



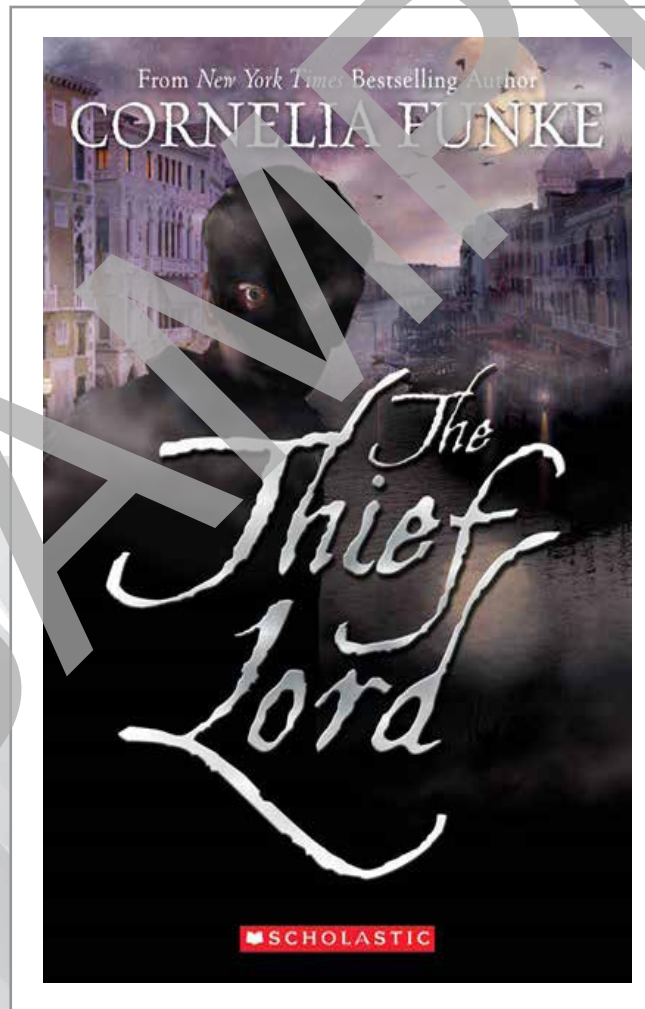
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

The Thief Lord

Cornelia Funke



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

The Thief Lord

Cornelia Funke

TEACHER GUIDE

NOTE:

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Identifying character attributes, compare/contrast, research, critical thinking, decision making

Comprehension

Predicting, summarizing, cause and effect, inference, main idea, sequencing, drawing conclusions, irony

Vocabulary

Words in context, using clues, using foreign words

Literary Analysis

Genre, story maps, figurative language

Writing

Character journal, personal writing, poetry, advertisements

Across the Curriculum

Map skills, research, art, drama, math

Genre: fiction—fantasy/adventure

Setting: Venice, Italy

Point of View: third-person omniscient

Themes: friendship, family, responsibility, developing one's identity

Conflict: person vs. person, person vs. society

Style: narrative

Tone: magical realism

Date of First Publication: 2000 in German; 2002 in English

Summary

Two orphaned brothers, Prosper, age 12, and Bo, age five, run away from the cruel aunt and uncle who want to separate them. Remembering their late mother's wonderful stories about the city of Venice, they travel there and are taken in by a gang of young thieves. The band of children is led by Scipio, the self-named Thief Lord. The children manage to survive by stealing and pawning various items. One day, they are hired to steal a mysterious wooden wing, which leads them on a magical journey and to a new home.

About the Author

Cornelia Funke was born in 1958 in Dorsten, Westphalia, Germany. As a child, she loved reading, writing, and drawing. She later became a social worker, board game designer, and an illustrator of children's books before writing *The Thief Lord*.

Ms. Funke's books, *Dragon Rider*, *Inkheart*, and *The Thief Lord*, are all scheduled to be made into movies. Her latest book, *Inkspell*, is the second in the *Inkheart* trilogy. Cornelia Funke lives in California with her children, Anna and Ben. Anna and Ben are the fortunate first readers of their mother's books. Ben was the inspiration for the character Bo in *The Thief Lord*.

Background Information

Teachers may find it useful to talk to students about the decisions the characters make in order to survive. Is it all right to steal in order to survive? Should people live in places that are not their own in order to have a roof over their heads? The concept of homelessness is vital to the story and should be discussed before reading.

Characters

Prosper: 12-year-old orphan

Bo: Prosper's five-year-old brother

Scipio: the children's leader; known as the Thief Lord

Hornet, Riccio, and Mosca: homeless children and thieves

Barbarossa: evil pawnbroker

Victor: detective hired to find Prosper and Bo

Ida Spavento: wealthy Italian woman who helps the children

Esther and Max Hartlieb: Prosper and Bo's aunt and uncle

Renzo (the Conte) and Morosina: mysterious brother and sister who live on the Isola Segreta

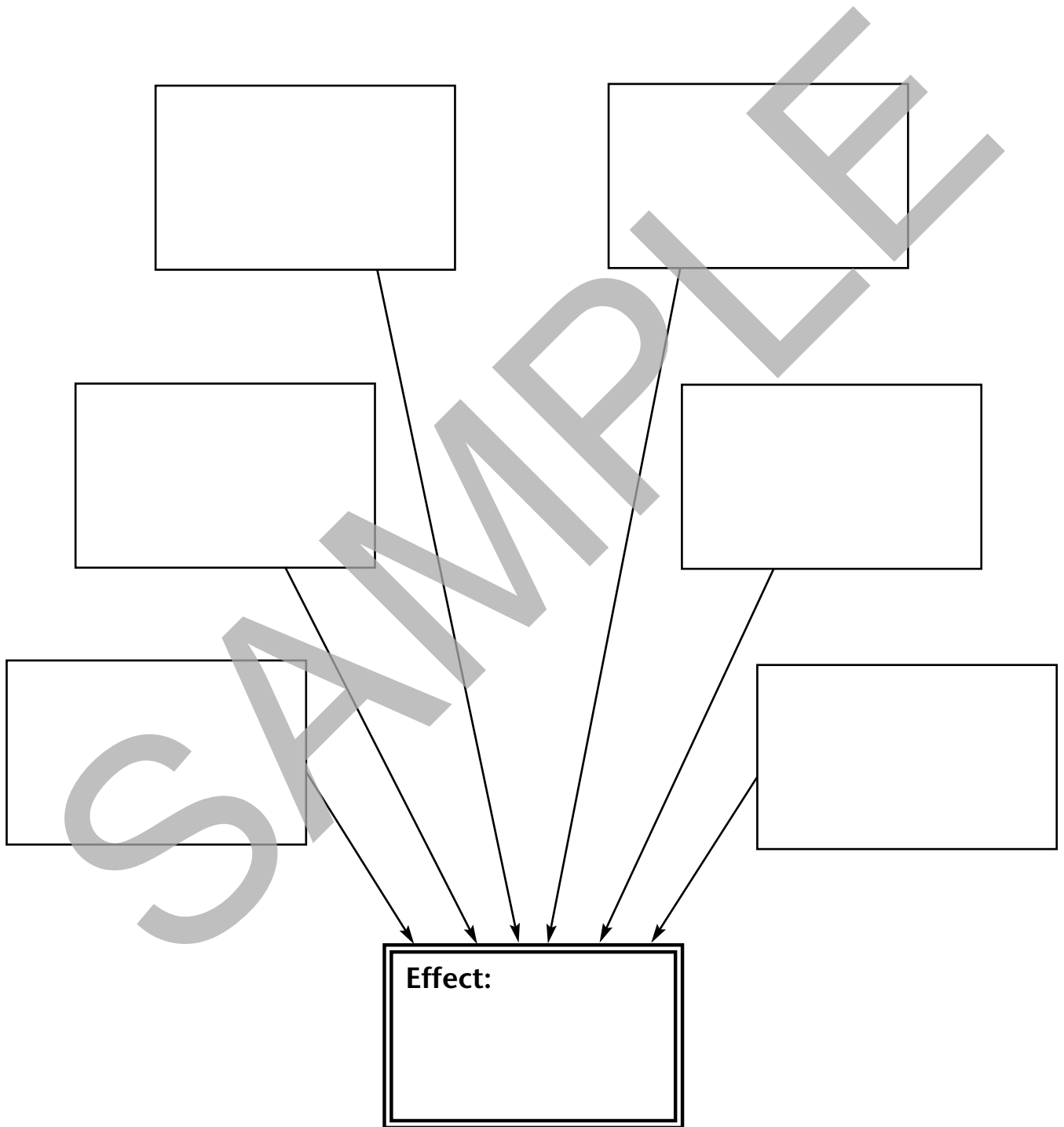
Initiating Activities

Understanding *The Thief Lord* depends, to a great extent, on one's background knowledge of the city of Venice. Taking time to familiarize students with the geography of the city will facilitate comprehension of the novel. The Initiating Activities below will provide needed knowledge for such understanding.

1. **Previewing the Book:** Allow students to preview the book by answering the following questions. Look carefully at the cover. What do you see? Look at the back cover of the book. What do the reviews and awards tell you about this book? Read the summary of the book on the back cover. What can you predict about this book?
2. **Geography:** Have students use a world map to find Venice in Italy. What body of water borders Venice? Find information about Venice in encyclopedias, on the Internet, and in other resources. Have students answer the following questions about Venice: What makes Venice a unique city? How is Venice connected to mainland Italy? Would you like to visit Venice?
3. **Art:** Students should draw a detailed picture of what they think Venice looks like according to the research they have done.
4. **Glossary:** Look at the glossary on pages 347–349 of the novel. These Italian words are used frequently in the novel. Ask students why the author includes them in the glossary. Is it necessary to pronounce these words correctly?
5. **Social Issues:** Discuss homelessness. Does homelessness exist in places other than Venice? How would being young, orphaned, and homeless in a strange country feel?
6. **Social Issues:** Discuss the fact that in this story children must steal to survive. Do the students feel this is justified? Is stealing ever right?
7. **Debate:** Ask students if they would like to be younger or older than their present age. Debate the pros and cons of changing ages.
8. **Predictions:** Using the following words as clues, have students write a paragraph predicting the plot of the novel. Each word must appear in the paragraph. Words: homeless, Venice, thieves, merry-go-round, orphanage

Cause/Effect Map

Directions: Characters' actions result in consequences for themselves and others. Choose an interesting situation in the novel, and write it in the "Effect" box on the organizer below. Then fill in the boxes above indicating what caused the situation.



2. Predictions: Write a paragraph predicting how you think Barbarossa will survive as a child in a world where he is used to being in control.
3. Creative Writing: Write a journal entry from Barbarossa’s point of view telling why you want to go with Scipio and Prosper to Ida’s house.

Chapters 47–53, pp. 300–345

Prosper returns to Ida’s house to find that Bo is back, and his aunt no longer wants him. Prosper brings young Barbarossa and the newly-grown-up Scipio with him. Scipio has the “brilliant” idea that Barbarossa should be adopted by the Hartliebs. Ida develops a plan that ends in the successful adoption of the scheming Barbarossa. Riccio and Mosca move to an abandoned warehouse where Mosca will begin fishing, and Riccio will return to his thieving ways. Prosper, Bo, and Hornet stay to live with Ida. Scipio becomes Victor’s assistant in his detective business. In an ironic twist, Barbarossa is sent to a boarding school where he terrorizes the other students and insists on being called “The Thief Lord.”

Vocabulary
stowed (301)
shamefaced (302)
surreptitiously (307)
retorted (310)
mediocre (320)
grudgingly (320)
assented (320)
gullible (321)
enraptured (328)
apprehensively (336)
traipsing (339)
intuition (342)

Discussion Questions

1. What good news does Victor give Prosper when he returns to Ida’s house? (*He tells him that Bo is back, and his aunt no longer wants him. p. 304*)
2. How does Ida know that Prosper went to the Isola Segreta even though Prosper promised Renzo never to tell? (*She realizes who the grown-up Scipio is and that he must have ridden the merry-go-round to have aged. p. 305*)
3. What great idea does Scipio have? (*He thinks Barbarossa should be adopted by the Hartliebs. p. 313*)
4. How does Ida get Esther to come to her house? (*She says she is a nun from the orphanage who needs Esther to sign papers giving up custody of Prosper and Bo. Ida also says that her house is the in-town office of the orphanage. p. 321*)
5. Describe what happens when Esther arrives at Ida’s house. (*Ida and the housekeeper are dressed as nuns. Barbarossa tricks Esther into thinking he is a perfect child, and she wants to take him on an excursion outside the “orphanage.” pp. 324–330*)
6. What is Esther told about Ernesto’s background? (*She is led to believe that his father was a wealthy antique dealer who disappeared, and his mother abandoned him. pp. 330–331*)
7. Who is the “someone who had looked a little like Esther” that Prosper thinks of on page 331? (*his mother, Esther’s sister*)
8. After reading Chapter 52, why do you think the author gave this chapter the title “Everything Will Work Out Fine—or Will It?” (*Answers will vary.*)
9. What arrangements does Barbarossa want to make regarding his store? (*He will keep the store and hire someone to run it and put the money in an account, while he lives, as a child, out of the country with the Hartliebs. He wants one of the children to check on the shop periodically. p. 334*)

10. What plans do the children make for the future? (*Riccio and Mosca will live in an empty warehouse in Castello. Hornet, Bo, and Prosper will live with Ida. pp. 334–335*)
11. What deal does Victor make with Scipio? (*Scipio can become Victor's partner in the detective business if he will write to his father to let him know he is all right. pp. 342–343*)
12. Where does Barbarossa (Ernesto) end up? (*He is sent to a boarding school after Esther catches him stealing. p. 345*)

Supplementary Activities

1. Irony: At the end of the story, Barbarossa, who is living in a boarding school, demands that the other students call him “The Thief Lord.” Write a paper answering the following questions: What is the irony in this situation? How had Barbarossa treated Scipio when he was the Thief Lord? What will happen to Barbarossa in the years to come?
2. Drawing Conclusions: What do you think happened to Renzo, Morosina, and the merry-go-round? Make inferences and draw conclusions in making your guess. Present your ideas as art, drama, or writing.
3. Writing: As a detective, at the end of the novel, Scipio calls himself “Scipio Fortunato,” the fortunate one. Write a paper discussing the good and bad fortunes of all the characters at the end of the book.

SAMPLE