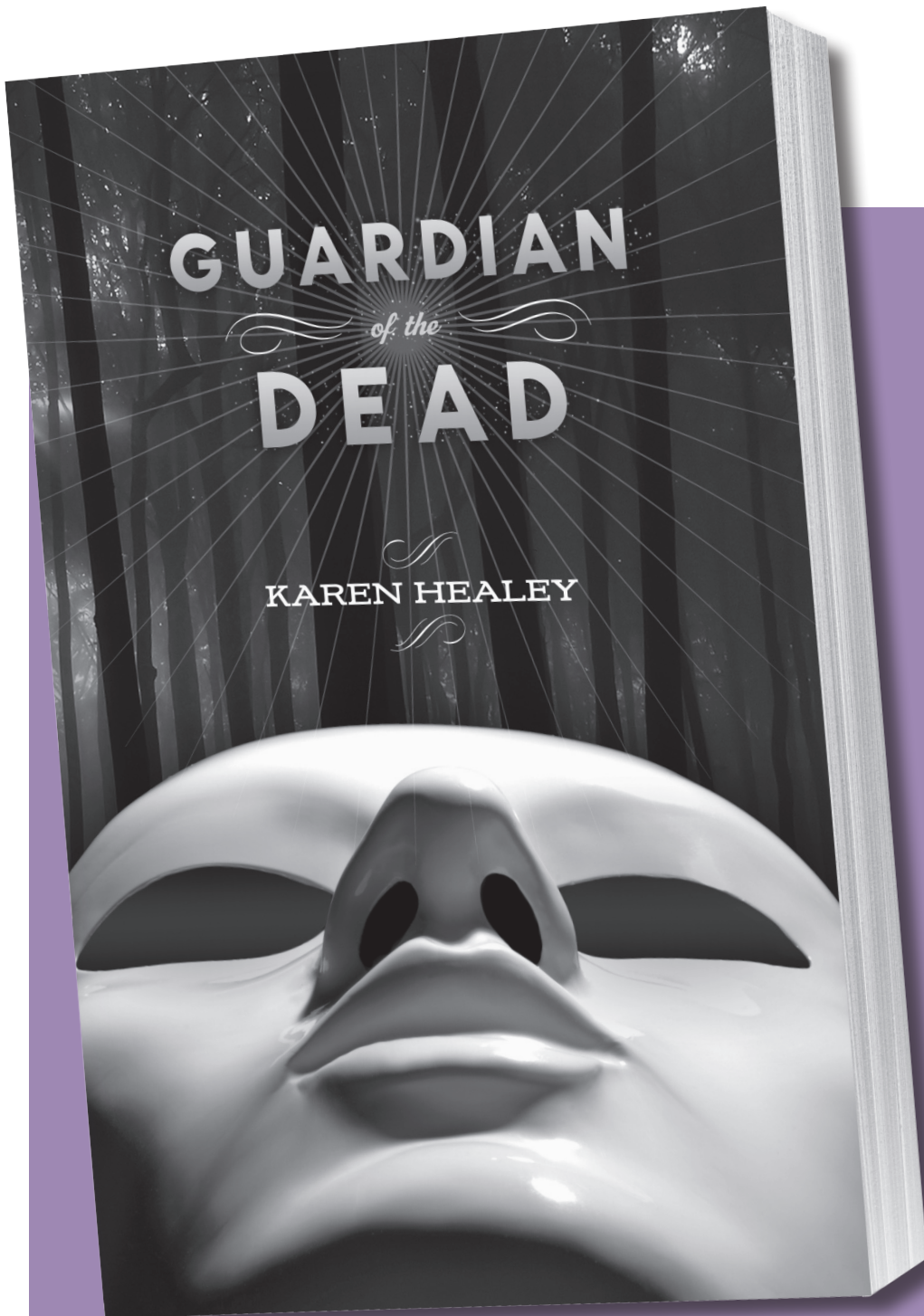


GUARDIAN *of the* DEAD



Thematic connections

- ❖ Myths and Legends
- ❖ Suspense
- ❖ Relationships
- ❖ School

Curriculum connections

- ❖ Literature
- ❖ Drama
- ❖ Geography
- ❖ Psychology

By
Karen Healey

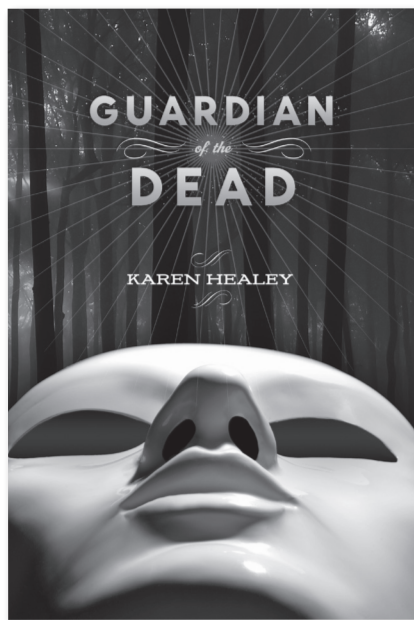
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Mark asks Ellie early in the novel, “Do you know what you are? What you could be?” (page 16) Who is Ellie at the beginning of this book? What has she become by its end?
2. Ellie grew up on New Zealand’s North Island and attends school on South Island. What does she think are the important differences between the two?
3. Professor Grimaldi thinks that New Zealander students are inferior to the students she taught in America. Why? What is the difference between the New Zealander and American educational systems?
4. Ellie buys a porcelain mask at an outdoor market. What attracts her to this seemingly simple object? How does she discover its power? How does it help her save her homeland?
5. Who are the *patupaiarehe*? What do they want? What role do they play in the Eyeslasher murders?
6. Discuss Mark’s complicated relationship with his parents. How does he look after them? How do they look after him? Are there similarities between Mark’s relationship with his parents and Ellie’s relationship with hers? If so, what are they?
7. Mark calls himself “all in-between” and “a chimera” (page 148). What does he mean by that? What is the bargain he makes with Mr. Sand? How does he try to betray Ellie?
8. Who is the Guardian of the Dead? Why can’t Ellie lie to her?
9. “Stories change us; they change the world,” says Professor Grimaldi. “People are stories of themselves” (page 267). How do stories shape the way Ellie sees her world? How do they shape the way you see yours?

ACTIVITIES

1. Like most cultures, the Māori tell traditional tales about their beginnings. Introduce your students to other creation stories. Divide them into small groups, each focusing on different parts of the world. Ask each group to find and then read aloud to the whole class a favorite creation story from their assigned region.
2. Using Mark’s version of the Māori creation story (beginning on page 168), construct a family tree as a whole class project. Start your chart with the union of Papa-tuanuku, the Earth-Mother, and Rangi-nui, the Sky-Father.
3. Christchurch, New Zealand, where most of this novel is set, is literally on the other side of the world for most American readers. Ask your students to plot an imaginary class trip there. How long would it take to get there from your community? What is the best route? How much would it cost? Where would you stay? If online travel sites are readily available, encourage your students to use them to build exact itineraries.
4. Exhibits of Māori art and performances of Māori cultural groups are sometimes on tour. If your community is fortunate enough to be near one of these events, try to arrange a field trip for your class. Otherwise, help your students discover some of the remarkable video and audio material available online.
5. A college production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, another story full of magical transformations, plays a major role in this novel’s plot. Screen one of the several fine film versions for your class. Better yet, attend a live performance if possible.

about the book



When Ellie wakes up with a ferocious hangover and a boy in her room, she fears that she is in big trouble. And she is, but her adversary isn't the dorm officer at her prestigious boarding school in New Zealand. An ancient, menacing force is gathering power, threatening not only the lives of Ellie and her friends, but millions of other mortals as well... Told in a strong, fresh voice, this deftly plotted first novel is rich with Māori lore, romance, betrayal, and epic battles.

Guardian of the Dead
By Karen Healey
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praise for *Guardian of the Dead*

“Creepy, funny, sexy, smart. This book completely rocked my socks.” —Libba Bray, author of *Going Bovine*

“Smart, hilarious, and wholly unique. Healey makes juxtaposing totally modern characters with numinous and ancient magic look effortless.”

—Holly Black, author of *Tithe* and *The Spiderwick Chronicles*

“A fresh and original urban fantasy debut with none of the usual suspects. More please!”

—Justine Larbalestier, author of *Liar* and *How to Ditch Your Fairy*

about the author



Karen Healey was born in New Zealand in 1981. After flirting with the notion of becoming an astronaut, a dinosaur-hunting cowgirl, or a lawyer, she studied English and Classics at the University of Canterbury. She has worked as a bookseller in her home country, a teacher of English in Japan, and is now a Ph.D. candidate in Australia. She plans on returning to New Zealand. You can visit her online at www.karenhealey.com.

