



# Teachers' Notes

## LAMPLIGHTER

### Monster Blood Tattoo Book Two

D.M.CORNISH

Teachers' Notes written by Fran Knight

#### OMNIBUS BOOKS

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## INTRODUCTION

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*Lamplighter* opens two months into Rossamünd's prenticing with the lamplighters of Winstermill. He is adapting to the regimented life of service in lighting and dousing the lamps that illuminate the Wormway and keep travellers and commerce safe and monsters at bay. On a night's training run, Rossamünd's prentice quarto are startled by a runaway carriage attacked by monsters, and are flung headlong into a life-and-death struggle between monsters and the group of women in the carriage. Rossamünd knows from his reading that they are calendars, a band of women intent on doing good and protecting the poor and the weak. The reason for their dangerous journey is that one of their number, Threnody, a young and newly made wit, in rebelling against her mother the august's wishes, wants to join the lamplighters. Being a latecomer, as is Rossamünd, owing to the adventures he was detained by in Book One, the young wit and he are thrown together in the same quarto and become uncomfortable allies. Threnody is haughty and ill-equipped for a life in the lamplighter service, although she shines where Rossamünd struggles, in targets (pistol-shooting) and lighting the lamps (Rossamünd is too short, and finds it impossible). However, Rossamünd finds that his knowledge of potives and their chemistry earns him the right to carry the salumanticum for his quarto and look after the 'first aid' and the chemicals used in combat against monsters.

Monster attacks are on the rise, and the attack on the carriage of the calendars is just one example. On another watch, the prentices encounter the Herdebog Trought, a giant monster that they see out on the Harrowmath, apparently chasing a butcher's van heading for Winstermill. In this incident the prentices must run back to the fortress accompanied by their lighter instructors and by Sebastipole, the lamplighter's agent. Rossamünd and Threnody try to defend their fellows, but their actions are misinterpreted and Rossamünd, particularly, is punished with 'pots-and-pans', or washing-up detail. When he goes to the kitchens to perform his penance, the culinaire, 'the Snooks', sends him on an errand to the Surgeon, Grotius Swill. Coming to the Surgeon's rooms via a furtigrade (a secret stair) Rossamünd discovers what he suspects are illegal goings-on with the dark trades when he looks inside the package and finds it contains a pig's head and innards. The politics of Winstermill are changing, with the old Lamplighter-Marshal being usurped by the Master-of-Clerks, a civilian concerned with administration and unaffected by the lamplighters' proud tradition of service. Rossamünd meets an old, incapacitated lighter in the Lantern Store, a

survivor of a monster attack, and makes a friend. He spends as much time as he can with him, and one night the old seltzerman (who makes the solution, seltzer, that is used in the lamps) shows him his hidden bloom baths, where he has secretly cultivated 'bloom', the glowing plant that provides the light for the lamps. Falling asleep in this cellar, Rossamünd eventually wakes in fright and must find his way back to his quarters after lights-out. This involves more secret tunnels and stairways under the fortress and, to his horror, an encounter with a pig-headed gudgeon, a man-made monster. Rossamünd kills the gudgeon and flees in horror, only to open a door and find himself in the Master-of-Clerks' office.

Rossamünd's story is not believed, and a search of the fortress yields no evidence of a gudgeon. The Marshal must answer to the Emperor and he takes Sebastipole with him leaving Rossamünd without allies. Monster-fighters gather at the fortress, eager for trade, Europe among them. She entertains Rossamünd and renews her offer to make him her factotum. He refuses, as he has entered Imperial Service and is obliged to honour this. The Master-of-Clerks calls an end to the prentices' training well before they are ready, and Rossamünd and Threnody find themselves unceremoniously assigned to distant cothouses. On the day of departure, however, Rossamünd finds that his difficult friend has thrown in her lot with his and they are going to the notoriously dangerous posting of Wormstool, right at 'the ignoble end of the road'. On their journey they encounter Europe again and enjoy her hospitality (although she does not enjoy Threnody's company) at a sumptuous wayhouse before continuing to Wormstool. Their posting is on the very fringes of civilised life, with monsters visible on the horizon from time to time from the top of the cothouse's tower. Rossamünd and Threnody settle in well with the ways of these doughty lighters with whom they share the wall. When they are out on routine duties they return to the cothouse to find a full-scale monster attack in progress and their lighter friends killed. Fighting back-to-back, Rossamünd with his potives and sheer desperate strength and Threnody with her firearms, they manage to rout the nickers and send them away. However, in spite of their heroic actions, they are called back to Winstermill, and Rossamünd is to stand trial for allegedly collaborating with monsters, for being a monster-lover who is possibly culpable for the deaths of his comrades at Wormstool.

Rossamünd stands trial for his supposed crimes. Fransitart and Craumpalin have arrived from Boschenberg and support him, but shocking revelations are revealed, and Europe reappears to deliver the most dramatic news yet.

*Lamplighter* takes place in a vividly imagined world that is unlike any other. Thirteen years in the making, it existed in the notebooks and the imagination of author/illustrator **D.M. Cornish** until 2004, when he began to translate his ideas and character sketches into the story that became Monster Blood Tattoo Book One, *Foundling*. Already an illustrator of children's picture books, Cornish has distilled a lifelong passion for fantasy into the series. The narrative is supported by illustrated appendixes and maps and a painstakingly detailed catalogue of the history and culture of the Half-Continent in the form of the 'Explicarium'.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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D.M. Cornish was born in Adelaide and attended the University of South Australia, completing a Bachelor of Design with a specialty in Illustration. After graduating, he took his folio to Sydney, where he found commissions with several magazines and newspapers. Three years later he joined the drawing team of the game show *Burgo's Catchphrase*. After six years with the show, David became restless, circumnavigating the globe before returning Adelaide. There he found commissions with Omnibus Books. His first picture book, Tony Wilson's *Grannysaurus Rex*, was published in 2004, and was followed in 2005 by *Emily and the Dragon* by Lyn Lee. He has also illustrated two four-part fantasy series for younger readers, *The Sunken Kingdom* by Kim Wilkins and *The Sorcerer's Tower* by Ian Irvine, also for Omnibus. His bold, 'graphic' style and wonderful draughtsmanship assured him of success as a professional book illustrator, but as D.M. Cornish he is also pursuing a career as a fantasy author, in the tradition of the great author-illustrators of the genre.

He has enjoyed all kinds of fantasy, reading *Lord of the Rings* at age twelve and progressing to Mervyn Peake's *Gormenghast* Trilogy. His reading of *Titus Alone* inspired him to create his own world in words and illustrations, and his early concept of a country and its city Brandenbrass was the first incarnation of this fantasy. Over thirteen years, this world was documented in twenty-seven closely written and illustrated notebooks. On the strength of this body of work, Omnibus Books publisher Dyan Blacklock encouraged him to transfer his fantasy creation to a story. The result is *Foundling* – the first in a series entitled Monster Blood Tattoo. *Foundling* and Book Two, *Lamplighter*, are rich in allusions to the Half-Continent, and the struggle between monsters and humankind; their respective 'Explicarium' or glossary explaining the lore and history of this world in its own

language, a fascinating mixture of faux Latin, Classical Greek and German that nonetheless reads as a fresh new form of expression.

David's favourite authors are Jane Austen, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Truman Capote and John Steinbeck, and he admires illustrators such as Ian Miller, Angus McBride, Bill Sienkiewicz and Egon Schiele. He lives and works in Adelaide and is currently writing the third novel in the series, working title *Factotum*.

## **WRITING STYLE**

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Written in a style that has already been likened to that of Charles Dickens by early reviewers of the book, *Lamplighter* embodies the customs and manners of the Half-Continent in its formal manner and use of language. Its strongly drawn characters are larger than life. Richly descriptive, the language consists of many coined words that sound both strange and familiar. In the lamplighters and their fortress, the author has constructed a world within a world through the accumulation of detail on their organisation, timetable, watch system, accoutrements and culture, all described both in the story itself and the appendices and Explicarium.

## **BEFORE YOU READ THE TEXT**

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- 1.** Make sure the students have read or at least know the main characters and story of *Foundling*, the first book in the Monster Blood Tattoo Series.
- 2.** Instigate a brainstorming activity to recollect what students know of Book One.
- 3.** Have class-work from the previous book displayed in the classroom.
- 4.** Talk to the teacher librarian about displaying fantasy novels in the library and classroom, and giving a book talk about fantasy novels.
- 5.** Ask students to list and/or bring in to class their own favourite fantasy books.
- 6.** Write up the main characters' names and places where the book is set for display in the classroom.

**7.** Investigate an audio version of the book. Audio Books Direct

<<http://www.audiobooksdirect.com.au>> made an audio version of *Foundling*, so they may have produced an audio version of *Lamplighter*.

**8.** Discuss the fantasy genre in the classroom. Make sure the students have a general understanding of the conventions of fantasy novels – unusual creatures, people who have some sort of power or a talisman, a made-up world, a quest, an adventure usually involving righting some wrong etc.

Use Wikipedia for a definition of fantasy <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fantasy>> or refer to a dictionary.

**9.** You may be able to show a fantasy film to your class. The Golden Compass (PG) (film version of Phillip Pullman's *Northern Lights*) is suitable for upper primary and lower secondary students.

## READING THE TEXT

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### 1. COMPLETE TABLE

Produce a table for the students to fill in as they read. See notes for *Foundling* on the different ways the class can read the novel.

Chapter	Characters	Setting	What happens
1	Rossamünd Prentice Lamplighters Sergeant Grindrod	Briarywood – on the Wormway.	The prentices and the sergeant see a carriage attacked by a group of nickers. They retaliate, helping to save two of the women inside the coach, but are astonished when one says she wants to become a lamplighter.
2			

Add enough sections for chapters 1–30

## 2. CHARACTERS

- Many new characters are introduced. List these as they appear in the story. Add any information about that character including their description, name, role and characteristics.
- Gosling made his first appearance in *Foundling*. Revisit the first chapters in Book One and read about what he did to Rossamünd. Describe him in your own words. In Chapter 20 of *Lamplighter*, Rossamünd hears of what Gosling has done. As Rossamünd, write a letter back to your friends at Madam Opera's, telling them how upset you are at this news. Do you expect to see him again? How might he reappear?
- Several characters are reintroduced from *Foundling*. Make a list of the ones you remember. Do we learn any more about these people in the second book? Describe the incident that brings a character from the first book into the new book. How does Rossamünd react to seeing this person again?
- Throughout *Lamplighter*, there are references to the term 'sedorner'. Can you explain what a sedorner is? Why is Rossamünd worried about the term? Who does he discuss it with? Reread the last four chapters. Why is Rossamünd accused of being a sedorner? What evidence is offered to the tribunal? What do you think Rossamünd is feeling? How is he saved?

## 3. LANGUAGE

- D.M. Cornish has coined many new words for his Monster Blood Tattoo series. On page 5 of *Lamplighter* a paragraph begins, 'Much of the six-mile stretch'. Use this paragraph to: list the new words made up by Cornish; list any archaic words; list words that reflect medieval times; list the made up names for the countryside; and list the words that have Latin endings (e.g. Explicarium).
- Look closely at the paragraph and locate any examples of old phrasing or unusual choice of words.

- Consider the names of the trees. Do you think they are Australian trees? (Cornish is an Australian author) Where do you think these trees could be found?
- Look at the way the author lists measurements. What sort of measurement is Cornish using? Why does he use this measurement system?
- Use this paragraph to note conventions used in the fantasy genre. For example, many fantasy authors use the Imperial System rather than the Metric System.
- The first book in the series is called *Foundling*. What does this word mean? What does this mean for Rossamünd? What do we know of his background? What is implied about his background in *Lamplighter*? Can you think of any other characters in fiction who are foundlings or orphans? Why do you think authors make their characters foundlings or orphans?
- While many of the words Cornish uses are made up, some are vaguely familiar, or are derived from known or little known words or a combination of words. For example, a meat pie is called a bully dicey. 'Bully' is from bully beef, and 'dicey' is from dice, as in cutting up. Use a dictionary and brainstorm what these words mean and how Cornish made them. There are many more that can be added to this table. Have a look at the Explicarium of either book for other examples.

Word	Meaning	Derivation
plaudamentum		
gyrovagues		
haubardiers		
antiscorbutics		
Abinition		
almonder		
August		
auto-savant		
besomers		



- Rossamünd is given some potives when he first leaves Madam Opera's establishment. Look back at *Foundling*, Chapter 3, and list those potives and their purpose. How do you think Cornish developed this word? Many more potives are used in *Lamplighter*. Make a list of the ones you find. Some of them could be compared with medicine taken today, but others have powers far beyond anything we know. In a world where anything is possible, make up a potive for a disease or condition. Give it a name. List its ingredients, and describe how it is used and for what purpose.
- What is a noun? D.M. Cornish makes up a dictionary full of new nouns for his story. Have a look in the Explicarium at the end of each book. Select a few words that appeal to you. Write them down and rewrite their meanings.
- Watch the film *Shrek* as an introduction to word play in fantasy. Ask the students to describe the world created by the film; to notice the characters and how they are created; and to locate the humour with intertextual references to fairy tales and mythology.

## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

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The following questions can be used as discussion starters.

Chapter 1: Describe the scene Rossamünd witnesses after the attack.

Chapter 2: Who are the calendars and what do they do?

Chapter 3: What is the role of a lamplighter?

Chapter 4: Why is Rossamünd suspicious of the skills of Grotius Swill?

Chapter 5: What do we learn of Threnody in this chapter?

Chapter 6: Describe the lamps and the way the lamps are lit.

Chapter 7: Why is Rossamünd worried about the contents of the butcher's cart?  
How did Rossamünd and Threnody gain Sebastipole's praise?

Chapter 8: Who is the Snooks? What does Rossamünd learn in the kitchens?

Chapter 9: What happens on Domesday?

Chapter 10: What does Sebastipole tell Rossamünd?

Chapter 11: What do the hints about being a sedorner mean?

Chapter 12: Why is there a notice posted calling for Teratologists to come to Winstermill?

Chapter 13: Who are the teratologists who come forward to claim the reward?

Chapter 14: Who does Europe warn Rossamünd about?

Chapter 15: Describe Rossamünd's fight with the rever-man.

Chapter 16: What does Rossamünd discover in the Low Gutter?

Chapter 17: What happens once the Marshal leaves Winstermill?

Chapter 18: What does the departure of the Marshal from Winstermill imply about the future?

Chapter 19: Why is Billeting Day brought forward?

Chapter 20: Describe Rossamünd's journey to Makepeace.

Chapter 21: What is the Brisking Cat, and what happens to Rossamünd and Threnody there?

Chapter 22: What does Rossamünd realise at the Brisking Cat?

Chapter 23: What do Rossamünd and Threnody learn about their billet?

Chapter 24: Why does the visit to Mama Lieger unsettle Rossamünd?

Chapter 25: Rossamünd meets a creature he has met before. Who is Freckle? Why do you think he is reappearing now?

Chapter 26: Why is Rossamünd such a successful fighter?

Chapter 27: Why are people suspicious of Rossamünd?

Chapter 28: Who reappears from Rossamünd's past?

Chapter 29: Why is Rossamünd accused of being a sedorner?

Chapter 30: What does Swill postulate about Rossamünd? How does Rossamünd escape the inquiry?

#### General Questions

- As you read the novel, note the instances where Rossamund and the others talk about food. What do the people in this world eat? Describe their kitchens. Rossamund takes food with him when he goes out to light the lamps. What is it?
- As Rossamund and Threnody travel to their billet at Wormstool, they worry about the future. What is there to concern them? What new things do they hear along the way that add to their concerns? Why are they together?

## CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

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**1.** Choose one notable incident from the novel and produce a storyboard for that episode. Consider how that episode might be filmed. What props would you need? What models need to be made? What sort of costumes and setting would be appropriate?

**2.** We meet the calendars in Chapter 1. Imagine that you are talking to someone who has never met them before and write up your conversation.

**3.** As with *Foundling*, we meet a variety of monsters in each chapter. List them as they appear. Choose one that you are interested in and describe it as if you are giving a description to the police. Consider height, age, colour, weight, eye

colour, hair, distinguishing features, voice, what was spoken, any firearms, clothing, transport and associates.

**4.** Often in fantasy stories, society uses magic to drive machinery. In *Monster Blood Tattoo*, it is living organisms:

'Technology as we know it has been replaced in Cornish's world with a sort of blend of mechanical and biological machinery. For example, many boats and ships are driven not by oars or engines, but by living, mindless organs and organisms grown into the ship itself, which produce the kinetic energy required for the ship's propulsion, and must be "fed" nutrients and kept alive.'

<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monster\\_Blood\\_Tattoo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monster_Blood_Tattoo)>

Choose one machine and reread the chapter that provides information about it. Produce a newspaper article about your chosen machine and include a description and a drawing.

**5.** In Chapter 13, all manner of people come to the Winstermill to compete for the money promised by the Emperor for the slaughter of the bogles. Who comes? Imagine that you are one of the prentices and have never seen people like this before. Write a letter to your parents explaining what you have seen.

**6.** Write a journal in first person for one day's duty as a lamplighter, based on the Prentice Schedule in Appendix 8.

## **EXTENSION ACTIVITIES**

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### **1. DESIGN A COSTUME**

Design a costume for one of the characters. This will require a series of sketches, culminating in the final picture of the costume. It will need to have cloth samples, examples of beadwork or jewellery if necessary, or other pieces that add to the authenticity of the costume such as weapons, satchel and head gear.

### **2. FANTASY WORLDS**

Use this site in Wikipedia to look at the different fantasy worlds created by authors. <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_fantasy\\_worlds](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_fantasy_worlds)> Have you heard of any of those listed? Are there any of these books in your library? Read one of

the books mentioned and compare the world with the Half Continent in the Monster Blood Tattoo series.

### **3. LIFE OF A LAMPLIGHTER**

The life of a Lamplighter is not as boring as Rossamünd thought it would be. Describe Rossamünd's life at Winstermill. What work does he do? What is involved in his work? Why does he sometimes get punished? Write up a list of rules for living and working at Winstermill for the next intake of prentices.

### **4. MAPPING**

Draw a 'mud map' of Rossamünd and Threnody's trip to Wormstool.

### **5. NEWSPAPER ARTICLE**

Write a newspaper article about the fire at Madam Opera's Estimable Marine Society for Foundling Boys and Girls. Include information about the establishment itself, what its purpose was, who lived there, the staff, Madam Opera, and speculation about how it came to be burned down.

### **6. POSTCARD**

If Rossamünd could send a postcard to Fransitart, what might he tell him? Choose an incident in the book in which Rossamünd is involved. Tell Fransitart about it on your postcard. Draw a picture relating to the incident on the other side.

### **7. PREDICT THE FUTURE**

Where do you think the story will go in the third book? Does the author give you any clues as to what might happen? Which characters might reappear? Will we learn more about Rossamünd's past?

### **8. DEVISE YOUR OWN TELEVISION SCRIPT**

Develop a short episode from the book as a TV script and make a storyboard, then film it. See if the media person in the school can help you.

### **9. VISIT WIKIPEDIA**

Check out the Wikipedia entry for *Foundling* at:

<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monster\\_Blood\\_Tattoo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monster_Blood_Tattoo) > This site provides information about the book, the author and the third book in the series. Browse the site and consider the following questions. What questions lie unanswered at the end of *Foundling*? Have these questions been answered in *Lamplighter*? What

might be in the third book and what might it be called? The site tells us that there may be

a film of this book. Think about who might star in it. Do you think it might work as an animated film? Discuss the possibilities. How does Wikipedia work? Who wrote this page about Monster Blood Tattoo? Would you add anything? How can you add information to Wikipedia?

## **FURTHER READING**

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Check out your school and local public library for other fantasy titles to read.

Some classic fantasy novels were listed in the notes for *Foundling*. Below is a list of recently published novels:

Colfer, Eoin	<i>Artemis Fowl</i>
Colfer, Eoin	<i>The Supernaturalist</i>
Dickinson, Peter	<i>The Ropemaker</i>
Freeman, Pamela	<i>Murderer's Apprentice</i>
Mahy, Margaret	<i>Maddigan's Fantasia</i>
Nicholson, William	<i>The Wind Singer</i>
Nix, Garth	<i>Mister Monday</i>
Pierce, Tamora	<i>Trickster</i>
Pierce, Tamora	<i>Terrier</i>
Rodda, Emily	<i>The Key to Rondo</i>
Pryor, Michael	<i>Quentaris in Flames</i>
Sedgwick, Markus	<i>My Swordhand is Singing</i>