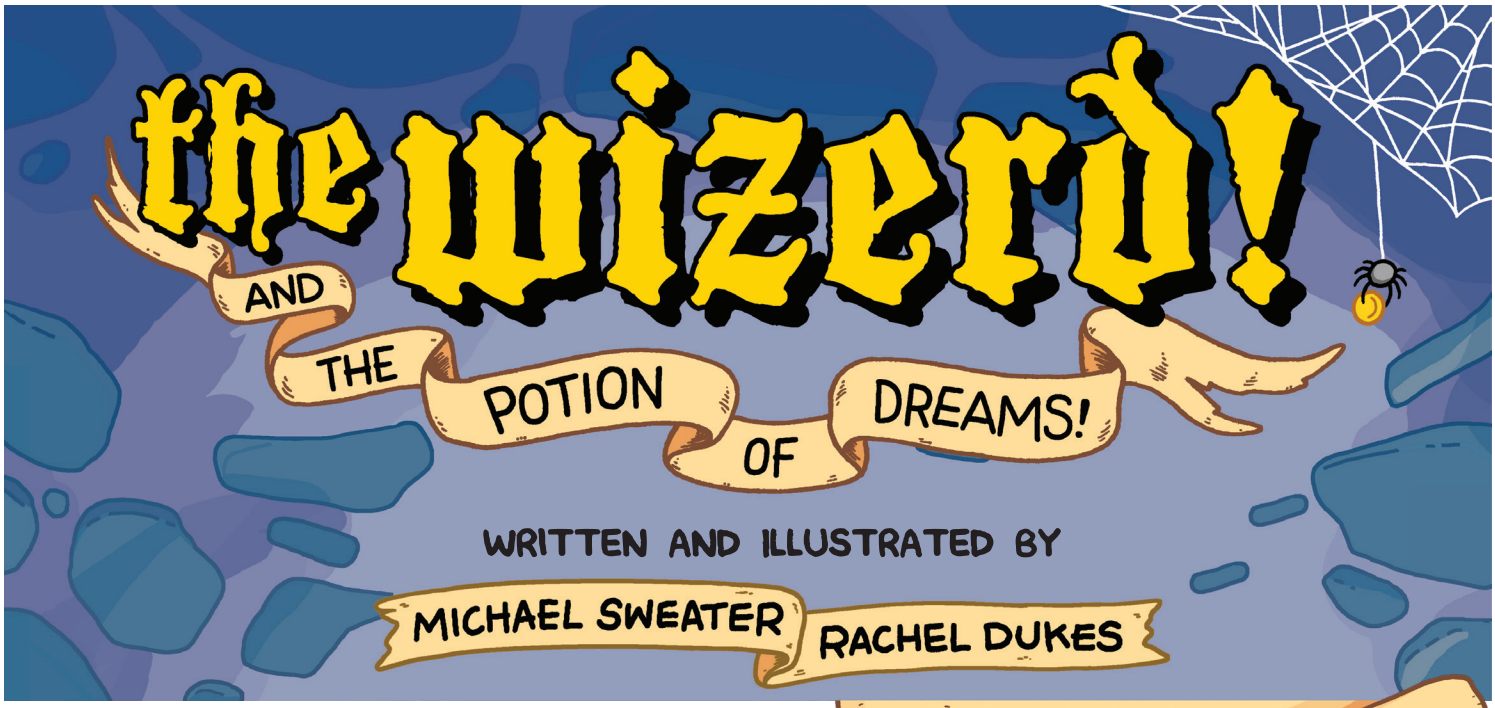




ISBN:978-1-62010-777-5

DISCUSSION GUIDE

ABOUT THE BOOK:

The Wizerd lives a solitary and peaceful existence, tending his garden and occasionally conversing with its resident bird, until the brash Princess Wallace arrives to threaten, cajole, and beg the Wizerd to brew a special wish-granting potion. She is fierce but small in stature, and desires to be a big, strong, hunky warrior. Though reluctant to pursue adventure, the Wizerd finally agrees to go with Wallace and gather the necessary ingredients, if only to be rid of the annoying and insatiably hungry princess. On the way to the town of Thent, they rescue an insecure archer who has been captured by two goblins in what becomes the first of several tricky and dangerous situations that the newly formed trio will face on their quest. Eventually, their paths cross with the evil Wych, despotic ruler of Thent, who won't stop until she sees them all dead. The colorful and detailed illustrations, humorous dialogue, and numerous action scenes make *The Wizerd* an engaging choice, especially for readers aged 9-13.



LEARNING STANDARDS

The Wizerd can be used to address many of the Reading Literature Common Core Standards for upper elementary grades including: **RL.4–6.1, RL.4–6.2, RL.4–6.3, RL.4–6.4, RL.4–6.5, RL.4–6.7.** The following discussion questions and extension activities may also be used as a springboard for addressing additional Common Core standards for Writing and other ELA-Literacy standards.



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

1. Carefully examine the cover of the book, as well as pages 8-16. What clues are offered to answer questions about the "who," "what," and "where" of the story?
2. What do you think is the purpose of the potion that the Wizerd is brewing on page 8? Does it work? The Wizerd says, "Not everything in this world is always what it seems to be." Do you agree? If so, give an example.
3. What does the tour of the castle reveal about the Wizerd's life and attitudes?
4. Numerous pages of the novel, such as pages 14 and 15, consist almost entirely of a single illustration. In comics and graphic novels, this is called a splash page. They can be used to introduce or focus special attention on particular places, characters, or events. Likewise, large illustrations called splash panels can help emphasize important details. When and where are splash pages and splash panels used in *The Wizerd*? Why? Analyze additional ways the book's illustrations help to convey actions, moods, emotions, and other key components. For example, how are splash pages and wordless panels used to set the tone at the beginning of the first chapter?
5. Who is Princess Wallace, and what does she want? What can you tell about her from her actions and words in the first chapter? Why does the Wizerd agree to help Princess Wallace?
6. Look at the first two splash pages in Chapter Two on pages 32 and 33. What is going on? Why does the Wizerd think this might be a distraction? Why does the archer want to join Wallace and the Wizerd?
7. Describe the city of Thent. Does it seem like a place you would want to visit? Why or why not? If you did go, which place would you visit first? What one item would you purchase at the Heap?
8. The Wizerd and Grindle make a deal: ingredients and a wand in exchange for a key. What do you think the key unlocks? How do you know?



9. Describe what happens at the tea shop. What more is revealed about the wishing potion? Why does a fight break out? What happens to the Wizerd, Wallace, and the archer (Rabia)?
10. Who is the Wych? What can you tell about her personality and style of governing at the beginning of Chapter Four? How does she treat the Wizerd? Why?
11. Who does the Wizerd meet in jail? How does the Wizerd trick the goblins and the guard to escape from the cell? What do Wallace and the archer find when they return to the Heap at the end of Chapter Four?
12. How does the Wizerd continue to escape? Why are books being burned in different parts of the prison? What does that indicate about the attitude toward books in Thent? Describe the reunion of the Wizerd, Wallace, and the archer. How does Chapter Five end?
13. Describe what happens at the beginning of Chapter Six. What causes the explosion? What are the effects of the explosion?
14. Review the panels on page 119. What do they reveal about the way the Wych thinks and acts? Have you ever tried to hurt someone because they hurt your feelings? What happened?
15. What secret is revealed to Wallace and the archer on page 122? Do you think that the Wizerd was willing to make a true sacrifice? Why or why not?
16. How do the Wizerd, Wallace, and the archer eventually escape the Wych? What happens to the Wych? To the city of Thent?
17. How does the book end? Speculate about what you think will happen next. Do you think that the goblins will return? How about the Wych?
18. What are some of the themes of the book? How do the ideas of home, adventure, power, loyalty, and confidence correspond to the various characters and their relationships? Be sure to give examples from the text.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES



SCAVENGER HUNT

The Wizerd contains many large and elaborate illustrations that deserve an extended look. Good examples can be found on pages 44, 45, 48, 49, 54, 55, 60, 61, 76, 77, 98, 99, 114, 115, and 137. To help students develop an appreciation for details, divide them into teams of two and assign them a page (or two) to examine. Ask them to generate a list of 10 items or other details from their assigned scene that may not be the most obvious. Then, the teams will trade lists to see if they can find everything on another team's list within a given time frame (e.g. 90 seconds). Lists can potentially be traded several times. Afterward, ask students what they learned from the experience. Did they get better with practice? What other things can they think of that might be worth a closer look?

NO POTION REQUIRED

Just before the title page for Chapter One, there is a note for all readers that says, "For aspiring cartoonists of all ages. You don't need a wishing potion to create comics. Start today!" Take advantage of this exhortation to encourage your students to create a comics project using available resources, which can be as simple as a 1-3 panel comic strip, a more challenging 6-8 panel comics page, or even a multi-page story. It is not necessary to be a proficient artist. Stick figures can tell a great visual story. These projects, whether teacher-directed or student-generated, can be tackled individually, in pairs, or in small teams. Templates and other helpful teacher resources for creating comics can be found here: **https://educators.lionforge.com/tool-box**

ONOMATOPOEIA

The Wizerd contains dozens of instances of onomatopoeia, which provide a wonderful opportunity to discuss this literary device and its usage during the course of the novel. Examples include: *biff*, *whump*, *thunk*, *donk*, *bang-a-rang*, *splosh*, *ding*, *twiiip,* and many more. As a follow-up, or in conjunction with the comics project activity mentioned above, ask students to illustrate a noisy situation of their choice with their own onomatopoeic inventions.



ABOUT THE CREATORS



RACHEL DUKES hails from San Diego, California. A graduate from the Center for Cartoon Studies, they work as a cartoonist and illustrator and is the creator of the cat-centric webcomic Frankie Comics. They are thankful for coffee, gingham, and readers like you.

@mixtapecomics | OniPress.com

MICHAEL SWEATER has worked for Cartoon Network and draws a lot of comics for grown-ups. He is currently being held hostage by his wife and cats in the beautiful mountains of northwest Arkansas. Send help.

@michaelsweater | OniPress.com

DISCUSSION GUIDE AUTHOR

A former K-12 instructor, **DR. ROBYN A. HILL** is a teacher educator, reading advocate, and lifelong comics fan.

The Wizerd Vol. 1: And the Potion of Dreams is ™ & © 2020 Michael Sweater and Rachel Dukes. All rights reserved.
Oni Press logo and icon artwork created by Keith A. Wood.