

TEACHER'S GUIDE



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Teacher Resource Guide developed by
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I	INTRODUCTION	4
	• About the Book	
	• About the Author	
II	PRE-READING ACTIVITIES	5
III	DURING READING QUESTIONS	6
IV	POST-READING ACTIVITIES	8
	• Developing Connections	
	• Visualizing	
	• Persuasive Writing	
	LETTER WRITING GRAPHIC ORGANIZER	11

I INTRODUCTION

About the Book

One evening as twelve-year-old Mika walks to her friend Aimee's house, she hears a cat yowling and goes to rescue it. She brings the cat home and decides to call her Angel. With Angel safe at Mika's home, strange and scary things start to happen.

One day after school Mika arrives home to find that Angel has disappeared. Mika is broken-hearted and worried. Mika and Aimee free Angel again, but not before Angel's owner sees them. After a narrow escape, Mika thinks the problem is solved. But then disaster strikes, and Angel's mysterious owner is behind it. Does Mika have the courage to take on this darkly gifted, cruel woman?

About the Author

Angela Dorsey has published more than twenty novels for young people, including *Abandoned*, the *Freedom* trilogy, the *Horse Guardian* series, and more recently, the *Whinnies in the Wind* series. She lives on southern Vancouver Island.

II PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. Examine the front and back covers. Discuss first impressions of the book based on the picture on the front cover, and on the synopsis of the book on the back cover.
2. As a class or in small groups, create a T-chart. On the left-hand side write what you think might happen in the book, or what the main ideas will be. Leave the right-hand column empty, to be filled out after the book has been read.

III DURING READING QUESTIONS

Chapter 1-3 Questions:

1. The first line in the book is “Mika threw her book down on her bed. How could she concentrate on homework when her little brothers sounded like they were killing each other?” Does this beginning entice you into reading further? Why or why not?
2. Mika shows empathy towards many living creatures (the spider on page 8, the cat Angel, the dog Hunter) but she and her father have a hard time getting along since the death of her grandfather. How could Mika show empathy and understanding towards her father?
3. Everything about Aimee’s life seems much nicer than Mika’s. How do you think Aimee sees Mika’s family and life? In what way might Aimee see Mika’s life as “better” than her own?
4. Mika seems to become increasingly afraid when she enters the house to rescue the cat. Do you think she has good reason to be afraid or is she letting her imagination get the best of her? Justify your answer.
5. Do you think it was appropriate for Mika to take the cat out of the house? Why or why not?
6. Is it acceptable that Mika is dishonest with her family by hiding Angel? Why or why not?

Chapter 4-7 Questions:

1. Mika is having a difficult time with her father. How does her friendship with Aimee help her to cope with this and the hardships of growing up?
2. What does Mika think is the better way to convince her parents to let her keep Angel? What strategies do you think she will use?
3. Do you think Mika’s grandmother will help smooth out the problems in Mika’s family? How?
4. Who do you think wrote the words on Mika’s backpack? What do you think they might want?

Chapter 8-10 Questions:

1. Mika puts up Lost Cat posters, as her parents told her to do, but she hangs them in places that people are unlikely to see them. Do you think this is a reasonable action on her part? Why or why not?
2. Aimee seems to be hesitant to steal back Angel. Why might stealing back the cat be a difficult issue for her?
3. How do you think the confrontation with Angel’s original owner might help Mika to repair her relationship with her father?
4. Considering that Joseph has been kidnapped as a result of Mika taking Angel, do you think Mika’s actions regarding the cat have been selfish? Justify your answer.

Chapter 11-13 Questions:

1. For the second time, Mika finds herself in the abandoned house fearing what might be upstairs. What do you think she will find up there? Is her fear justified?
2. When Mika realizes that Joseph is probably being held at her fort she decides to go and look for him on her own. Is this a good decision on her part? What would you do?
3. Lucinda has told Mika that she can get her brother back when she hands over Angel. What do you think Mika should do?
4. Mika realizes that being angry but also being in control is the only way to defeat Lucinda. Why do you think anger is good in this situation?

Epilogue Questions:

1. What do you think caused Lucinda to change from a happy girl to a mean one?
2. Considering they were locked in paintings for many decades, how do you think Lucinda's family will cope with living in the modern world?

IV POST-READING ACTIVITIES

Lesson 1: Developing Connections

Ontario Curriculum Connection: Extend understanding of oral texts by connecting, comparing, and contrasting the ideas and information in them to their own knowledge, experience, and insights; to other texts, including print and visual texts; and to the world around them (Reading grade 6, 1.6).

Teach lessons on how to make meaningful connections that relate to emotions, attitudes, and feelings, rather than to simple commonalities.

Have students fill out the making connections graphic organizer for each chapter, clusters of chapters, or for the novel as a whole. Students should create a Level 1, a Level 2, and a Level 3 connection. If desired or, as an extension, students can attempt to create a Level 4 connection.

Level 1 connection: Detail

Level 2 connection: Detail and Support

Level 3 connection: Detail, Support, and Opinion

Level 4 connection: Detail, Support, Opinion, and Extension

<p>Level 1 (Student makes a very basic connection with the story.)</p>	<p>Level 2 (Student makes a very basic connection with the story, providing support with an example from the story.)</p>	<p>Level 3 (Student makes a connection with the story, including support from the text, and demonstrates how this connection fits with his or her life or experiences.)</p>	<p>Level 4 (Student makes a connection with the story, including support from the text, and demonstrates how this connection fits with his or her life or experiences, and extends this by considering the meaning of the connection or by predicting future outcomes.)</p>
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<p>Example: Mika and I both like cats.</p>	<p>Example: Like me, Mika really likes cats. She shows this in Chapter 2 when Mika goes into the house to rescue the cat even though she is afraid.</p>	<p>Example: Mika and I are both caring people. She shows this by rescuing the cat twice from the abandoned house. Although I have never had to rescue a cat from an abandoned house, I show that I care about animals by taking care of my dog every day, walking him and feeding him.</p>	<p>Example: Mika and I are both caring people. She shows this by rescuing the cat twice from the abandoned house. Although I have never had to rescue a cat from an abandoned house, I show that I care about animals by taking care of my dog every day, walking him and feeding him. I think caring for animals is a good way to show that people like Mika and me will grow up to be responsible and caring adults.</p>
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Lesson 1: Developing Connections

Ontario Curriculum Connection: Identify a variety of reading comprehension strategies and use them appropriately before, during, and after reading to understand increasingly complex texts (Reading grade 6, 1.3). Create two-dimensional, three-dimensional, and multimedia art works that explore feelings, ideas, and issues from a variety of points of view (Visual Arts grade 6, D1.1).

Visualizing is an important strategy to help children to better understand what they are reading. Visualizing can include creating a mental picture in your head, but it can also include using the other senses in order to “fill out” a story. Imagining what a story smells, tastes, sounds, and feels like can help us to better relate to the characters or themes of a story, making it more interesting and real to us.

One important element of *The Time Thief* is the painting in the parlour of the abandoned house (see page 21). Have the students re-create the painting, carefully taking into consideration the expressions on the face of the woman and of the dog. When they are done, have them answer some of the following questions:

1. When reading the text, how does what you see, hear, smell, and feel help in the creation of your picture?
2. How can the woman in the picture appear both beautiful and frightening at the same time?
3. Both the cat and Mika seem to be afraid of the painting. What do you think it is that is causing their fear? Have you ever seen something like a painting or an image that caused you to feel uneasy (or any other emotion)?
4. How has creating a picture helped to further your understanding of the story?
5. Predict how you think this picture will play into the story of Mika and the little cat.

Lesson 3: Persuasive Writing

Ontario Curriculum Connection: Identify the topic, purpose, and audience for a variety of writing forms (Writing grade 6, 1.1). Identify and order main ideas and supporting details and group them into units that could be used to develop a structured, multi-paragraph piece of writing, using a variety of strategies (e.g., making outlines, writing notes, filling in a ranking grid) and organizational patterns (e.g., order of importance) (Writing grade 6, 1.5).

In *The Time Thief*, Mika is having a difficult time relating to her father. Mika is convinced that while her mother will probably fall in love with the cat, Angel, as soon as she sees and holds her, Mika's father will be much more resistant (pages 48-49).

Have the students write a letter from Mika to her father, trying to convince him to let her keep the cat. Have them use a graphic organizer (provided) to help them to organize their arguments and to anticipate arguments that her father would make. Once they are finished filling in the organizer, have them write a rough draft of the letter, making sure to write using Mika's voice and keeping in mind the audience to whom she is writing (her father). They should be sure to revise and edit the letter before writing a final draft.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Letter Writing Graphic Organizer

After you have read Chapter 5 of *The Time Thief*, think of some arguments that you might use, if you were Mika, to convince your father to let you keep Angel the cat. When trying to persuade someone to your way of thinking, it is important to anticipate how they might argue against you. In the organizer below, write your arguments on the left-hand side and the arguments you anticipate on the right-hand side. When you write your letter, make sure to consider the arguments against your position and to argue against them.

The graphic organizer consists of three rows. Each row contains two rectangular boxes. The left box in each row is larger than the right box. A blue arrow points from the right side of the left box to the left side of the right box. The boxes are empty, intended for students to write their arguments.