



Every shadow is a door. Every nightfall brings danger. There are things who look like people, things that feed on people, things that lurk in the dark. Fortunately for humanity, standing between us and the shadows are the Knights of the Borrowed Dark.

Unfortunately for thirteen- year old Denizen Hardwick, he's one of them...

Irish Book Awards Children's Book of the Year 2016

Great Reads Award Most-Read Novel 2016

2017 Dublin UNESCO Citywide Read

ABOUT DAVE

A former English teacher, librarian and actor, Dave Rudden has performed in over 300 schools, libraries, theatres, art galleries, conventions, universities, tents, conferences, seminars and one pumpkin festival. He is the winner of the 2011 Fantasy Book Review Short Prize and has been shortlisted for the Hennessey New Writing Prize and the Bath Short Story Prize. His writing has been featured in the *Irish Times*, the *Guardian*, the *Stinging Fly*, the *Telegraph*, *Wordlegs* and many more.

He enjoys cats, adventure and being cruel to fictional children.

PRAISE FOR KNIGHTS OF THE BORROWED DARK

‘A magical debut.’

The Guardian

‘Atmospheric, action-packed and powerfully imagined.’

The Sunday Times

‘Clear some time in your schedule before you read this, because once you start it is very difficult to stop.’

Joseph Fink, Welcome to Nightvale

‘Knights of the Borrowed Dark is filled with brilliant turns of this kind, limning absolute poetry with the equally evocative, deceptively spare ruminations of the young hero, all using vocabulary accessible to YA readers.’

The LA Review of Books

‘The stuff of nightmares... in the best possible way.’

Heat Magazine

‘Rudden has the eye and ear of an artist.’

The Irish Independent

‘Wonderful style. Reminded me of Douglas Adams.’

R. L. Stine

‘Finally a real writer who isn’t dead.’

Eleanor, Year 8

SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHING RESOURCES

Dear rock-star teacher,

I hope that you and your students enjoy exploring the world of *Knights of the Borrowed Dark*. I used to be a teacher, and so much of *KotBD*, from the writing style to the horror to poor Denizen's stressed head, is based on my own experiences on both side of the desk.

If your class have questions about the book, if you want to organise a visit either through Skype or in-person, if any of these exercises work particularly well, or don't work, or could work better, I'd love to hear from you and your students! You can find me on Twitter at @d_ruddenwrites or at www.daverudden.com under the CONTACT tab. I hope you find these resources helpful and, remember – yield not to evil...

Dave

READING STRATEGY

Each student should read with the smallest colour-coded sticky-notes available or different coloured highlighters.

As students read, tell them to put a sticky-note/highlight any place that:

- 1) They do not understand, in which case they should write a question on the sticky note;
- 2) A place they do understand and can relate to, in which case they should write a comment on the note, e.g. 'I felt this way when my parents left me with Grandma for a whole week';
- 3) Moments or lines that surprised them, in which case they should write a reaction on the note.

They should try to make at least one note on each page, but they can do more. It would be a good idea to model the method on the first page together, so students get the idea. Then have them read silently for the rest of the chapter. Once everyone has finished, students pair-off and have a discussion based on what they wrote on their sticky-notes. This is an excellent way to structure a discussion and have students compare what they thought was important or confusing about the reading.

BEGINNING THE BOOK

1. CHAPTER TITLES

In order to build up anticipation with the students, teachers can ask the students what they think is going to happen in each chapter based on its title. The teacher could run a board displaying each students' predictions, and there could be leaders chosen depending on who's right more often. Students can also change theirs **once** after Chapter 10.

2. PREPARATION FOR READING

Every story has four parts –

Introduction – the stage is set and we meet the players. We see what the main character's life is like – what their normal is.

Complication – nobody wants a *normal* story. Something has to happen to get the story moving. This is usually a problem or a conflict that the main character must solve, something that sends their life down a different path. There can be multiple complications in different parts of the story and they can be good or bad, but they must build on each other to make the main character's life tenser and more exciting until -

Climax – the hero goes to solve the complication. They confront what is facing them. The moment of maximum excitement in the book.

Resolution – the dust settles. We look at how the characters are different, how they've grown by dealing with their complications.

Exercise

Every book, TV show, film and game follows this example. Get the students to break down their favourite movies. Use the first chapter as an example – look at Ackerby's normal, how

his life gets more complicated, how it climaxes in the Three revealing their monstrous selves, and how he is changed at the end.

Get the students to note each character's own personal introduction, their complications (if any) the climax of that complication and how they are changed. Do all of the characters get a resolution? Do you think some complications might carry over into the rest of the trilogy?

This can be done for each chapter as well – where do they start? What arrives to complicate matters and make them tense? Where do the students think they'll resolve?

3. THE MYSTERY OF THE HARDWICK FAMILY

A central mystery drives Denizen – what happened to his parents? As the novel goes on, more detail is revealed by different characters until we finally learn the truth.

Exercise

Students should assemble the mystery in an evidence diary – writing down quotes, dates, and pieces of information and see if they can figure it out before the truth is revealed.

One clue you could reveal after Grey's treachery is revealed is that after Chapter 16 he starts mimicking some of the Man in the Waistcoat's mannerisms, like popping his knuckles against his chin.

4. CHARACTER IMPRESSIONS

The first rule of writing is 'SHOW, DON'T TELL.' A reader doesn't want to be *told* a character is good or bad. They want to figure it for themselves, the way Ackerby slowly realises that the Clockwork Three are not good people, or even people at all...

Every character in a story is formed of four parts;

Want – this might not be the best thing for them, but it's what they're striving for.

Need – what we can see, as readers, the character actually needs.

Limitation – what is holding the character back from what they need to achieve/realise.

Strength – what makes them an interesting character/competent in this world.

Want & Need are most interesting when they're as far apart as possible. **Limitation & Strength** are most interesting when they're one and the same. Consider Vivian as an example – her strength is that she is a tough and emotionless warrior, but that limitation holds her back from being a proper relative (aunt first, mother later) to Denizen.

Exercise

Students should write down their impressions of each character as they're introduced – both what the narration says about them and what their dialogue reveals. Remember that the writer has to sit down carefully and design each character when they're writing the novel – what does it tell us that these are the details he chose to focus on? Try and work out their wants, needs, limitations and strengths, and when they are particularly displaying each.

5. VISUALISING THE CHARACTERS

Everyone has a different idea in their head of what characters should look like. And this is the way it should be – books allow us to make our own connections and picture our own. Consider this line about Simon –

'...he looked like a crow in a scarf'

It doesn't tell you his height or weight or whether he has arc or whorl fingerprints, but it does give you a prompt, with which you can make your own connections. You mightn't have the same idea of Simon as the person beside you but you're both reading from the same hymn sheet.

Exercise

Get the students to write down every word and description they can think of, all based on the above line. Compare how many have words in common and whether anyone has a word nobody else has.

Exercise

Students should go find a picture or photo online of what they imagine each character to look like, then stick them to a sheet over a quote from that character. Cast the ‘film of the book’ with their favourite actors. Gather a ‘showreel’ from the students where they pick a scene from a different film that proves why their actor is the best choice for the role.

6. WHAT’S IN A NAME?

There are a lot of hidden meanings to the names in *KNIGHTS OF THE BORROWED DARK*. Names are important – they’re a way to get across a secret to the reader, a way to perfectly embody what a character is about. Names tell us where someone is from, what their family might have been like, whether they have friends or titles or famous deeds in their past.

On first meeting a character, get the students to speculate on why the author might have called them what they did. Do some research into what the words mean, how they sound, what impression they give the reader, and whether that impression pays off later.

Overleaf is a selection of names to get you started.

NAMES

FULLER JACK – a fuller is the narrow channel at the centre of a sword blade

SIMON HAYES – Hayes is an old Irish name meaning ‘descendant of Aodh,’ a fire god. ‘Simon’ means ‘good listener.’

GRAHAM MCCARRON – McCarron is a derivative of McCearáin, meaning ‘son of Ciaran’ or ‘little dark one.’ Grey is also a reference to his divided allegiance and his PTSD, the Knight caught between light and dark.

ABIGAIL FALX – A falx is a curved sickle or blade

VIVIAN HARDWICK – Vivian means ‘alive,’ a reference to her particular secret.

ELLICOTT (The Man in the Waistcoat’s alias) – John Ellicott was clockmaker to George III

SERAPHIM ROW – Seraphim are a type of powerful angel from the Bible.

CORINNE D’AUBIGNY – Julie D’Aubigny was an opera singer/duellist in France in the seventeenth century.

DARCIE WRIGHT – Darcie is a classical reference to Cassandra from Greek mythology. Cassandra’s curse is that nobody believed her foresight. Darcie’s curse is that everyone believes her. In an Order of warriors and destroyers, Darcie is a ‘wright,’ someone who creates, who mends.

HELIOS LANCE – Helios was the Greek God of the sun, and a lance is a Knightly weapon.

THE ART OF APERTURA – Aperture is a hole through which light travels.

THE ANATHEMA BEND – Anathema means something or someone you dislike intensely.

THE BELLOWS SUBVENTUM – ‘bellows’ is a play on both the verb ‘to bellow’ and bellows as lungs, and subventum is Latin for ‘to assist’

7. FEEL THE FEAR

Tenebrous are monsters so alien to this world that they warp it around them. You can feel a Tenebrous coming in all sorts of ways. Think of that unexplainable chill down your neck as you walk home from school. Think of strange tastes popping up in your mouth, or your reflection suddenly twisting and being replaced by something a whole lot worse.

Exercise

Get students to write down a list of ways you might notice a Tenebrous Breaching. Ask them about their favourite horror films, how the writer and director up suspense, and whether they see any of those techniques used in *Knights of the Borrowed Dark*.

(this exercise works best post-Chapter 3)

8. DAWNING

Growing up far away from the Order, Denizen had no idea that lurking within him was the power of a Knight. His discovery was... traumatic. Compare the Dawnings of Denizen, Darcie and Simon, and get the students to discuss what Abigail's might have been like.

Exercise

Each student should write a short piece about how they would discover their power. Stories can be scary/funny/a mixture!

9. DESIGN A TENEBROUS

Tenebrous are the ancient enemies of the Knights of the Borrowed Dark. Creatures from another reality, they are nothing but black oil and hunger until they make a body. They use whatever they can find – stone, metal, flesh. A Tenebrous who Breaches into a field will look very different than one in a city.

Exercise

Design a Tenebrous that might have built a body in a –

- Junkyard

- Glacier

- Forest

- Library

10. DESIGN YOUR CREST & MOTTO

All someone needs to join the Order of the Borrowed Dark is the fire of the Tenebrae and the will to face what lives in the dark. Certain families – The Hardwicks, the Falxes - have been in the Order for centuries. Discuss the motto of the Hardwick family – *TU NE CEDE MALIS, SED CONTRA AUDENTIOR ITO* – *YIELD NOT TO EVIL BUT ATTACK ALL THE MORE STRONGLY* – and how it fits the character of Vivian Hardwick.

Exercise

Students can research the origin of their own names and whether they come attached to a crest or motto. If they don't, then students can design their own.

Remember the core values of being a Knight – bravery, valour, and introducing monsters to the unpleasant end of a sword.

www.nli.ie/heraldry_site/DesignyourownCoatofArms.pdf - (useful resource template on designing your own crest)

11. MAPPING THE CITY

Denizen has never been in a city before. If his time wasn't taken up by things trying to murder him, he'd probably like to sight-see.

Exercise

Students should research things for Denizen to do based on his personality, and make a schedule of things for him to see in Dublin.

12. WHAT'S IN A NAME? (Pt. 2)

Knights record the name of every Tenebrous they come across, for some kind of clue as to their hunting patterns or their powers. However, Tenebrous are wily things, and what one Knight fights in nineteenth century Rome might be completely different in 2015 Roscommon.

Exercise

Students split into groups of two and are each given the name of the same Tenebrous. They can do some research on the words in the name, and must then try and come up with the creepiest and most fitting design for that Tenebrous. They can draw it, describe it – whatever they like. Then they can compare the differences and where they got their own ideas.

Sample Names – The Widows of Victory, John-of-Sorts, the Bloody Mice, the Hounds of Vox, The Masque of Prospero, Fafnir, The Tearsipper Girls.

13. HUNT A HAUNTING

The Knights in Seraphim Row are lucky that they have Darcie Wright, resident genius and *Lux Precognitae*, who can find the Tenebrous as and even before they Breach. Other cadres need to resort to other methods. They research, they patrol, they even visit haunted houses in case the stories of ghosts turn out to be stories of something much worse.

Exercise

Students are encouraged to find ghost stories online or stories of haunted houses and pick one to write a story about. Maybe the Headless Horseman of Brackley Hall is a Tenebrous who never gets the neck right. Maybe the Black Dog of Castor Alley hasn't been seen since 1805 because a Malleus called around...

14. TABLEAU

Students are split into groups and have to choose a scene from the book. They must then freeze in a tableau and see can the other students guess which scene it is. Students can brainstorm a list or have one chosen by the teacher first. Finally, instruct each student to begin saying their characters thoughts aloud as soon as you touch them on the shoulder, and to keep talking until you touch their shoulder again.

15. SOS

Simon and Denizen are best friends. Denizen writes Simon a birthday card but as much as he wishes he could tell Simon everything, he knows he can't.

Exercise

Get students to write the letter that Denizen would have liked to write.

Simon unfortunately can't get any message out to the outside world, but if he could, Denizen would be the person he'd contact.

Get students to write the letter that Simon would have written.

16. SPARRING

Sparring is an important part of being a Knight. You must be quick and alert if you want to survive.

Class is divided into four teams, and the board is divided the same. Students can choose their own name.

The rules: Everyone on every team must take a turn at the board. The team members have to rotate, and once they establish a "batting order," they must keep that order. Two teams at a time send representatives to the board. Let's call the teams A, B, C, and D, for example. To begin, the first person from team A comes to the board to challenge the first person from team B. You will say the question. The first person to get the right answer written on the board wins. Teams may not help or say anything unless both players are obviously stumped, in which case you can say "teams."

At that point, team members may run to the board to assist, but the person whose turn it is still has to be the one who writes the answer. Whichever team wins, gets a point. If there is a tie, the same two people stay up for a second, tie-breaking question. If neither team is able to answer the question, no one gets a point and both players sit down. Then the tournament rotates -- the next person from team B plays the first person from team C. Then team C plays team D. Team D plays team A, and the whole process starts over until you run out of questions or time.

To spice things up, you can have different categories of questions. Start with one-pointers, then five-pointers, then ten-pointers. This way, teams don't get discouraged if they do poorly at the beginning. Sample questions are below.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1 point

- 1) Where are the Knights of the Borrowed Dark located? (Seraphim Row)
- 2) Who is the ruler of the Tenebrae? (The Endless King)
- 3) What is the commander of a cadre of Knights called? (Malleus)
- 4) What does 'Malleus' mean? (hammer)
- 5) Where was Mercy hidden? (basement of Crosscaper)

5 point

- 1) What is Grey's full name? (Graham McCarron)
- 2) What is D'Aubigny's first name? (Corinne)
- 3) When is Simon's birthday? (26th October)
- 4) What did the Three & Grey use to trap Mercy? (Knights' iron filings)
- 5) What did Abigail get for her 10th birthday? (crossbow)

10 point

- 1) What is Denizen's father's first name? (Soren)
- 2) Who was Vivian's Malleus? (John Carsing)
- 3) How many Cants are there? (78)
- 4) What's another name for a Tenebrous? (Stygia, Obscura, Those Who Walk Under Unlit Skies)
- 5) What are the roving bands of Knights called? (Peregrines)

17. CONTACT THE WRITER

Everyone should write down a question they have for the writer and the teacher can email him.

18. REVIEW THE BOOK

Get the students to look up their favourite books on Goodreads and see what other readers have thought of them. Look at the language of reviewing – critical, emotional responses – and ask them to try writing a response to *Knights of the Borrowed Dark* for Goodreads. Do they agree with the good reviews? Do they agree with the less positive ones? Is it a mix?

