

Teacher Guide

Grades 7–8

Stormbreaker

Anthony Horowitz

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STORMBREAKER

by
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Teacher Guide

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Note

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Please note: Parts of this novel deal with sensitive, mature issues. Please assess the appropriateness of this book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading and discussing it with them.

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Skills and Strategies

Comprehension

Main ideas/supporting details, sequencing, recalling, classifying, ordering, summarizing

Literary Elements

Genre, style, story mapping, plot, cause/effect, foreshadowing, setting, characterization, author's purpose, theme, point of view, similes, dialogue, mood, conflict/resolution

Vocabulary

Synonyms, antonyms, context clues, thesaurus/dictionary skills

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, debate, acting, presentation

Writing

Analytical essay, argumentative essay, creative writing, journalism, poetry, alternate story, journaling

Critical Thinking

Research, problem solving, compare/contrast, identifying attributes, predicting, evaluating, supporting opinions

Across the Curriculum

Art—illustration, drawing, visual analysis, travel brochure, Web page design, storyboard;
History—Desert Storm, time line, research; Geography—Cornwall, London and Cairo, Egypt; Social Studies—Industrial Revolution; Law—mock hearing

Physalia Physalia–Death in the Long Grass

Alex arrives at Sayle Enterprises using a fake identity and meets Herod Sayle. In his room, Alex finds an obscure map left by Ian Rider. He tests the Stormbreaker computer and then overhears a conversation regarding an impending two a.m. delivery. He secretly boards a truck that heads to meet a submarine. Sayle’s men move metal boxes from the submarine to trucks. The next day, two men chase Alex on separate four-wheelers. With few resources, Alex outsmarts each and causes them to crash in the dunes.

Vocabulary	
thatch	
methodically	
instantaneously	
oppressive	
complex	
snooker	
baize	
blatantly	
gazing	
inconsolable	
precaution	
gangly	
silhouette	
tarpaulin	
vacant	
unison	
ghastly	

Discussion Questions

- How is Felix Levens’ life similar to and/or different from Alex’s? (*Felix is the ordinary boy with the ordinary life that Alex never had.*)
- Find the description of Sayle Enterprises as first seen by Alex. How is the place described, and what can be inferred about Sayle and his company based on that description alone? (*The description reads, “The whole complex was somehow shocking, alien to the sloping hills and fields” [p. 59]. Answers will vary. Students might note that words like “shocking” and “alien” lead them to imagine that whatever is going on at this complex is unusual and out of place.*)
- What is the name of the painting Alex sees before he meets Sayle and what does it look like? What is most likely the significance of the painting? (*The painting, Judgment Day, features “a swirling mass of doomed souls and demons” [p. 90]. Answers will vary. The students might imagine that Sayle Enterprises is a place full of such “doomed souls and demons” or that whatever is happening here is more evil than good.*)
- Does Sayle treat Alex as he would treat a boy who has just won a snooker contest his company sponsored, or why not? (*No; Sayle seems suspicious and hostile from the beginning. Students know that Sayle has a bristly personality, and gives a bad first impression but they are probably still surprised by Sayle’s treatment of Alex. Students should reference Sayle’s suspicion, exemplified in Sayle’s comment about the appearance of Ian Rider and the “hunch” that Alex does “fall” to the same fate.*)
- What do you think the drawing and reference number Alex finds in the box? (*Answers will vary. Students can only guess at the box’s contents. They might think it’s a map and a secret code.*)
- In what way is Sayle’s art collection “oppressive”? (*There are so many pieces crowded together, and all of them seem to have grim subjects.*)
- Note the details of the strange room Alex stumbles upon. What might the room’s significance might be? (*The room is extremely cold and has unfinished stone walls with streaks of metal. Answers will vary.*)
- How might the snooker game foreshadow events to come? (*The outcome of the game could mean that Alex strategically gets the upper hand and corners Sayle in the end.*)
- Alex suddenly wishes to see this case through to the end. What happens that makes him feel this way? Why didn’t he feel this way before? (*Before, he’d rebelled against getting forced into this situation, but now he feels his work vindicates his uncle’s death.*)

Supplementary Activities

1. Journal Entry: Consider how Alex must feel playing Felix—who has a mother and father. Write a journal entry as Alex, describing what it is like to research Felix’s life and then pretend to be Felix.
2. Imagery/Art: In small groups, create an image based on the descriptions of Cornwall and Sayle Enterprises (draw, make a collage, etc.). As you create the countryside, consider the tone used in the description of Sayle Enterprises. Try to convey this tone(s) in your image. Write a paragraph on the back of your image explaining why your group made the choices it did.
3. Dialogue: Complete the Using Dialogue Chart on page 22 of this guide to analyze the exchange between Alex and Herb Sayle when Sayle introduces Mr. Grisham.
4. Mood: In a small group, select a chapter in this section to discuss. Find a passage from your chapter, and discuss what the mood or tone is for that passage. Settle on one word that best describes it, and write that word on the back of a large sheet of butcher paper or poster board. Then select words, sentences, and images from the passage that you feel help create this mood. Copy and draw these items on your page. See if the rest of the class can guess what the word is on the back of your poster based on the visuals, words, and quotations your team has grouped on your poster.
5. Storyboard: The scene with Alex and the two men on four-wheeled bikes is described in detail, moment by moment, as if readers were watching this scene unfold on a movie screen. Plan a moment-by-moment “storyboard” of this scene depicting what a director might film in translating this scene to the big screen.

Clue Search

Directions: Collect information about the novel for each of the items. Write down the information, and then make some predictions about the novel.

Information Source	Information Provided
Dedication	
Title	
Cover illustration	
Tease on the cover	
Friends' recommendations	
Reviewers' recommendations/awards won	

Your predictions about the novel:

Using Dialogue

Directions: Complete the chart below to analyze the exchange in “Physalia Physalia” between Alex and Herod Sayle when Sayle introduces Mr. Grin.

