

Educator Discussion Guide

Flunked

by Jen Calonita

Louisiana Young Readers' Choice Nominee 2018

Grade 3-5

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ABOUT THE BOOK

Gillian Cobbler, a twelve-year-old girl who knows the streets of Enchantasia, is a thief who steals from the royals to help care for her five siblings. She is caught and sent to Fairy Tale Reform School (FTRS), an educational program for misbehaving children. There she is introduced to the Headmistress of FTRS, Flora, the stepmother of Cinderella. Flora opened the school to help reform others like herself and her daughters, and has recruited other fairy tale villains to help run the school including: Professor Wolfington the Wolf, Harlow the Evil Queen and Madame Cleo the Sea Witch. She desperately wants the school to be accepted by the Princesses who reign over the kingdom of Enchantasia.

Gilly meets Kayla who tells her all about the school and encourages Gilly to be nice so that stay will go smoothly. Gilly also meets Jax who is trying to escape. The two become friends and realize that there is something suspicious about the school, especially after gargoyles attack on Royal Day. Gilly saves the day and is given her freedom, but she has a choice to make. Will she go home to her family who loves her or will she stay and help figure out who is trying to destroy the school?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jen Calonita lives in Long Island, New York with her husband, two children, and their Chihuahua. She is a writer of teen and young adult work; she wants to live in the castle of Cinderella at Walt Disney World. She was once an entertainment editor at a teen magazine and that experience in Hollywood allowed her the opportunity to work among the brightest of stars such as Justin Timberlake and Zac Efron. Her first work *Secrets of My Hollywood Life* was inspired from her time as an entertainment editor.

Biographical information taken from the author's website at

<http://www.jencalonitaonline.com/index.html>.

Accessed 06 June 2017.

BOOK AWARDS

2016 ILA-CBC Children's Choice List.

OTHER TITLES IN SERIES

Charmed (2016)

Tricked (2017)

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

Villains

Have students share their initial impressions when they hear the word “villain.” What images or connotations come to mind? Discuss the importance of villains in literature, especially in fairytales, and the role these characters play as part of the story. Have students discuss what lessons can be learned from villains; how would stories be different without them; and what it would be like to be the hero of a story fighting against a villain.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Gilly decided to stay at FTRS even though she was given an early release, why did she decide not to leave?
2. Why did Gottie/Alva want to take over Enchantasia and why did she need Harlow and the others help?
3. Why did Kayla not like Rumpelstiltskin?
4. How did Gilly's sister Anna feel about Gilly not wanting to leave FTRS and return home? Support your answer with evidence from the book.
5. What did Gilly want to prove to her father?
6. Do you think Gilly was reformed at FTRS and why?
7. Who is Harlow and is she wicked? Support your answer with evidence from the book.
8. Why was it important to Flora for FTRS to be successful?
9. Do you think Gilly was wrong for stealing from the royals to help her family and if so why?
10. During the fight in the dungeon Professor Wolfington turned into a wolf to help; why did he not return to the school?
11. Gilly stole from the royals to help support her family, what was her reason for stealing and why did she feel it was necessary?
12. If you were in Gilly's situation what would you have done differently to help your family?
13. Do you think Gilly should have been placed at FTRS? Was she wrong to help her family and if so why?
14. Harlow pretended to be concerned about Gilly and proud of her after she saves the day; why do you think she was in such a rush to release her from FTRS?
15. Have you ever wondered who your real friends were and who you could trust? How did it make you feel and how did you handle the situation?

CLASSROOMS CONNECTIONS

Health and Physical Education:

Enjoy a Q & A race! Write down a number of questions on slips of paper and place these questions in a jar or bowl. Divide students into teams and call out one question at a time. The first student to reach you, with a correct answer, will get to stay at the front of the class, all others will return to their team. The first team all team members at the front of the class wins!

Language Arts:

A majority of the characters in *Flunked* are borrowed from common folktales and fairytales. Have students research and read original versions of these fairytales and see how these characters are similar or different from their original counterparts.

Vocabulary:

Advertisements	Esteemed	Potential
Apparel	Luminous	Rhubarb
Brochure	Mahogany	Scoffed
Coincidence	Maintenance	Sniveling
Condiments	Menacing	Villainous
Defiantly	Mournfully	Wistfully
Enthusiasm	Modifications	

RELATED WEBSITES

Jen Calonita Flunked

www.jencalonitaonline.com/MG_Flunked.html

A site that includes information about the author, her books, and information for teachers/librarians.

Jen Calonita

<http://www.jencalonitaonline.com/index.html>

A site that provides biographical information about the author.

Fairy Tale Reform School

<http://books.sourcebooks.com/enchantasia/>

A website about the series with activities.