

THE *Princess IN BLACK* series



by Shannon Hale & Dean Hale

illustrated by LeUyen Pham



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ABOUT THE SERIES

Who says princesses don't wear black? When goat-eating monsters rear their hungry heads, Princess Magnolia ditches her flouncy dresses and becomes the Princess in Black! This humorous series from award-winning writing team Shannon and Dean Hale is filled with action, adventure, and secrecy. After all, stopping monsters is no job for a dainty princess. Luckily, Princess Magnolia is able to sneak away and transform into her alter ego before anyone ever discovers her secret. Or is she?



Common Core Connections

This teachers' guide with connections to the Common Core includes discussion questions, language arts activities, vocabulary instruction, and more to accommodate the learning needs of most students in kindergarten through grade 3. The guide is intended to be used after students read a book independently, as a group, or a combination of both.

Notes throughout the guide correlate the discussion and activities to specific Common Core Language Arts Standards. For more information on specific standards for your grade level, visit the Common Core website at www.corestandards.org.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. The Princess in Black is really Princess Magnolia. Why do you think she needs to keep her identity a secret? Is it difficult keeping this secret? What examples from the story support this?
2. “Princesses do not wear black.” Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? Should it make a difference what a princess wears, or what color her clothing is?
3. How would you describe the monsters? Hungry? Forgetful? Thoughtful? Cite examples from the story to support your description.
4. Do you think that one day Duff the goat boy will actually become the Goat Avenger and fight beside the Princess in Black? Make a prediction as to whether or not Duff becomes Princess Magnolia’s sidekick.
5. Duff admires the Princess in Black’s ninja skills. What type of training and skill would it require to wage battle with monsters?
6. The Princess in Black yells “Behave, Beast!” Does this work? Do the monsters always listen to her? How does she want them to behave?
7. Princess Magnolia’s monster alarm is her glitter-stone ring. If you were a secret superhero battling monsters, what kind of alarm would you use?
8. There was a rule against climbing through the hole in the ceiling of Monster Land. How would you keep the monsters in Monster Land? Would you close the hole? Would you move the goats to another location?
9. Princess Magnolia has had several close calls when other people almost discover her secret in the broom closet. How would you protect your secret if you were Princess Magnolia? Should she find a better location or put a lock on the door?
10. Princess Magnolia is afraid of snails. Do you think the Princess in Black is, too? Do you think someone who can battle a monster could be afraid of something that cannot hurt her? Do fears always make sense?



Name Your Princess

Reading: Literature:
Integration of Knowledge
and Ideas: RL.2.7: Use
information gained from
the illustrations and words
in print or digital text to
demonstrate understanding of
its characters, setting, or plot.



The authors of the Princess in Black series come up with funny names for many of their characters (such as Duchess Wigtower, Frimplepants, and Princess Sneezewort). Have each student create and name a character. Once the character is named, have students draw their character in a way that reflects the name. Then have students think about how their character would fit into the storyline. Invite students to write a scene portraying their newly invented character interacting with existing characters in the series.

Who Is That Masked Girl?

Reading: Literature:
Integration of Knowledge and
Ideas: RL.1.9: Compare and
contrast the adventures and
experiences of characters in
stories.

Reading: Literature:
Integration of Knowledge and
Ideas: RL.3.9: Compare and
contrast the themes, settings,
and plots of stories written
by the same author about the
same or similar characters.

Duff the goat boy notices some similarities (height, eyes, and tiara) between the Princess in Black and Princess Magnolia and wonders if they could be the same person. Discuss with students the similarities between Princess Magnolia and the Princess in Black. Talk about physical similarities as well as character traits and behavior. Do they both possess good core values? How can you tell? How does Princess Magnolia/the Princess in Black compare to Duff or Duchess Wigtower or some of the other princesses? Create a character trait chart with headers such as *giving*, *polite*, *kind*, *nosy*, *curious*, and so on. Have students analyze the behavior of various characters and check off the applicable traits for each one.



Attack of the Hungry Monsters

Speaking and Listening:
Presentation of Knowledge
and Ideas: SL.1.5: Add
drawings or other visual
displays to descriptions when
appropriate to clarify ideas,
thoughts, and feelings.

The monsters from Monster Land just want to eat goats. They can't remember rules, they don't like sunshine or the unpleasantly fresh air, and they certainly don't like being yelled at. Discuss the monsters' behavior with your students. Then talk about various anti-bullying campaigns they might have seen. Ask them if they think the monsters behave like bullies. Have the students use the details discussed to create a poster or advertisement for an "anti-monster campaign."

COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

Reading: Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.2.4: Describe how words and phrases (e.g., regular beats, alliteration, rhymes, repeated lines) supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song.



Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: SL.1.1: Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

A: Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topic and texts under discussion).

B: Build on others' talk in conversations by responding to the comments of others through multiple exchanges.

C: Ask questions to clear up any confusion about the topics and texts under discussion.

Sparkle Slam and the Princess Pounce

The Princess in Black has several fighting moves that scream “alliteration.” Explain to students that alliteration is the use of the same initial consonant sound in words that are close together. Draw attention to the way the authors use alliteration to emphasize the action in the story. Challenge students to find examples of alliteration throughout (e.g., “The breeze from the window was warm and wishy”) and make a list. The students could make this into a game by working together in groups and seeing which group can find the most examples of alliteration. Finally, have students practice using alliteration in their own writing. Ask them to describe themselves or something in the classroom using alliteration (e.g., “I sigh and make silly smiles when someone makes me sad”). A variation of this activity is for students to create a comic book sketch using their own version of alliteration for an action scene, such as a picture of two monsters fighting with the words *monster mash* above it.

Feed the Monster

In addition to goats, the monsters from Monster Land eat a lot of yucky things, such as toenail clippings. Discuss what might be better food choices for the monsters (or anyone, for that matter). Talk about the importance of eating fruits and vegetables and how healthy eating improves one's mood and can prevent a person from becoming a grouchy monster. Have students cut out pictures from magazines or draw pictures of both nutritional and unhealthy foods. Cut a hole in a cardboard box and decorate it to look like a monster's mouth. As each child shares his or her food pictures, determine as a group whether it is healthy enough to feed the monster or whether it should be put in a junk pile.



COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: L.2.5: Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

A: Identify real-life connections between words and their use.



Writing: Text Types and Purposes: WS.1.2: Write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure.



Fly, Blacky, Fly!

Blacky is the Princess in Black's faithful steed. Blacky knows that when the Princess says "fly" she means "run fast." Ask students why the Princess might have told Blacky to fly if, in fact, he cannot fly at all. Ask them if they have ever heard the phrase "fly like the wind." Explain that this is what is referred to as a simile — when something is likened to something else, usually incorporating the words *like* or *as*. It might be difficult for students to brainstorm a list of similes on their own, so create a list of examples. Begin by asking students to sing "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" ("like a diamond in the sky") or "Mary Had a Little Lamb" ("whose fleece was white as snow"). Some common similes you may suggest are "easy as pie," "hungry like a wolf," "sweating like a pig," or "happy as a clam." Once you have a sufficient list of similes, ask that each student select one to illustrate and use in a sentence. After students have written and illustrated their similes, display them on a bulletin board or in the classroom.

Magnolia, Monsters, and Other Math Applications

In *The Princess in Black and the Perfect Princess Party* there are twelve princesses at Princess Magnolia's birthday party, and the final monster gives the Princess in Black twelve stones. Princess Magnolia gives one stone to each of her guests ($12 \div 12 = 1$). Explain to students that math can be found everywhere, including in a fictional story. How many monsters are in Monster Land? How many monsters does the Princess in Black fight altogether? Use the answers to write unique math problems. For example: There are twelve guests at Princess Magnolia's party, and each one has a mount that she rides in the race. How many participants race? Create additional math problems ranging from easy to challenging. Then have students work in pairs to write their own math stories.



COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

Language: Vocabulary
Acquisition and Use: L.2.4:
Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases from an array of strategies.

E: Use glossaries and beginning dictionaries, both print and digital, to determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases.

Alarming Vocabulary

Princess Magnolia's monster alarm rings at the most inconvenient and unexpected times! Using an alarm adds to the fun of a fast-paced vocabulary game. Distribute twenty index cards to each student. Have students copy the ten words below onto separate index cards. (You can also select your own vocabulary words with your class.) Have students look up the definition of each word and write them on the other ten cards. Set a timer to a time of your choosing. Have the students mix their cards and turn them over at their desks. Start the timer and have students match as many word/definition pairs as they can. Whoever gets the most correct matches wins. Feel free to expand the list of words for a greater challenge.

amiss	faithful	steed
curious	minced	wincing
emerged	pranced	
exasperating	remarkably	

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Shannon and Dean Hale are the husband-and-wife writing team behind the graphic novels *Rapunzel's Revenge* and *Calamity Jack*, both illustrated by Nathan Hale. Shannon Hale is also the author of the Newbery Honor Book *Princess Academy*. Shannon had the idea for these books when their daughter Maggie informed her that “princesses don't wear black.” She immediately began to think up a princess who did just that—a superhero, perhaps, working to protect her kingdom. About these books, the authors say, “Sometimes our daughters wear princess dresses and play tea party, and sometimes they don capes and fight monsters. We wanted to write a character who does both, too!” Shannon and Dean Hale live in Salt Lake City, Utah, with their four young children.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR



LeUyen Pham is the illustrator of many books for children, including *God's Dream* by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Douglas Carlton Abrams and *Aunt Mary's Rose* by Douglas Wood. About the Princess in Black series, she says, “I was never a very princessy girl, and I always preferred playing superheroes to playing girl games. I would have *loved* these books as a kid!”

Drawing Activity

Princess Magnolia may seem like the perfect princess . . . but she's secretly the Princess in Black! If you were a superhero, who would you be?

Draw your superhero below.

My superhero name is _____.

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Make Your Own Monster

Monsters come in all shapes and sizes. Create your own, just like illustrator LeUyen Pham does!

1. Close your eyes and draw a wiggly shape on your paper.
2. Open your eyes and start to add eyes, noses, and mouths to your monster. Put them in unlikely places — eyes on the bottom half of the body or mouths on top of the head (or heads).
Use your imagination!
3. Add arms, legs, and tails to your monster. It can be any which way you like — imagine tails coming out of the front instead of the back, or arms instead of legs.
4. Color your creation in and voilà — your own unique monster!

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