

A Teacher's Guide to



The Great Cape Rescue

by Stephanie Badulak



ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THIS GUIDE...

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PRE-READING DISCUSSION

Discuss students' personal experience with fantasy play and beliefs.

When you were younger...

- ▶ Did you have a “magic” cape or other costume? What did you pretend it could help you do?
- ▶ Do you still have your stuffed animal or other special toy, even if you don't use it anymore? How do you feel about it?

Right now...

- ▶ Do you have a lucky baseball cap, tee shirt, or other item for playing sports?
- ▶ Do you have a lucky pen or pencil for taking tests?
- ▶ Do you have another lucky object? What kind of luck do you think it brings you?

Imagine if your special toy or other object turned out to be truly magical. *The Great Cape Rescue* is the story of a fourth grader whose old kindergarten plaything turns out to have real powers.

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER GUIDE

Vocabulary; response/discussion questions; and literary devices

Chapter 1:

Azalea (p.4)
Hedge (p.4)
Flounced (p.6) (p.4)
Scampering (p.8)
Skittering (p.9)
Scrabbling (p.9)
Extracted (p.10)

Literary Term

Alliteration describes two or more words in close succession that begin with the same sound, such as “Society of Super Secret Heroes. Alliteration is used to emphasize a feeling or idea.



Question:

1. Find an alliteration on the first page of Chapter One.

Chapter 2:

Doom (p.13)

Sensation (p.15)

Literary Term

A **simile** is a literary device where the author compares two unlike things using the words like or as. Example in this chapter: (p. 14) “His words seemed to hang in the air like the last note of a bird’s song.” Look for other examples as you read.

Question:

1. What seems to be worrying Elliot near the end of the chapter?

Chapter 3:

Unruly (p.17)

Lotus position (p.19)

Wannabe (p.22)

Retorted (p.23)

Questions:

1. On page 22, Finch thinks, “Letting Thorn keep order would be like hiring a burglar to run the bank.” What does this mean?
2. Why do you think Thorn keeps picking on Finch?

Chapter 4:

Amber (p.27)

Unison (p.27)

Literary Term

Foreshadowing is a literary device authors use to give the reader a hint of something that will occur later in the book.

Question:

1. There are two examples of similes, one on p. 24 and one on p. 27. Can you find them and tell what is being compared? (*Reminder: A simile is a literary device where the author compares two unlike things using the words like or as.*)
2. Re-read the last line on page 30. What might the author be foreshadowing?
3. Choose any superhero, as the author chose Spiderman, and discuss the pros and cons of being that character, as in “the gift or the curse”. You might want to make a t-chart and put Gift and Curse or Pro and Con as the headings to help organize your thoughts.

Chapter 5:

Repast (p.32)

Perchance (p.32)

Feisty (p.35)

Disband (p.36)

Questions:

1. Fin and his friends have always played superheroes, but now that they’re in fourth grade they’re afraid if they do it at recess, they’ll look silly. Is it a “gift or a curse” to grow up? Make a t-chart with what you think are the pros and cons.
2. After reading the chapter, why do you think the boys told Mr. Burns that the mess on their shirts was caused by accident instead of admitting the truth?



Chapter 6:

Prosthetist (p.40)
Aroma (p.40)
Prejudiced (p.42)
Humiliating (p.42)
Undulating (p.43)
Squelch (p.43)

Question:

1. Finch thinks his sister Mimi put the cape in his book bag to embarrass him. What makes him change his mind?
2. Do you have an old teddy bear, doll, or other plaything that you have outgrown, but don't want to give away? What is it and why is it special to you?

Chapter 7:

Hermit (p.45)
Incapacitated (p.46)
Verge (p.49)

Literary Term

Onomatopoeia is a word or a group of words that mimics or imitates the sound it is describing. Smack! Thud! Pop! Crash! are examples of onomatopoeia (see pg. 4).

Questions:

1. Why did the author title the chapter "The Tattletale Ferret"?
2. The author uses onomatopoeia on page 49. Can you find the example?

Chapter 8:

Corridor (p.51)
Hunkered (p.52)
Jeered (p.54)

Questions:

1. Do you think Finch might be partly to blame for what happened to Anthony the crab? Explain your answer.
2. Do you think Finch is right when he thinks Mr. Burns can't tell a bully from a victim? What evidence do you have that this might not be true?

Chapter 9:

Odiferous (p.60)
Polecat (p.60)
Oath (p.61)
Contrary (p.65)

Questions:

1. Explain what Finch discovers about the cape. What do you think about this?
2. Finch starts to tell his dad about the cape, but then changes his mind. Why?

Chapter 10:

Preposterous (p.75)
Ventriloquism (p.76)

Questions:

1. Why is it important that Finch's friends can also "hear" the cape?
2. How did the cape get to the garage sale? Retell its history in your own words.



Chapter 11:

Hurtled (p.83)
Demons (p.83)
Quell (p.88)

Questions:

1. Do you think the guys are right about the consequence of telling an adult about the cape?
2. Would you be afraid to be alone with the cape?
3. Do you think Finch will ever need to use the speechless spell on the cape? Explain.

Chapter 12:

Antsy (p.90)
Smelling salts (p.95)

Questions:

1. Why do you think the cape tells Finch to borrow first aid supplies from the nurse?
2. Do you think it's a good idea for Fin to trust the cape to help him? Explain your answer.

Chapter 13:

Cluster (p.98)
Hospitality (p.99)
Insulated (p.102)
Moral (p.105)
Nay (p.106)

Questions:

1. What does the cape mean when it says, "Nay, Master, nay! I fear you are crossing the line from bravery to foolishness."
2. How might the last sentence on p. 107 be an example of foreshadowing? (Reminder: Foreshadowing is a literary device author's use to give the reader a hint of something that will occur later in the book.)

Chapter 14:

Mission (p.108)

Questions:

1. Do you think a surprise birthday party will help the boys achieve the goal of their first superhero mission?
2. On p. 109, Finch says, "Being lonely is a problem. Having no friends is a problem." Do you agree? Explain.

Chapter 15:

Churning (p.115)
Tuition (p.117)
Venom (p.118)
Valorous (p.120)
Recognition (p.124)

Questions:

1. How does the cape seem to feel about Mimi? How do you know?
2. How does Finch feel about his sister? Explain.

Chapter 16:

Humongous (p.128)
Aroused (p.130)
Crooned (p.133)
Valorous (p.136)
Heirloom (p.137)



Questions:

1. What problem is Mimi having with her friend Kelly? How is it solved in this chapter?
2. At the end of the chapter, Fin realizes that Bud has seen him talking to the cape. What effect might this have on the story?

Chapter 17:

Stalks (p.140)
Sushi (p.143)
Organism (p.144)

Questions:

1. Why does Finch feel badly when he finds out that Mrs. Burns's brother won't be visiting on his birthday? What connection does Fin see with something that happened in his own life?
2. At the end of the chapter, Finch is very upset. Retell in your own words what occurred to make him feel this way.

Chapter 18:

Lecture (p.146)
Influence (p.147)
Grudgingly (p.151)

Questions:

1. On page 147 there is an example of hyperbole. Hyperbole is exaggeration. "Elliot's mouth opened so wide a pigeon could have flown inside." What do you know about how Elliot was feeling from this quote? See if you can write your own example of hyperbole for this situation.
2. Do you agree with Raj, El, Kev, and the Thinking Cape that Bud and Thorn should be invited to the party for Mr. Burns? Or do you agree with Finch? Explain.
3. Do you think the cape should get to attend the party? Tell why or why not.

Chapter 19:

Limp (p.154)
Depressed (p.155)
Woo (p.159)
Ferocious (p.160)

Literary Term

Personification is giving human qualities to non-human things. There is an example of personification on p. 156. — "The treetops waved their leaves at him."

Questions:

1. Which "character" in the book is an example of personification? Explain.
2. There is a simile on p. 156. Can you find it and tell what two things are being compared? (*Reminder A simile is a literary device where the author compares two unlike things using the words like or as.*)
3. What do you think was bothering Finch about the Thinking Cape's version of the tale of the fisherman and the bottle?

Chapter 20:

Questions:

1. What does Mrs. Mundy mean by "Hospitality Abuse (p. 163)? What do you think of how she deals with Thorn?
2. Body language can tell us a lot about how someone is feeling. How are Finch and his dad feeling? On p. 165 the author writes, "The tips of Mr. Mundy's ears were red. So were Fin's."
3. Make a prediction before reading chapter 21. Who will come in the room and what will happen?



Chapter 21:

Expelled (p.175)

Truce (p.177)

Literary Term

Imagery uses a set of words that paint a mental picture in order to represent an idea. The author uses imagery on page 176 when she says, “Thorn’s eyes flashed rays of death at him.”

Questions:

- 1 Explain how Finch avoided fighting with Thorn again.
2. Do you see any similarity between Fin and his mom in this chapter? Explain.

Chapter 22:

Meddlesome (p.179)

Kneehole (p.184)

Empathize (p.186)

Questions:

1. Why doesn’t Finch want his mother to read composition?
2. What do you think happened to the cape? Make a prediction about what will happen next.

Chapter 23:

Smirking (p.189)

Distraction (p.189)

Questions:

1. What memory makes Fin think the cape can take care of itself?
2. What has Mimi offered to do for Finch? What does she mean when she says she and Kelly owe Fin?

Chapter 24:

Speck (p.197)

Bough (p.198)

Drenched (p.202)

Questions:

1. Do you think Fin and his friends have a right to look in Bud’s backpack? Explain.
2. What does the note the guys find in Bud’s backpack tell you about how his brother treats him?
Do you think it might affect Bud’s behavior?
3. What “surprise” do you think Bud and Thorn have for Finch?

Chapter 25:

Contribution (p.206)

Blurted (p.210)

Questions:

1. Explain the title of the chapter “A Surprise for the Surprisers”.
2. What is worrying Finch at the end of the chapter? Do you think he could be correct?

Chapter 26:

Admonished (p.211)

Ambled (p.213)

Replica (p.217)

Digestive (p.217)



Questions:

1. Why does Finch tell Thorn that he's been elected to give Mr. Burns his present and Bud that he's been chosen to give Mr. Burns the cupcake?
- 2 "Finch felt a flicker of regret. He wished the class really had picked Thorn for something." (p.218)
Why do you think Fin felt that way? Could it have made a difference? Explain.

Chapter 27:

Procession (p.220)
Heaving (p.222)

Question:

1. What do you think of the way Mr. Burns reacted to his gift? Would your teacher react the same way?

Chapter 28:

Synopsis (p.229)

Questions:

1. In what way does Fin's attitude toward his father change in this chapter? What do you think makes him feel differently?
2. Why does Fin rent "Lawrence of Arabia?" from the video shop. How does he think it might help the cape?
- 3 Do you think Fin really has superhuman speed in his arm when he shoves Bud or is something else making him fast and strong? Explain your answer.
4. Why are Chloe, Zoe, and Kayla clapping at the end of the chapter?

Chapter 29:

Trudged (p.236)
Worthy (p.238)

Question:

1. What do you think the cape means when it says, "You may find the truth unforgivable?"

Chapter 30:

Scorn (p.240)
Generation (p.240)
Fate (p.241)

Questions:

1. Make a prediction before reading the chapter. What is "The Cape's Secret"?
2. How does Finch feel when he first hears the truth from the cape?
3. Do you think the cape's true history will matter in the future? Explain.



ACTIVITIES

Language Arts

1. Imagine that you have been hired by a television network to create a new superhero. Write a description of your superhero that includes his/her physical qualities, personality traits, and special powers.
2. Write a letter to the author suggesting a sequel title and explaining the problem that the Society of Super Secret Heroes along with the help of the Thinking Cape, will try to solve next.

Art

1. Sketch a picture of your super hero that matches your written description. Invent an object to be used by your super hero that assists them in some way in performing their super hero duties. Add captions to your drawing to explain the importance of the object.
2. Have students make their own thinking cape. Use inexpensive fabric, felt squares, yarn, glitter, fabric markers, glue or any variety of crafting materials. Ask for community volunteers to come in and assist with this project.

Writing/Art Combo

1. Create a comic about your “super pet” that is like Super Ferrets, the comic that Fin and his friends have made.

Reading/Writing Combo

1. Obtain a copy of Tales from the Arabian Nights to read aloud from and discuss. Using the Thinking Cape’s retellings as models, choose one of the stories and write your own fractured version.

Science/research

1. Authors research information on topics they’d like to include in their books. Since they like to present facts accurately, but they are not always experts on these topics, they must research. Schedule a visit to the school library to research ferrets and/or hermit crabs, two animals that come up in the novel. Compare the information students obtain with the information presented by the author in the novel.

Physical Education

1. Invite a local yoga instructor to the classroom to demonstrate some of the poses Mr. Burns teaches Finch and talk about the mind/body experience of yoga.
2. Invite a magician in to visit the classroom and share a secret or two on performing slight-of-hand magic.