



# Teachers' Notes

## FOUNDLING

### Monster Blood Tattoo Book One

D.M.CORNISH

Teachers' Notes written by Fran Knight

#### OMNIBUS BOOKS

Category	Fantasy
Title	Monster Blood Tattoo Book One: Foundling
Author/Illustrator	D.M.Cornish
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## INTRODUCTION

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In the city of Boschenberg lives a small boy, a foundling called Rossamünd, who is waiting to be selected for a useful occupation. His home is Madam Opera's Estimable Marine Society for Foundling Boys and Girls, and he lives there with other orphans being educated for a lowly post in the Boschenberg navy. Rossamünd is finally selected to serve with the lamplighters, and his journey to the place where he is to take up his first employment is told in *Foundling*. He is escorted to the wharf at Boschenberg by the mysterious Sebastipole, but in the fog he loses his way and boards the wrong vessel. A passenger on the sinister craft, the *Hogshead*, and in the power of its criminal captain, Poundinch, Rossamünd soon fears for his life. This fear is intensified when Rossamünd spies monsters on the bank from the boat.

In the world of Monster Blood Tattoo, keeping the monsters at bay involves teratologists – monster-hunters – patrolling the wildlands, dealing with the monsters for a fee. When he at last escapes from the *Hogshead*, Rossamünd meets an elegant woman called Europe who is a fulgar, one of the supreme monster-hunters. She has the ability to generate powerful surges of electricity and to release it by the touch of her hand. Rossamünd soon discovers the fulgar's weakness, though, and their relationship develops in a mood of mutual distrust as they make their way towards Winstermill and the home of the lamplighters.

*Foundling* introduces readers to 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 a story. Already an illustrator of children's picture books, Cornish has distilled a lifelong passion for fantasy into the Monster Blood Tattoo 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', which occupies almost a third of the volume.

## 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, *Foundling* embodies the customs and manners of the Half-Continent. Its strongly drawn characters make a bold impact, and are larger than life. Richly descriptive, the language consists of many coined words that sound both strange and familiar.

## BEFORE READING THE TEXT

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### 1. DISPLAY

Talk to your teacher librarian about:

- having a display of all the fantasy novels in the library
- giving your class a book talk about fantasy novels
- displaying some of the work done by students in the library
- having a fantasy focus for the term your class is reading the novel

### 2. AUTHOR

Check the library for other books illustrated by D.M. Cornish. *Foundling* is his first novel. Before this, he illustrated books such as *Grannysaurus Rex*, 2004; *Emily and the Dragon*, 2005; *Ghost Ship*, *Tide Stealers*, *Sorcerer of the Waves* and the *Star Queen* (2006). Have these in your classroom for the students to browse and read.

### 3. GENRE

Check out Wikipedia for its explanation on fantasy: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fantasy>  
Have your class go to the website to read and discuss the definition. Also see the entry for *Foundling*: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monster\\_Blood\\_Tattoo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monster_Blood_Tattoo) Can you add to this entry?

### 4. FILMS

Ask the class to discuss fantasy films they have seen. Refer the films to the books, such as *The Lord of the Rings*, *Northern Lights*, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *Harry Potter*, *The Dark is Rising* and *The Neverending Story*. The Film rights to the *Monster Blood Tattoo* series have been sold. Who do you think might star in it?

Look at the common elements of these books and films: a made-up world, strange creatures, magical powers, journeys, overcoming difficulties, etc. Ask your class if they can see any other similar traits.

### 5. WRITER VISIT

Have a fantasy author as a guest speaker. A fantasy author could be booked for Book Week in your school. Contact your local library to see if they are having a fantasy author visit during the term, and book your class.

Book Week 2008 (August 18-22) has the theme 'Fuel you Mind'. Work it in with your class reading of *Foundling*.

## 6. PREMIER'S READING CHALLENGE

Does your state participate in the Premier's Reading Challenge? Encourage your class to participate. *Foundling* has been added to South Australia's list of recommended titles. Check that it has been listed in your state. It can be one of the twelve books read by your class for the year. If they check the genre fantasy, they may find others that will interest them after they have finished *Foundling*.

- SA [www.premiersreadingchallenge.sa.edu.au](http://www.premiersreadingchallenge.sa.edu.au)  
NSW <https://products.schools.nsw.edu.au/prc/home.html>  
VIC <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/prc/>  
ACT <http://activated.det.act.gov.au/actlearn/readingchallenge/index.htm>  
QLD <http://education.qld.gov.au/schools/readingchallenge/about.html>

## 7. YEAR OF READING

2008 has been designated the National Year of Reading (UK). Log on to the website for further information: <http://www.yearofreading.org.uk> . Your school might encourage students to participate.

## READING THE TEXT

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Consider the different ways of approaching a novel. *Foundling* could be:

- read aloud by the teacher
- treated as a class text
- set up as a Literature Circle
- read in class and at home
- listened to from an audio version.

A combination of any of the above could also be used.

### 1. COMPLETE TABLE WHILE READING

(Add spaces for the next 13 Chapters and give a copy to each class member.)

Chapter	Characters introduced	Events	Setting
1	Rosamünd Verline	Rosamünd's childhood is explained.	Madam Opera's Estimable Marine

	Gosling Fransitart Master Craumpalin	Relationships with other foundlings is clearly shown.	Society for Foundling Boys and Girls
2		Rossmünd sees the monster blood tattoo on Fransitart's arm. Foundlings are prepared for work.	Vlinderstrat in the city of Boschenberg
3	Madam Opera Mister Sebastipole	...	...

And so on to Chapter 16.

## 2. LITERATURE CIRCLE

Divide the class into groups of five or six students. Each group selects a leader, a scribe and researcher. The leader's role is to keep the group on task, the scribe's to fill in the table as the group reads the novel, and the researcher's to set homework (e.g. by the next session we will all be up to Chapter 6) and keep an eye on the other groups to see how well they are going and to answer any questions the group may have.

With a Literature Circle, the class can easily read the book in a term, with two Chapters being read each week, using the last two weeks of the term to complete some of the more interesting tasks.

In a Literature Circle, each group decides who will read. Some may read aloud in the circle, some may elect to read aloud more than others, some may decide to read to themselves for a session.

Use the Activities Section while reading the book to give your groups work to do as they read. Have the students set up a group diary to record their progress after each session.

## 3. AUDIO VERSION

Check out Audio Books Direct <http://www.audiobooksdirect.com.au/> to find the audio version of the novel. You can order directly from the website or through your local bookseller.

It is a good idea to have the names and places from the book listed for the class, so that the students can refer to them while reading. Compile a list as you are reading.

Discuss how the narrator uses voice to portray the characters. Are they true to character? Check the pronunciation of the names with the Explicarium. Practice them aloud.

## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

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Chapter 1: In your own words describe Madam Opera's Estimable Marine Society for Foundling Boys and Girls. What does it remind you of? What does this Chapter tell us about Rossamünd's character?

Chapter 2-4: List some of the words the author uses to create a sense of 'foreboding'.

Chapter 3: What gifts do Rossamünd's friends at the foundlingery give Rossamünd? What are they designed to do?

Chapter 4: What does Rossamünd see of Boschenberg? What does Rossamünd find aboard the *Hogshead*? What is the Axle? How is it described?

Chapter 5: When does Rossamünd first realise he has taken the wrong boat? What alerts the reader to Rossamünd's mistake?

Chapter 6: How does Rossamünd find out about Poundinch? Has he found himself in a worse situation?

Chapter 7: The description of the meeting between Europe and the ettin is comparable to the *Three Billy Goats Gruff*. Read the fairy tale and list the similarities between the two.

Chapter 8: What does Rossamünd have to do to save Europe after the grinnings' attack? Use a recipe as a model and write up a list of instructions for him.

Chapter 10: Why is the Harefoot Dig's proprietor wary of Europe? What happens when his wife finds Europe and Rossamünd staying at the inn?

Chapter 11: When Sallow says to Rossamünd (p. 206) that it must be amazing to be the factotum of the Branden Rose, why does she think this way? What is a factotum, and do they still exist?

Chapter 12: How does Fouracres deceive the monsters trailing the two of them?

Chapter 13: What dangers are waiting for Rossamünd and Fouracres on the road from Silvernook to Harefoot Dig?

Chapter 14: Who does Rossamünd meet again in the city of High Vesting?

Chapter 15: Who does Rossamünd think of when he is rescued by Europe and Fouracres? What does this reveal about him? Is Winstermill what Rossamünd thought it would be? What thoughts would be running through his head as he tries to sleep that first night?

Chapter 16: At last Rossamünd is on his way to Winstermill. How does he feel?

## CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

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- Reread the description of Madam Opera's Estimable Marine Society for Foundling Boys and Girls. Using the description, find some pictures in magazines and create a montage of the building. Design a notice board for the front of the home telling people what it is.
- Draw the vision of Boschenberg that Rossamünd sees from the boat.
- Produce a brochure advertising the Harefoot Dig to travellers.
- Design a sign warning travellers of the dangers of moving through the woods.
- Draw a map of the harbour at Vesting to show the different sorts of ships and where they are moored. Check Appendix 6 for drawings and descriptions of the various ships.

## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

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### 1. WHAT MAKES A HERO?

- Rossamünd is the hero of *Foundling*. Heroes in literature have many similar traits. Look at the grid below to see what traits are shared by heroes. Think of another hero that you know well. Fill in the grid with examples for both Rossamünd and your chosen hero.

<b>Trait</b>	<b>Your choice</b>	<b>Rossamünd</b>
Unusual circumstance of birth		
Leaves family and lives with others		
An event, sometimes traumatic, leads to a quest		
A hero usually has a special weapon that only he can use		
Supernatural powers are involved		
Hero must prove himself to others as well as himself		
There is always a journey		

- Write a description of Rossamünd in heroic terms. Consider what Rossamünd learns during his journey.

## **2. THE MONSTERS**

- List the monsters Rossamünd meets in the order he comes across them. Include characteristics and descriptions. Can the monsters be grouped in any way?
- Look closely at the names of the monsters. How do you think the author developed these names? Do the names reflect their personalities?
- Reread Chapter 2. How does Rossamünd find out about the monsters?
- Describe the monster blood tattoos that Rossamünd sees. Why are there different tattoos?
- Pin up large outlines of the monsters in the classroom. Conduct a brainstorming activity with the students to attach lists of words describing the monsters.

- Look closely at the descriptions of the monsters in the Explicarium. What are their common features?
- What is the term for a monster-lover? What does the word mean? Why is Rossamünd frightened that he may be one?

### **3. CHARACTERS**

- Write a list of the friends Rossamünd makes on his journey and include the qualities they have that make them Rossamünd's friends. Consider why he is cautious about some of the people he meets. Rossamünd is initially suspicious of Europe and Fouracres, but later learns to trust them. What is it about Europe and Fouracres that causes Rossamünd to be suspicious? How does he learn to trust them?
- Make a list of the enemies Rossamünd makes through the story. Why are they not his friends? What do they do to annoy, intimidate, or scare Rossamünd? Rossamünd is suspicious of Poundinch from the start. What is there about Poundinch that arouses our suspicion? Look closely at the drawings of Gosling, p. 13, and Poundinch, p. 124. How does Cornish make them look like villains?
- List several of the minor characters in the story. Some are more likeable than others. Put them into two groups, those you like and those you don't like. List the characteristics of both groups. What part does each person play in the plot?
- Choose one character that you do like, but does not have a large part to play, and fill out their background. Imagine that you are writing a prequel in which that person plays a larger part. Write an introduction filling in their story.

### **4. INTERVIEW A CHARACTER**

- Choose one of the characters you would like to know more about. Imagine that you are a journalist. Write a list of questions you would ask that person and speculate what the answers might be. Write an article about that person as if you were writing an article for a magazine. There are many different points of view you could take in writing the article. It could be:
  1. Question/answer

2. An apology justifying their actions
3. Their Life
4. How they know Rossamünd
5. Where do they go now?
6. Their part in the story...

## 5. LANGUAGE

- In the Half-Continent 'threwd' means a sensation of watchfulness denoting the presence of monsters. This is a coined word. Discuss how the word evokes this meaning. Is it difficult to invent a word? When does it become part of everyday language?
- Find examples of words in *Foundling* that the author has used from different languages, words that are no longer in use, words that sound like something else and words he has made up.
- How difficult would it be to make up a series of new words? Try it out yourself.
  1. Make up a new animal and draw it. Make sure it looks like nothing else you have ever seen. Write down some of its characteristics, feeding habits and behavioral traits. Develop a new name for it. Present it like an animal shown in an encyclopedia, with drawing, scientific name, common name, food and habitat.
  2. Make up a new monster and follow the same instructions as number 1.
  3. Make up a new person and follow the same instructions as number 1.

## 6. AUTHOR

- Log on to [www.dmcornish.com](http://www.dmcornish.com) to find about the author and his work. Follow the link to his Monster Blood Tattoo website. What additional information does it give you about the author? What can you deduce about the author from the drawing he has done of himself? Rossamünd is drawn from behind, giving no clear impression of his face. Why?

## 7. REVIEWS

- A good review fits a lot of information into one paragraph; telling the reader about the story, the characters, setting and overall theme. Often a review includes information about the author and other novels which may be similar to this one.
- In *Magpies* (May 2006) there is a review of *Foundling*. The review is written by Jo Goodman, a noted Australian reviewer, critic and speaker. Consider:
  1. Which sort of review is it?
  2. What information does it give about the book?
  3. How does it encourage interest from the reader?
  4. Who do you think the review is aimed at? Why?
- Below is the annotation of *Foundling* placed on the *Magpies* website, The Source.

### **Review of Monster-Blood Tattoo by DM Cornish**

A new world awaits readers who embark on the Monster Blood Tattoo trilogy. One that is alien but which has footholds in our own earlier societies; that has a distinct language and landscape but shares human nature with us. Here is a world where monsters prowl the areas beyond the fortified towns and cities, the polluted seas are acidic and a Dickensian life is led by the common people. So well drawn is this world that it rings with verisimilitude and whilst the reader may take a little while to come to terms with its unique nature, he or she is quickly drawn into the world and the story that unfolds within its boundaries. It is a classic tale of good versus evil where the hero, protected by people of good will, must make his way in a hostile world to find his own identity and past.

Young Rossamünd has grown up in Madame Opera's Estimable Marine Society for Foundling Boys and Girls bullied by the despicable Gosling who leads a pack of boys who taunt Rossamünd for his girlish name, and protected where possible by three of the staff. There is a sense that the uncoordinated Rossamünd has yet to discover his own strengths. Madame Opera's Estimable Marine Society for Foundling Boys and Girls tends to send its boys to the navy but Rossamünd is accepted into the Lamplighter's Guild. His journey to his new employment is full of adventure as he sets forth in the wrong ship; is

threatened by an evil ship's captain, befriended by a beautiful Lahzar (a human with surgical implants that strengthen him or her and add electrical powers to their many superhuman traits) and a postman.

At the end of Book One we learn that one of his protectors in the Orphanage is on his way to tell Rossamünd something of great importance. The book itself is a work of art from the bookplate on the endpaper to the many diagrams, character sketches, maps and diagrams. There is a lengthy and detailed glossary that repays reading. Two bound-in ribbons provide bookmarks.

Reviewer: Jo Goodman, published *Magpies*, May 2006

- Compare the review in *Magpies* (May 2006) with that in *Fiction Focus* (Volume 2, 2006) or go to <http://amlib.eddept.wa.edu.au/webquery.dll> to read the review on-line. Consider:
  1. What are the differences between the two reviews?
  2. How does each reviewer see the book?
  3. What are the strengths and weaknesses seen by each reviewer?
  4. Which review is more accurate?
- Write a review. A review is about 200 words long. It has a paragraph which tells the reader something of the plot and characters, and a paragraph about the theme and overall plan of the book, and some concluding sentences giving an opinion of who may read the book, or how it will fare, or a word sketch of where it fits in literature, or something about the author, or its place in a series of books.
- Your review could appear in the school newsletter, or magazine, or *The Advertiser* or state newspaper, your local *Messenger* or your library website. Find out where it can be published.

## **FURTHER READING**

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*Book of Lies*, James Moloney

*The Book of Three*, Lloyd Alexander

*Pawn of Prophecy*, David Eddings

*The Amulet of Samarkand*, Jonathan Stroud  
*Eragon*, Christopher Paolini  
*Artemis Fowl*, Eoin Colfer  
*Evil Genius*, Catherine Jinks  
*Ranger's Apprentice*, John Flanagan  
*Sam Silverthorne: Quest*, Gary Crew  
Deltora Quest Series, Emily Rodda  
*The Sword in the Stone*, TH White  
Quentaris series, Michael Pryor & Paul Collins  
*A Wizard of Earthsea*, Ursula le Guin  
*Dragonlinks*, Paul Collins  
*The Riddle*, Alison Croggan  
*So You Want to be a Wizard?* Diane Duane

*Foundling's* sequel, *Lamplighter*, is due out in May 2008.

## **WEBSITES**

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Log on to [www.monsterbloodtattoo.com.au](http://www.monsterbloodtattoo.com.au) and check out the information given on the website about the book, the characters and the author. Send an email to D.M. Cornish saying what you thought of the book, or add a letter to his blog.

Log on to [www.readplus.com.au](http://www.readplus.com.au) for reviews, information and bookmarks. As a subscriber you can search the website. Your students can look up authors similar to D.M. Cornish, or download a fantasy bookmark.