



BOOK STATS

Grade Level Equivalent: 5–8

Ages: 10+

Lexile Measure®: 710L

Pages: 342

Guided Reading Level: Z

Genre: Adventure, Fantasy

Subject/Theme: Perseverance, Survival

| Common Core State Standards | Reading | Writing | Listening & Speaking | Language |
|-----------------------------|--|---------|----------------------|--------------|
| Grade 5 | RL.5.1, RL.5.3, RL.5.4, RL.5.6, RL.5.9 | W.5.3 | SL.5.1, SL.5.4 | L.5.4, L.5.5 |
| Grade 6 | RL.6.1, RL.6.3, RL.6.4, RL.6.6, RL.6.9 | W.6.3 | SL.6.1, SL.6.4 | L.6.4, L.6.5 |
| Grade 7 | RL.7.1, RL.7.3, RL.7.4, RL.7.6, RL.7.9 | W.7.3 | SL.7.1, SL.7.4 | L.7.4, L.7.5 |
| Grade 8 | RL.8.1, RL.8.3, RL.8.4, RL.8.6, RL.8.9 | W.8.3 | SL.8.1, SL.8.4 | L.8.4, L.8.5 |

OVERVIEW

Book Summary

In the medieval kingdom of Carthya, a civil war is brewing. The royal family has been murdered, and a scheming nobleman named Conner plans to replace the kingdom's long-lost prince with an imposter so that he can rule from behind the scenes. After scouring the land, Conner finds an orphan named Sage and three others to prepare for the role. The boys are brought to Conner's palace and forced to compete against each other to learn the ways of a nobleman. At the end of their training, one of them will be chosen to be Conner's false prince, while the other three—well, surely they know too much and can't be allowed to live.

Sage is a rebellious and sharp-tongued wisecracker who refuses to bow down to anyone. The young pickpocket has been bounced from orphanage to orphanage, always on the run from trouble. Now he must reluctantly play Conner's game and become the prince or find a way to escape death. Sage and the remaining two orphans—Tobias and Roden—are pitted against each other during the two-week testing period. Conner leads them down a tangled path of incredible lies and shocking truths. Secrets are revealed, alliances forged, backs stabbed, and—at last—the false prince is chosen.

And, yet, further truths and lies are yet to be told in this action-packed adventure filled with deceit, danger, and hidden identities.

Teaching the Book

Can a rough and rebellious orphan be transformed into a prince in just two weeks? The answer lies at the end of this adventure fantasy, filled with twists, turns, and a shocking conclusion. *The False Prince* provides opportunities to discuss the genre of fantasy, to compare and contrast characters, and to explore the vocabulary of deceit. Activities engage students in examining the government of monarchies, researching historical princes, and taking on another viewpoint in fiction.

Genre Focus: Fantasy

Comprehension Focus: Compare and Contrast

Language Focus: Words of Deceit

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

At the age of 11, Jennifer A. Nielsen wrote her first full-length novel. As a kid growing up in northern Utah, she constantly read and reread *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* by Joan Aiken. Other favorite classics included *The Outsiders* by S. E. Hinton, *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle, and the Hardy Boys series.

A major influence for *The False Prince*, the first book in Nielsen's Ascendance Trilogy, came from the music of Eddie Vedder, the lead singer of the seminal grunge band *Pearl Jam*. From Vedder's lyrics "I knew all the rules, but the rules did not know me," Sage, her protagonist, was born.

Jennifer is also the author of *Elliot and the Goblin War*, the first book in a humorous middle-grade fantasy series. She lives in northern Utah with her husband and their three children. For more information about the author, visit: www.jennielsen.com.

Get Ready to Read

Pre-Reading Activities

The False Prince Engage students by showing them the *The False Prince* page at the Scholastic website: <http://bit.ly/10vwZPD>. Begin with the “Lose The Game, Lose Your Life” video trailer, which sets up the action with a dramatic narration and image sequence. Project the website on the whiteboard or a screen.

Then have students, individually or as a group, play the “Are You the False Prince?” game, answering the multiple-choice questions. Encourage them to compare their responses and then figure out what the correct responses would be for a real “false prince.”

Preview and Predict Ask students to discuss the video trailer and the cover of the book and predict what they think the novel is about. What conflicts might the characters face? How will a character be able to prove himself as the false prince?

Vocabulary

Words of Deceit The plot of *The False Prince* is full of deceit, disguise, double identities, and words that describe them. Ask students to watch for the following words as they read the book. Encourage them to look for clues in the text to figure out the meanings, then check the dictionary definitions, and write them on the vocabulary cards.

Use **Resource #1: Vocabulary Cards** on page 7 and distribute copies to students.

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| treason (p. 35) | façade (p. 68) |
| impersonate (p. 80) | replica (p. 105) |
| imitators (p. 128) | swindler (p. 128) |
| fraud (p. 306) | traitors (p. 312) |

STORIA ENRICHMENTS

This Storia e-book has the following enrichments to enhance students’ comprehension of the book:

- Word Twister (2)
- Word Scramble (2)
- About You
- Who Said It?
- Do You Know?



BIG QUESTION

Critical Thinking Ask students to think about this question as they read and be ready to answer it when they have finished the book. Write the question on chart paper or have students record it in their reading journals.

Who is the real master of deceit?

As You Read

Reading the Book

Modeled Reading Read aloud several pages from the first chapter of the book or the complete first chapter, asking students to follow along. As you read, model the strategy of questioning the text. For example, questions might include: Who is telling the story? Why is he stealing the meat? How did he become an orphan? Who is the man named Connor who purchased Sage from the orphanage? Encourage students to ask other questions about the first chapter and answer them together.

Independent Reading Assign students to read *The False Prince* independently. Encourage them to discuss the book with a partner as they read, asking questions and sharing responses about what is happening in the story.

Comprehension Focus

Compare and Contrast The plot of *The False Prince* revolves around the competition between three boys—Sage, Tobias, and Roden—to impersonate Prince Jaron. Connor often compares each of the

orphaned boys to the prince and to each other. Help students integrate the information that they learn about Sage, Tobias, and Roden and compare them to the prince by creating a comparison and contrast matrix. By analyzing the results, they can make predictions and inferences about who will become the false prince, and explain why.

Display the matrix **Resource #2: Compare and Contrast Matrix** on page 8 on a whiteboard or screen. Then model how to fill out the first set of information for the category of education.

Model: I'm going to use this matrix to help me compare and contrast Sage, Tobias, and Roden with Prince Jaron. The first category is education. I know that Prince Jaron was well educated by his tutors at the castle, so I'll write "well-educated" under his name. Although Sage is smart, he seems as if he has not had a formal education. I'll write "poorly educated and is impatient with lessons" under his name. For Tobias, I'll write "knows how to read, has read a lot." For Roden, I'll write "cannot read, but is learning quickly." If I had to choose the boy who is most like Prince Jaron in this category, it would be Tobias.

Pass out copies of Resource #2 and guide students to fill it out for the remaining categories as they read the novel.

After You Read

Questions to Discuss

Lead students in a discussion of these focus story elements.

1. Fantasy Compare this fantasy with other fantasies that you have read. What parts of the book could exist in our world? What parts could not exist in our world? (*Sample answers: This fantasy is not as extreme as some like Gregor the Overlander. The people act like real human beings; only the countries are made up.*)

2. Compare and Contrast How does Sage behave like Prince Jaron during the two-week trial? How does he behave differently from the prince to maintain his disguise? (*Sample answer: He is as rebellious and wily as the prince; however, he pretends to be uneducated and to have a different accent to keep Connor from guessing his true identity.*)

3. Words of Deceit Do you think Sage will be less deceitful now that he is King Jaron? (*Sample answer: I think King Jaron will continue to be deceitful if it is necessary.*)

Questions to Share

Encourage students to share their responses with a partner or small group.

1. Text-to-Self Which of the orphans do you identify with most in the first part of the book? How would you react to Connor's plan?

2. Text-to-World What would it be like to be a real member of royalty? What would it be like to be the child of the president of the United States?

3. Text-to-Text What other books have you read, or what movies have you seen, that involve double identities? Why do you think this is such a popular theme?

WORDS TO KNOW

Words of Deceit

Draw a concept map with the word **deceit** in the middle on a whiteboard or chart paper. Define **deceit** for students as "intentional dishonesty meant to mislead." Ask volunteers to add one vocabulary word at a time to the concept map. Have students define the word and then use it in a sentence with **deceit** or another vocabulary word. Build the map until all the words are included.

Extension Activities

Reading/Writing Connection

Point of View Ask students to find the important turning point of the novel when we learn that Sage is in fact the real Prince Jaron (Chapter 42, page 258). Before then, Sage narrates the story in the first person. In Chapters 42 and 43, the author writes the story in the third person. After that, Prince Jaron tells the story in the first person. Challenge students to choose a chapter in the novel to write from a different character's point of view; for example, with Tobias, Imogen, Amarinda, Connor, or Roden telling the story.

Don't forget the



BIG QUESTION

Critical Thinking Give each student an opportunity to answer the big question. Encourage students to support their answers with details and evidence from the text. Remind them that there is more than one right answer.

Who is the real master of deceit?

Content Area Connections

Government Monarchies The times of kings and queens and princes seem to belong to the Middle Ages; however, there are still many monarchies in the world today. Ask interested students to research the monarchies that are still governing countries in the present time and the powers that they hold. Guide students to the Info Please website by visiting: <http://bit.ly/W4C2z5>. Ask students to report back to the class on the kinds of governments in these countries and the powers of their monarchies.

History Royals Assign students to research the British royals today or English royals from the past. The story of the two princes in the Tower of London presents an interesting connection to the tale of deceit in *The False Prince*. For information, visit the BBC website at: <http://bbc.in/W2cKCN>. There is a wealth of information about present and past British royals at: <http://bit.ly/WHLuwx>.

Literature The Sword in the Stone Ask students to read the legend of the young King Arthur told in the story *The Sword in the Stone*. Provide students with a version of the story or help them access one through the Internet. Have them compare and contrast King Arthur (Wart) with Prince Jaron (Sage). Discuss the recurring idea in both books and movies of royalty in disguise.

Science and Engineering Castles In the last part of the book, Sage returns to the castle that was his home. Ask interested students to research the architecture of medieval castles and how they were built. Suggest that students visit the History Learning website at: <http://bit.ly/13xa709>. Guide students to research how castles were built as fortifications and then have them report on their research to the rest of the class.

BIG ACTIVITY

The King's Advisor Remind students that King Jaron needs trustworthy advisors to help him make decisions. This activity thrusts students into the role of advisor to the king. Ask students to first decide what issue or person they will advise the king on; for example: Should he marry Amarinda? Would Imogen be a better choice? What should he do with Tobias? Connor? Roden?

Make copies of the **Big Activity: The King's Advisor** on page 5 and distribute them to students to use as a template for their letter of advice to the king.

READ MORE AND LEARN MORE

Use these books and other resources to expand your students' study of the book or theme.

Theme Connections



Floors #1

Patrick Carman

Ages: 9–12

Grades: 4–7

Lexile Measure: 870L

Pages: 272

Ten-year-old Leo knows everything about New York City's Whippet Hotel, with its one-of-a-kind rooms and loony guests. But now the hotel's eccentric billionaire creator has disappeared. Leo discovers a strange purple box with a note telling him that only he can save the Whippet from a grim fate. First he must find three more boxes and follow their instructions through hidden floors, mind-bending puzzles, and improbable partners. And he only has two days to do it! **Available as a Storia e-book**



Moon & Sun, Book 1: The Ruby Key

Holly Lisle

Ages: 10–13

Grades: 5–8

Lexile Measure: 860L

Pages: 386

Humans rule the day, and creatures called Nightlings rule the night—and the two are never supposed to meet. But when Genna and her brother, Dan, venture into the old forest at night, they encounter a Nightling slave who reveals a terrifying secret. Genna and Dan's village chieftain has made a dangerous deal with Letrin, ruler of the Nightlings. To save the villagers and themselves, Genna and Dan must strike their own bargain with the Nightling lord. **Available as a Storia e-book**



The Princess Trap

Kirsten Boie

Ages: 11–13

Grades: 6–7

Lexile Measure: 700L

Pages: 416

After a recent civil war, a fragile peace holds in the nation of Scandia. Now that her uncle is king, Jenna is full-fledged royalty. Hounded by cameras, followed by bodyguards, Jenna's time at boarding school is anything but magical. She decides to escape, but is captured by the agents of a cruel villain planning to overthrow the king. Will she evade her kidnappers and thwart this sinister plot?

Available as a Storia e-book



Shadow

Jenny Moss

Ages: 12–16

Grades: 6–10

Lexile Measure: 510L

Pages: 384

In a kingdom far away and long ago, it was prophesied that the queen would die before her 16th birthday. Shadow, an orphan girl the same age as the young queen, is given the duty to watch the queen's every move. When the queen is poisoned days before her birthday, Shadow escapes with the handsome young knight. As mystery builds, Shadow wonders what her role in the kingdom truly is. **Available as a Storia e-book**



Tentacles

Roland Smith

Ages: 11–14

Grades: 6–8

Lexile Measure: 740L

Pages: 336

Marty and Grace O'Hara's globe-trotting parents disappeared, and now the kids are living with their Uncle Wolfe, a scientist fascinated by creatures like Bigfoot and the Loch Ness monster. Wolfe is planning an expedition to New Zealand to track a giant squid. Someone on board is determined to sabotage their mission—and Marty and Grace might be the saboteur's next victims!

Available as a Storia e-book



Tomorrow Girls #1: Behind the Gates

Eva Gray

Ages: 11–13

Grades: 6–8

Lexile Measure: 680L

Pages: 224

Guided Reading Level: V

In a world ravaged by war and natural disaster, wealthy families are sending their teens to boarding schools in the wilderness in hopes of keeping them safe. Louisa's parents offer to pay for Louisa and her best friend Maddie to go to one of these elite schools. At first the school seems like a dream come true for the girls. But soon they begin to discover that their new school has a hidden agenda.

Available as a Storia e-book

To find PDF versions of the Storia teacher guides and links to purchase the related books, visit:

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/ereading-resources/>.

treason (p. 35)

façade (p. 68)

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traitors (p. 312)

Name: _____ Date: _____

RESOURCE #2: Compare and Contrast Matrix

Compare and contrast each character to see who is the most like Prince Jaron.

| Category | Prince Jaron | Sage | Tobias | Roden |
|----------------------------|--------------|------|--------|-------|
| Education | | | | |
| Physical Strength | | | | |
| Physical Appearance | | | | |
| Personality | | | | |
| Cunning (Street Smarts) | | | | |