

The Thief Lord - Cornelia Funke

Lesson 1

Before reading...

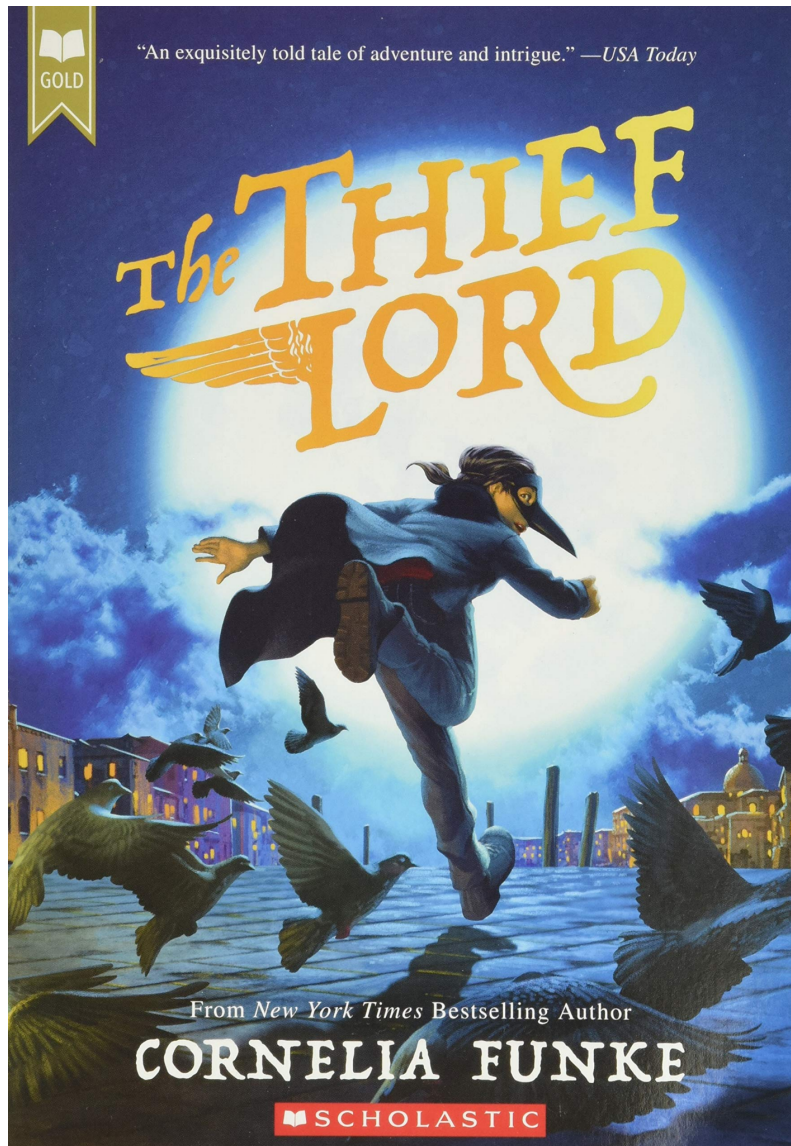
Look at the front cover.

- What do you think the book will be about?
- What things can you see on the front cover?
- What sort of story will it be?
- Who might enjoy it?

Now read the blurb...

- Were any of your predictions correct?

Front Cover



The Opening Lines

1 - Victor's New Clients

It was autumn in Venice when Victor first heard of Prosper and Bo. The canals, gleaming in the sun, dappled the ancient brickwork with gold. But the wind was blowing ice-cold air from the sea, reminding the Venetians that winter was approaching. Even the air in the alleyways tasted of snow, and only the wings of the carved angels and dragons high up on the rooftops felt any real warmth from the pale sun.

The house in which Victor lived and worked stood close to a canal; so close, in fact, that the water lapped against its walls. At night, he sometimes dreamed that the house was sinking into the waves, and that the sea would wash away the causeway that Venice clings to, breaking the thin thread that binds the city to Italy's mainland. In his dream the sea would sweep the lagoon away too, swallowing everything -- the houses, the bridges, the churches, the palaces, and the people who had built so boldly on its surface.

For the time being, however, the city still stood firmly on its wooden legs. Victor leaned against his window and looked out through the dusty glass. Surely no other place on earth was more proud of its beauty than Venice, and as he watched its spires and domes, each caught the sun as if trying to outshine one another. Whistling a tune, Victor turned away from the window and walked over to his large mirror. Just the weather for trying out his new disguise, he thought, as the sun warmed the back of his sturdy neck. He had bought this new treasure only the previous day: an enormous mustache, so dark and bushy that it would have made any self-respecting walrus extremely jealous. He stuck it carefully under his nose and stood on his toes to make himself taller. He turned to the left, to the right, and became so engrossed in his reflection that he only heard the footsteps on the stairs when they stopped outside his door.

Clients. Blast! Why were they bothering him now of all times? With a deep sigh he sat behind his desk. He heard voices whispering outside his door. They were probably admiring his nameplate, Victor thought, a handsome black shiny sign with his name engraved in gold letters.

**VICTOR GETZ
PRIVATE DETECTIVE
INVESTIGATIONS OF ANY KIND**

It was written in three languages -- after all, he often had clients from abroad. Next to the sign was a knocker -- a lion's head with a brass ring in its mouth, which Victor had polished just that morning.

Comprehension

Use the extract above to help you answer these questions:

1. What season is it at the start of the book?

2. Where do 'Venetians' come from?

3. What did Victor often dream about?

4. How would you describe Victor's home?

5. What was Victor's job?

6. Why did Victor try to change his appearance?

7. What kind of investigations might Victor do?

8. What is your first impression of Victor?

9. What skills does a detective need to have?

10. Would you like being a detective? Why?

Vocabulary

1. Dappled
2. Ancient
3. Carved
4. Lagoon
5. Tourist
6. Sulk
7. Compartment
8. Insulted
9. Waft
10. Crooked
11. Inhabitants
12. Scuttle
13. Claim
14. Reception
15. Auditorium
16. Embroidered
17. Gondola
18. Abandon
19. Self-conscious
20. Mumble

HOMEWORK

How does the writer **set the scene** at the start of the book?

OR

Write a **short story** using **at least 5 new words** (above) that we learned from these chapters.