intended meaning should have relevance not only to the characters in the text, but to the lives of anyone who reads the book.

Exploring *Reckless* through Writing

In *Reckless*, the complexities of the characters, their relationships, and the situations in which they find themselves provide students opportunities to dig deep into the text as they examine and answer one of the following prompts:

- Compose an essay which analyzes the dynamics of loyalty and examine the consequences of unquestioned loyalty or betrayal using examples from the text.
- Clara asks Fox, “Why do you prefer being a fox? Does it make the world easier to understand?” The vixen responds to her by stating, “Foxes don’t try to understand it.” Consider Fox’s response and the challenges faced by her due to her shape shifting. Using textual evidence to support your statements, compose an essay detailing the advantages and disadvantages of Fox’s transitional state of being.
- *Reckless* is rife with villainous characters and creatures. Select the one you find most terrifying and craft a short essay explaining what it is about this individual that strikes a chord of fear in you. Be sure to consider and offer specific details from the novel about their past indiscretions or behaviors that make them so vile.

Create Original *Reckless* Inspired Art

Allow students to create one of the following as a means of exploring the novel.

- Using a variety of mediums, create an original piece of art which is symbolic of one of the major themes of *Reckless* (these may include but are not limited to the following: love, family, friendship, or loyalty).
- Create a “Wanted” poster detailing the individual or creature you find most deserving of punishment for his transgressions from the Mirrorworld. The poster should include the following features:
 - 1) Original “mug shot” (this can be original art or computer generated as long as the image accurately portrays the character’s description in the novel.
 - 2) Detailed list of offenses
 - 3) Reward information, if applicable
- One of Funke’s greatest strengths as a writer is her ability to offer richly descriptive scenes. In small groups, have students select a favorite scene from *Reckless* and create either a digitally or manually illustrated graphic novel for that scene. Using a digital comic strip creator (www.makebeliefscomix.com/Comix or <http://infinitecomic.com> for example), have students begin by using the strips to create story boards for their scene. Have students select original art, images, and graphics. Alternatively, students could assume the roles of two of the characters with each one’s personality and voice and have them interact with one another by creating an extension of a scene from one of the novels. As part of the evaluation component, consider panel size and number of panels, transitions and layouts, artwork, writing, and lettering.

RECKLESS POST-READING ACTIVITY

Students make connections between characters or events in *Reckless* with people and events in their lives.

After reading *Reckless*, ask students to complete the chart considering the ways in which the story relates to their life and the world at large.

As I read *Reckless*, I observed...

As I read *Reckless*, I wondered...

Sensory Descriptions Included in *Reckless*
(smell, hear, touch, sight, taste)

Some of the things I realized in
reading *Reckless* were...

ABOUT THE BOOK



Beyond the mirror, the darkest fairy tales come alive. Jacob Reckless has enjoyed the Mirrorworld's secrets and treasures for years.

Not anymore. His younger brother has followed him. Now dark magic will turn boy to beast—unless Jacob can find a way to save them.

RECKLESS
by Cornelia Funke

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Inspired by the Brothers Grimm, master storyteller Cornelia Funke introduces a lush, enchanting world filled with danger, mystery and magic, with fairy tales reimagined as never before!

Praise for *RECKLESS*

“Masterful storytelling.”—*Kirkus*

“This adventure-driven fantasy, the first in a series, will have readers turning the pages.”—*Booklist*

“The intricately described, lushly developed other world is stunning.”—*BCCB*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



CORNELIA FUNKE is an internationally bestselling, multiple award-winning author, best known for writing the Inkworld trilogy, *Dragon Rider*, *The Thief Lord*, and *Igraine the Brave*. Deeming her “a unique talent,” *Time* magazine included Cornelia on its “Time 100,” an annual list of the most influential people in the world. Cornelia currently lives with her family in Los Angeles, California, in a house full of books.

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