

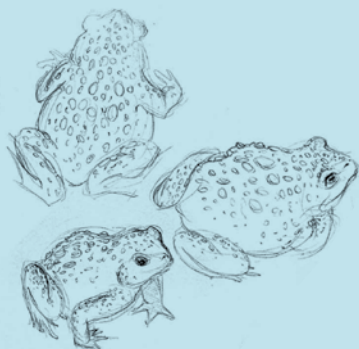
GHOST KNIGHT

Curriculum connections

- ❖ History
- ❖ Language Arts

Ages 8 – 12

By
Cornelia
Funke



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Consider Jon's reaction to being sent to a boarding school in Salisbury. Why does he blame "The Beard" for his mother's decision? Why does he resent the presence of this man? Do you believe Jon is justified in feeling the way he does? Why or why not?
2. When describing the welcome given by his two roommates, Jon states, "The two of them did their level best to try to cheer me up, but making friends just didn't fit with my status of being banished and miserable". What is your impression of Angus and Stu? Based on Jon's descriptions of them, do these boys remind you of anyone you know?
3. Why does Jon feel drawn to Ella? In what ways are these two friends similar? How are they different?
4. Consider Jon's chilling description of the physical appearance of the ghost riders: "The most horrible thing about them was their eyes: burned-out holes filled with bloodlust." Given that eyes are often regarded as the windows to the soul, how does this powerful, yet eerie imagery serve the story?
5. In *Ghost Knight*, fear both motivates and incapacitates Jon. Consider how he deals with their fears. Does he acknowledge them? In what ways do we witness him turning to others for assistance? Who are the people you seek out to assist you when you are afraid?
6. In *Ghost Knight*, William Longspee serves as a protector of Jon. Consider their relationship. What other role Longspee play in Jon's life? What does Longspee get from out of their relationship? Do you find the relationship to be balanced? Why or why not?
7. Describe Ella. What makes her such a dynamic character? Is she the type of person you would want to befriend? Why or why not?
8. Beyond his acknowledgements of his shortcomings during his life, William Longspee is unable to rest in peace because his heart isn't buried with his wife, Ella. Do you believe relationships can transcend death? Why or why not?
9. *Ghost Knight* contains a number of characters who exhibit a variety of strengths. Who most impresses you with their strength? Explain your choice.
10. Jon states, "Once you've seen a ghost, you keep seeing more. I do believe they're everywhere. Maybe they're the reason we sometimes suddenly feel sad or angry. Maybe love, pain, and fear don't fade as quickly as walls and stones. Yes, people disappear...but what if everything they experienced lives on?" Consider Jon's statement; do you agree? Why or why not?
11. Using the phrase, "This is a story about..." supply five words to describe *Ghost Knight*. Explain your choices.



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CONTEMPORARY CONNECTIONS ACTIVITIES

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

Before Reading	After Reading	Statements
		Relationships between parents and their children are always complicated.
		It is impossible to change your family's destiny.
		Performing a good deed forgives past indiscretions.
		Heroes are always selfless.
		Sacrificing yourself for those who matter most to you 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 has students who agree show it by standing or raising their hands. Each student should be permitted to provide their rationale for agreeing if they wish.

Exploring *Ghost Knight* through Writing and Research

In *Ghost Knight*, the complexities of the characters, their relationships, and the situations in which they find themselves provides students opportunity to dig deep in the text as they examine and answer one of the following prompts:

- In *Ghost Knight*, Jon's story focuses on his connection and relationship with Longspee and the people that matter the most to him. Consider your most special relationships. What makes these individuals so important? Compose a personal journal entry where you share their thoughts, and be sure to answer the following questions:

- o Who are the individuals who mean the most to you?
- o Why is your particular relationship with them so special?
- o What's the greatest sacrifice you've made for the people you love?

To culminate, ask for volunteers to share their writing with the class.

- Longspee tells Jon, “Darkness taints my soul like soot, Jon. I wish I could once again have a soul like yours: young, untainted by rage, envy, and false ambitions. No more memories of bloody deeds to stay with me forever, no cruelty to shame myself through eternity, no betrayal that took from me my trust in myself.”

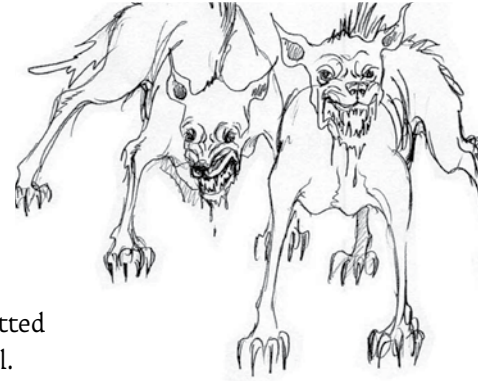
To what extent can a good deed atone for past indiscretions? Compose an essay which analyzes Longspee's effort to right his wrongs. Is he ultimately successful? Use examples the text to support your position.

- Though *Ghost Knight* is an original ghost story created by author Cornelia Funke, the story is loosely inspired by historical events. Using reference materials and the Internet, research one of the following individuals: Lord Stourton, William and John Hartgill, and William Longspee. Search for the following biographical data:

- o Year of birth and death
- o Location
- o Family
- o Profession
- o Other accomplishments or disreputable information

Use findings to create a digital presentation to share with the class.

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- *Ghost Knight* is rife with villainous characters. 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/behaviors that make them so vile.
- Throughout *Ghost Knight*, important historic sites in England are referenced (Salisbury Cathedral, Kilmington, Lacock Abbey and Stonehenge, for example). Using the textual descriptions and the illustrations in the book as inspiration, place students in small groups and have them research the following:
 - o When was the historic site established or founded?
 - o Where is it located?
 - o What is the most unusual/interesting fact about this site?
 - o What is being done to preserve the site and its history?

After gathering their information, have students' role play as news reporters giving a report on the historic site they've researched. To enrich the activity, record the "report" and allow students to use props and costumes for their news report.

Making Meaning by Exploring the Story's Setting

In *Ghost Knight*, the story's mysterious and magical elements 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 *Ghost Knight*. 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.



Considering Character: Host a Mock Trial

After reading *Ghost Knight* as a class, students will brainstorm "crimes" committed by characters from the novel.

Have groups of students will 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 for 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 a Biopoem

The purpose of this strategy is to help students demonstrate knowledge of a character in *Ghost Knight* 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.

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

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Essential Quotes Analysis

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

- o Quote
- o Page Number
- o Relevance to the Novel
- o 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.

Create Original *Ghost Knight* Inspired Art

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

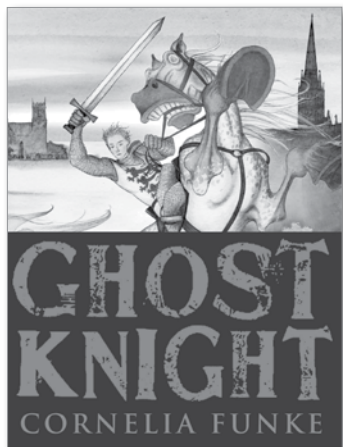
- Music is often used to connect people to each other and the world at large. Select a favorite character from *Ghost Knight* and create a CD with an original playlist which is representative of the experiences that character undergoes throughout the novel. Create original art for the jewel case and on the interior, and after including appropriate artist information, offer an explanation for the selection of each song.
- As a knight during the Middle Ages, Longspee dedicated his life (and death) to maintain a code of honor, loyalty, and courage. To better understand Longspee's commitment as a knight, have students research Codes of Chivalry. After reading the statements of belief that knights lived by, have students select four in which they also believe. Next, have them write an essay in which they explain why they chose the four codes and how they honor those codes in their lives today. Finally, have them create or draw a coat of arms for the shield that would be theirs if they were a knight. The four beliefs must be symbolically represented in each quadrant of the shield. Have them come prepared to explain what the symbols represent and how they relate to their beliefs.

- Create a "Wanted" poster detailing the individual you find most deserving of punishment for his transgressions from the *Ghost Knight*. The poster should include the following features:
 - o 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.)
 - o Detailed list of offenses
 - o 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 *Ghost Knight* and create either a digitally or manually illustrated graphic novel for that scene. Using a digital comic strip creator (<http://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.
- Previews of coming attractions in the movie industry are known as trailers. Design an original book trailer for *Ghost Knight*. Begin by creating a story board, detailing which scenes you intend to incorporate in your trailer. Use a moviemaker program of choice such as www.animoto.com. Post your finished trailers to www.youtube.com.
- Using a variety of mediums, create an original piece of art which is symbolic of one of the major themes of *Ghost Knight* (these may include but are not limited to the following: love, family, friendship, loyalty, or sacrifice).



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about the book



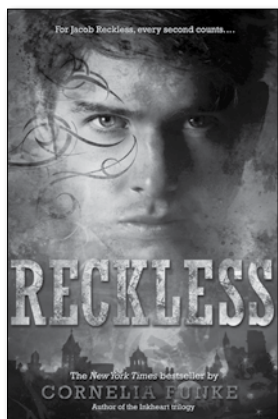
GHOST KNIGHT
by Cornelia Funke

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Eleven-year-old Jon Whitcroft never expected to enjoy boarding school. He never expected to be confronted with a pack of vengeful ghosts, either. And then he meets, Ella, a quirky new friend with a taste for adventure.

Together, Jon and Ella must work to uncover the secrets of a centuries-old murder while being haunted by terrifying spirits, their bloodless faces set on revenge. So when Jon summons the ghost of the late knight Longspee for his protection, there's just one question: Can Longspee truly be trusted? This fantastic original ghost story is also a thrilling tale of bravery and friendship—bound to become a classic!

also by Cornelia Funke



★ **“Masterful storytelling.”**

— Kirkus Reviews, starred review

RECKLESS

978-0-316-05609-0 HC

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about the author



Cornelia Funke is an internationally bestselling, multiple-award winning author, best known for writing *Reckless*, the *Inkworm* 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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This guide was created by Rose Brock, a teacher, school librarian, and doctoral candidate at Texas Woman's University, specializing in children's and young adult literature.