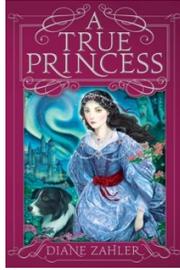


Reader's Guide

A True Princess

By Diane Zahler



The activities and questions in this guide are correlated to Common Core State Anchor Standards. For more specific, grade-level standards within each Anchor Standard, see the specific Literature, Writing, and Speaking and Listening Standards for your grade at <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy>.

Extension Activities

1. A Curse that Continues.

A True Princess uses the fairy tale “The Princess and the Pea” as its jumping-off point. Find a version of the original story. What parts of the original fairy tale did the author choose to include in her retelling? What parts did she leave out? Write a short essay comparing and contrasting the two story versions.

CCRA.R.1, CCRA.R.9; CCRA.W.9

2. “The Erl-King.”

The author was inspired by Johann van Goethe’s poem “The Erl-King” when she wrote about the Elf-King in *A True Princess*. Read Goethe’s poem. How does the character in the poem compare to the Elf-King in the book? Write a brief description of the Elf-King in each work. Which version of the Elf-King do you find most threatening? Why?

CCRA.R.7, CCRA.R.7; CCRA.W.1, CCRA.W.9

3. Origins of Odin.

One of the most frightening characters in *A True Princess* is Odin, who is a god from Norse mythology. Research the myths that describe Odin, and write a summary of the god’s powers and actions.

CCRA.R.2; CCRA.W.7, CCRA.W.8

4. The Northern Lights.

Lilia's blanket reflects the colors of the Northern Lights — the aurora borealis — which she sees for herself in Chapter 9. Research the phenomenon of the Northern Lights, and write a brief essay explaining what causes them and when and where they happen.

CCRA.W.2, CCRA.W.4, CCRA.W.7

Discussion Questions

CCRA.R.1, CCRA.R.2, CCRA.R.3, CCRA.R.4, CCRA.R.5, CCRA.R.10; CCRA.SL.1, , CCRA.SL.4

1. Lilia doesn't feel like she fits in with Jorgen and his family. What is different about her? How do her differences affect her actions?
2. When Lilia first meets the blue lord, he says that he heard Odin and his dogs, and after that, "everything was changed." What does he mean? What changed for him after hearing the god in Bitra Forest?
3. The nisse is both troublesome and helpful to Lilia and Karina. How does he end up helping them? Why does he finally decide to lend them a hand?
4. What happens to Lilia and Karina when they get into the locked bedroom? What result do their actions have?
5. The Elf-King's actions have had an enormous effect on Lilia from her childhood on. What has he done to change her life? How might her life have been different without him?
6. As Karina and the prince begin to fall in love, Karina feels that she is not suitable for him. Why does she feel this way? What is Lilia's reaction to her feelings?
7. The chapter titles of Chapters 1-11 are rules for being a true princess, each of which Lilia manages to break. How does she break each rule? What result does each rule-breaking have on the events of the story?
8. When Lilia confronts the Elf-King, her actions have an impact on many people in the kingdom. Who is affected, and how?
9. Lilia changes in many ways from the beginning of the book to the end. What is she like when her story starts? Make a list of words that describe her. Then think about how she changes. Make another list of words that describe her by the end of the book.