



# Teachers' Notes

## FACTOTUM

### Monster Blood Tattoo Book Three

D.M.CORNISH

Teachers' Notes written by Anita Jonsberg

#### OMNIBUS BOOKS

Category	Fantasy
Title	Monster Blood Tattoo Book Three: Factotum
Author/Illustrator	D.M.Cornish
Extent	720 pp
Age	10+
Australian RRP	\$29.99
Binding	Hardback
Printing	Mono
ISBN	978 1 86291 692 0
Format	190 x 120

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## INTRODUCTION

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After the dramatic trial at the end of *Lamplighter*, Rossamünd is faced with a new life as Europe's factotum. Still pondering his true nature after the sensational accusations of Surgeon Swill at the trial in Winstermill, Rossamünd agonises over a future involved in Europe's business of monster-hunting. Soon, Europe and Rossamünd, along with Craumpalin and Fransitart, arrive at Europe's mansion, Cloche Arde, and Rossamünd is introduced to Europe's domestic staff, his quarters and his new duties as her factotum.

Rossamünd at last discovers the true story of his origins. Rossamünd has Swill's suspicions confirmed - he is indeed a kind of monster, the mud-born replica of some child who fell into a throwdish bog and was reborn in monstrous form. Europe's reaction to his history is bemused acceptance. Although a professional monster-hunter, she is loyal to Rossamünd, and although her feelings are not displayed, it is clear she feels a bond to her unlikely friend. She is determined to have her own way against those who oppose her and to keep Rossamünd safe.

Rossamünd keeps himself busy looking after Europe's various doses and chemical requirements. One of his other duties involves negotiating monster-hunting contracts at a local registry in Brandenbrass. There he declares his mistress free for monster-hunting contracts, assignments that will take them all away from Brandenbrass, with Fransitart and Craumpalin co-opted as drivers.

Granted a Sunday to spend as he pleases, Rossamünd goes to the waterfront to meet up with Fransitart and Craumpalin, who are not at their lodgings. He wanders down to the sea and comes across what seems to be a duel between a blonde-haired fellow and others. The blonde-haired fellow, who has been struck, is helped by Rossamünd and introduces himself as Rookwood. Impressed by Rossamünd's position in Europe's household, Rookwood invites him out to a pantomime. Rossamünd agrees and has a night out that ends badly with a visit to a hob-rousing pit, deep in the cellars of a night club called the Broken Doll. Here Rossamünd cannot help but intervene in a fight pitting a tiny monster against a fighting dog. This causes uproar and as a result, Rossamünd is chased through Brandenbrass by a wit in the employ of Pater Maupin, the proprietor of the Broken Doll, and it is only a matter of time before he runs him to ground. Rossamünd scales the iron gates of the Mouldwood, the throwdish park at the heart of Brandenbrass. Just as the wit is about to unleash a fatal charge on Rossamünd, he is plucked away by a rabbit-eared monster, the Lapinduce. This creature kills the wit and takes Rossamünd to his underground palace.

Rossamünd finds the Lapinduce's words to him so disturbing that he decides not to tell of it when he returns home to Cloche Arde.

Pater Maupin confronts Europe at Cloche Arde, and points out Rossamünd as the culprit behind the last night's heavy losses in the betting ring. Europe orders Maupin away and later receives a summons to the court of the Archduke of Brandenbrass. She and her factotum go to his court and Europe is called to explain herself, but refuses to give ground, knowing that she is somewhat higher in rank, or will be once she is the Duchess of Naimes. Later that night Cloche Arde is attacked, but this attack is thwarted by Electrobus Slitt, an enforcer in the employ of Baron Finance.

On their monster-hunting tour at last, the party proceeds to the Patredike, where they are to take on a Sapperling. In the fight that follows, Europe is victorious and the party moves on to its next assignment, their progress dogged by the appearance of a reddleman, who seems to be following them. After an epic struggle, the attackers are turned back, and the party is left to tend its wounds. Europe suspects Maupin as the instigator of the ambush, and is plotting revenge.

Europe announces that she plans to hold a gala, to celebrate her 'triumphal' return from what has in truth been a disastrous journey. Europe quietly leaves the party to take on Maupin, who has employed accomplished fighters, but Rossamünd finds them and makes a brave showing. Europe is badly injured and it is discovered that she will need a long spell in Sinster to recover from her injuries. Europe and Rossamünd realise that this is the end of their association, since Rossamünd cannot enter a city of monster-killers. There are poignant farewells and Rossamünd realises he cannot live in the world of man any longer.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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D.M. Cornish was born in Adelaide and attended the University of South Australia, completing a Bachelor of Design with a specialty in Illustration. After graduating, he took his folio to Sydney, where he found commissions with several magazines and newspapers. Three years later he joined the drawing team of the game show *Burgo's Catchphrase*. After six years with the show, David became restless, circumnavigating the globe before returning Adelaide. There he found commissions with Omnibus Books. His first picture book, Tony Wilson's *Grannysaurus Rex*, was published in 2004, and was followed in 2005 by *Emily and the Dragon* by Lyn Lee. He has also illustrated two four-part fantasy series for younger readers, *The Sunken Kingdom* by Kim Wilkins and *The Sorcerer's*

Tower by Ian Irvine, also for Omnibus. His bold, 'graphic' style and wonderful draughtsmanship assured him of success as a professional book illustrator, but as D.M. Cornish he is also pursuing a career as a fantasy author, in the tradition of the great author-illustrators of the genre.

He has enjoyed all kinds of fantasy, reading *Lord of the Rings* at age twelve and progressing to Mervyn Peake's Gormenghast Trilogy. His reading of *Titus Alone* inspired him to create his own world in words and illustrations, and his early concept of a country and its city Brandenbrass was the first incarnation of this fantasy. Over thirteen years, this world was documented in twenty-seven closely written and illustrated notebooks. On the strength of this body of work, Omnibus Books publisher Dyan Blacklock encouraged him to transfer his fantasy creation to a story. The result is *Foundling* – the first in a series entitled Monster Blood Tattoo. *Foundling* and Book Two, *Lamplighter*, are rich in allusions to the Half-Continent, and the struggle between monsters and humankind; their respective 'Explicarium' or glossary explaining the lore and history of this world in its own language, a fascinating mixture of faux Latin, Classical Greek and German that nonetheless reads as a fresh new form of expression.

David's favourite authors are Jane Austen, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Truman Capote and John Steinbeck, and he admires illustrators such as Ian Miller, Angus McBride, Bill Sienkiewicz and Egon Schiele. He lives and works in Adelaide.

## WRITING STYLE

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Written in a style that has already been likened to that of Charles Dickens by early reviewers of the book, *Factotum* embodies the customs and manners of the Half-Continent in its formal manner and use of language. Its strongly drawn characters are larger than life. Richly descriptive, the language consists of many coined words that sound both strange and familiar. In *Factotum* Cornish has created a convincing world through the use of maps, detailed description of settings and costumes, alongside fabulous drawings of characters and monsters to help engage the reader. Diverse social demographics are explored and each demonstrates different values and cultural practices and uses language that reflects the characters' varying backgrounds.

**NB: Please check all websites for suitability on the date of proposed use.**  
**If certain sites are blocked in your school, see your IT administrator to have them unblocked, or to get the address of a proxy server.**

**It is in no way suggested that you use these notes in their entirety – pick and choose activities and discussions that suit the age and level of your group.**

## **BEFORE READING**

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1. Ensure students have read or at least know the main characters and story of *Foundling* and *Lamplighter*, the first two books in the Monster Blood Tattoo Series.
2. Look at Fantasy as a genre. Some useful sites for guidance are:  
  
[http://www.bukisa.com/articles/25652\\_10-tips-for-writing-fantasy](http://www.bukisa.com/articles/25652_10-tips-for-writing-fantasy) (simple, clear and can be used as a tool for examining DM Cornish's novel)  
  
<http://www.thecraftywriter.com/2008/08/01/writing-fantasy-fiction/> (lays out some conventions with clickable links to further detail)
3. Download the 'free fantasy name generator' at  
<http://fantasy.fictionfactor.com/> (This allows students to enter their names and generate a fantasy version – scroll down to see the link)
4. Read the 'blurb' to the class and outline the events of the first chapter. Students can write down their own suggested first lines – they are not allowed to tell anyone their line. These are then named and handed to the teacher, who reads them out in random order along with the original line (it's important to maintain a straight face when doing this, so as not to give away which lines are made up and which is real). Have students vote for each opening line. Reveal the winning line and then read out the original. Examine with students what they did to make their lines convincing. Compare the winner's line with the original and point out the similarities and differences – or if Cornish's line wins, explore why the students' were not as convincing.

## READING THE TEXT

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If studying the novel as a class text, it is advisable to read key sections all together, with students reading nominated passages for homework. This will ensure a certain 'pace' is adhered to and that students are able to converse about various events in the novel.

Keep a 'reading diary' while travelling through the text. After every two reading sessions, comment on what is happening, as well as three of the following:

characters

setting

tone

predictions

how much you are or aren't enjoying the story, with reasons.

You can use diagrams, drawings and graphs as part of your reading diary.

### 1 Across the Grume

*For discussion:*

1. How do the maps at the beginning of the book help readers suspend their disbelief and enter the world of the novel?
2. Explore how the first chapter plunges readers into an alternative reality – focus on the technical detail involved, how the characters interact with the landscape and language used by characters and narrator. Many words are new (neologisms) whilst others are adapted from other languages. How long does it take for the reader to become comfortable with this lexis? (Use of language in context is important.)

*Activity:*

1. Look at the drawing of the 'lagimope' in this chapter. It is part fish/part something else. Draw your own version of a lagimope. For fun, you can click the link below and see some morphed pictures of animals and fish: <http://www.lilesnet.com/wow/animals/>
2. Note what you discover about the main characters in this chapter and what characteristics help you to relate to them.
3. How many complications are set up or referred to in this chapter? Note each one.

## **2 The House of the Branden Rose**

### **3 On Being a Factotum**

*For discussion:*

1. How does Cornish effectively conjure an image of Cloche Arde's grandeur in this chapter and how does Rossamünd attempt to gain some control in his own quarters?
2. Rossamünd is distressed by the 'cabinet pictures' in his room. What are cabinet pictures and what would be a modern equivalent of such pieces?
3. How is Rossamünd's personal and professional disorientation communicated in this chapter and what is his reaction to finding out the circumstances of his birth?

*Activities:*

1. Look at the drawing of Europe's house, Cloche Arde. In a paragraph, write down your reaction to its appearance. Note the personification of Europe's home in some of Cornish's descriptions and note three adjectives from the text that best sum up the house for you.
2. Make character profiles of each of Europe's staff members, include: name, function or job, physical appearance and clothing and mannerisms.

## **4 To Brandentown**

### **5 Of Writs and Singulars**

### **6 A Day at the Seaside**

*For discussion:*

1. Look at the definition of 'elephantine(s)' at the beginning of Chapter 4. What does it reveal about the narrator's attitudes and values? How far do you agree with his opening statements and which character in this chapter embodies the narrator's notions?
2. What role do pamphlets play in shaping Rossamünd's understanding of Europe and the risk she is taking in saving him?
3. Pamphlets were the earliest form of mass media – what are the modern equivalents?
4. When Rossamünd falls under the spell of Rookwood at the beach in Chapter 6, the reader understands that he is in some danger, though Rossamünd himself does not. How does Cornish create this dramatic irony?

*Activities:*

1. In your opinion, why does girth (and the use of 'lard-barrows') confer status in Brandentown? Does girth confer status in our society?
2. Cartoons, like the one showing Europe with a monster, are often used for political purposes. Find three examples from newspapers or magazines and explain their messages.

## **7 A Night in the Town**

### **8 In the Pit**

*For discussion:*

1. How does Rossamünd's station with Europe affect Rookwood's friends' reactions to him? Why?

*Activities:*

1. The Hobby Horse theatre (Chapter 7) where Rossamünd is taken by Rookwood is reminiscent of the 'music halls' of the early nineteenth century. Find out what music halls were and how they began here:  
[http://www.musichallcds.com/music\\_hall\\_history.htm](http://www.musichallcds.com/music_hall_history.htm)  
The Broken Doll (chapters 7 & 8) is an example of the type of venue that still exists in the form of unlicensed casinos, dog fighting rings and the like. You can find out about this here:  
[http://kb.rspca.org.au/Is-dog-fighting-illegal-in-Australia\\_237.html](http://kb.rspca.org.au/Is-dog-fighting-illegal-in-Australia_237.html)  
[http://www.dogslife.com.au/dogs\\_life\\_articles?cid=9443&pid=146504](http://www.dogslife.com.au/dogs_life_articles?cid=9443&pid=146504)
2. Re-write the events in the Broken Doll (Chapter 8) from Rossamünd's perspective. Bear in mind his status as a rossamünderling, as well as his experiences with the animals he sees trapped for the fighting. **Then**, write the same scene from the perspective of someone who has bet on the fights.

## **9 The Courts of the Rabbit**

*For discussion:*

1. What message does the Lapinduce give to Rossamünd regarding whether he is an everyman or a monster?
2. What reasons does the Lapinduce give for not attacking everymen?
3. Does Rossamünd make the right choice at the end of this chapter? Why or why not?



## 10 A Bad Excuse is Better than None

*For discussion:*

1. Is a bad excuse really better than none? What is the effect of not giving an excuse?
2. Rookwood is brought to Cloche Arde by Maupin and immediately points out Rossamünd as the culprit of the previous night's debacle. Why is the reader not surprised by his behavior? How has Rookwood already been shown to be a character of low moral fibre?

*Activity:*

1. Look closely at the way in which Europe deals with Pater Maupin's remarks. Fill in the table below with Europe's retorts to his comments and accusations. Is there a pattern in her deflections?

Pater Maupin	Europe
"Perhaps you did not know the full and base character of such a fresh-appointed <i>employé</i> ,"(232)	
"If this were simply damage and depletion, I might accept such unkind expressions so ungraciously given and move on ... Yet it also involves the vanishment of a much-valued deputy who had, this night gone, set out to fetch yon brat ... and present him to proper justice." (232)	
"Waste makes for want ... And I – and my associates – <i>want</i> fair due. Let this one ... sit beneath a telltale's gaze. If he is condemned by his own words, I shall, as I said, not charge you as responsible. You can hire yourself another runt – there are plenty to be had." (233)	

## **11 A Stately Invitation**

## **12 The Arborlustra**

*For discussion:*

1. When is an invitation not really an invitation?
2. Why does Rossamünd blush when he sees Europe ready for her meeting with the Archduke?

*Activities:*

1. Predict what may happen to Europe and Rossamünd now that Grotius Swill has laid accusations against them.
2. The whole Of Cloche Arde is under assault from 'witting'. Write a short description of how witting might feel.

## **13 The Knaving Begins**

## **14 The Patredike**

## **15 Of Blood and Basins**

*For discussion:*

1. Look at the passage that describes Rossamünd's battle with the Swarty Hobnag. What does Rossamünd (and the reader) discover about his own skills?
2. How does Cornish build suspense in these chapters?
3. Explore why Rossamünd is so affected by the physical proof of his origins.

*Activities:*

1. As Europe and Rossamünd proceed on their knaving, Rossamünd spots a 'catharine wheel' designed as instruments of torture for thieves, murderers and sedorners. This is not entirely fiction, as many terrifying instruments of torture have been used throughout history. You can look at these sites to explore this:

<http://www.medieval-period.com/medievaltorturedevices.html> (written summary)

<http://www.medievality.com/torture.html> (interesting site, but quite graphic, so check for suitability before using with students)

2. Find out what type of metallic element you would expect to find at 'Spelter Innings'.
3. List all of the things in these chapters that surprise Europe about Rossamünd. Exchange ideas with the group.

## **16 The Hunt for the Secreted Evil**

*For discussion:*

1. Look at the pace of this chapter as Europe and Rossamünd battle the Sloe Sapperling. How does Cornish create this pace? What other techniques does he use to convey the tension in this scene?

## **17 Of Fêtes and Fictlers**

*For discussion:*

1. In what way can the early part of this chapter be said to be Rossamünd's 'coming of age'?

## **18 The Aid of Friends Unbidden**

## **19 Travelling Light**

## **20 Orchard Harriet**

*For discussion:*

1. How do the definitions at the beginning of each chapter help to keep the reader engaged? Look particularly at the definition of 'testudoe(s)' at the beginning of Chapter 18.
2. Look at the picture of the 'jackstraw' (403). With which other fictional character does it link? Why is it so threatening?
3. Europe's comment at the end of Chapter 18 is an example of bathos. Discuss its function here.
4. How has the balance of power between Europe and Rossamünd changed in 'Travelling Light'? What is Europe's reaction?

*Activities:*

1. In your own words, explain the 'splendid irony' Europe refers to at the beginning of 'Travelling Light'.

2. What lesson is Rossamünd supposed to learn by living in the world of everymen?
3. In what sense can Gaspard Plume be seen as a representative of a 'new breed' of everymen?
4. The Emperor changes the months in 'Orchard Harriet'. How did our own calendar come about? You can find out here:  
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/89368/calendar/59346/The-Western-calendar-and-calendar-reforms> (needs a subscription to Britannica online, which most schools have)

## **21 Living by Another's Leave**

## **22 Justice Delivered, Vengeance Delayed**

*For discussion:*

1. Grotius Swill is conducting lectures concerning Rossamünd, having made a cruorpunxis on his own arm with Rossamünd's blood. What are the implications of this for Rossamünd?
2. The reader discovers that Europe is an accomplished pianist early in this chapter – why is this a surprise? Do we sometimes see other people in just one dimension? How might this affect our judgment?
3. 'Living by Another's Leave' seems a period of calm for the travellers – how does this 'hiatus' affect the reader and what might it precede?
4. Doctor Crispus' account of the events in Winstermill reflects a fundamental change in society. How is Rossamünd himself symbolic of this change?
5. 'Justice Delivered, Vengeance Delayed' is part of the novel's 'denouement' and lots of narrative threads are resolved. What techniques besides Crispus' account convey such resolutions to the reader?

## **23 Of Ossatomy and Obfuscations**

## **24 Plans Within Plans**

*For Discussion:*

1. There is an apparent 'gathering of the clans' at Cloche Arde. What is Europe planning?
2. The role of the media in stirring up anti-monster sentiment is explored in these chapters. Discuss a modern equivalent of the way in which modern media can position audiences to view events and people in certain ways.

3. Fransitart has his arm amputated to avoid his cruorpunxis ever being used as evidence against Rossamünd. Do actions speak louder than words? If so, what is he saying by the removal of his arm?

## **25 The Grand Gala**

## **26 Uninvited Callers**

## **27 Contests Dark and Venomous**

*For discussion:*

1. Europe's gala takes the form of a masque ball, the modern equivalent of which is the cyber - space chat-room. What do they have in common? (This is a good opportunity to reinforce the notion that the Internet is a place where strangers can pretend to be whoever they wish and the dangers of this.)
2. How does this type of event, combined with the fact that the event is happening on several floors, help Europe with her plans?
3. What does the Imperial Secretary's obsequiousness (552) on his arrival suggest about Europe's power at this point?

## **28 A Life of Adventure, a Life of Violence**

*Activity:*

1. Look carefully at this chapter and explore how the author has created such poignancy concerning Europe's physical state. Write each technique used and add quotes to illustrate your points.

## **29 Last Words**

*For discussion:*

1. Compare Rossamünd's last letter to Verline with his earlier letter. What does it show about his personal journey?

## FINAL ASSIGNMENTS

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### Creative:

1. Look at the 'Singular Contracts' Europe is inspecting in Chapter 5. Write a series of possible missions for her and include details of where she must go and the nature of the threat. Like Cornish, draw the 'monster' she will encounter.
2. In Chapter 10, Rossamünd relates how he was effectively trapped in the rousing-pit at the Broken Doll. Write about a time when you felt you needed to leave somewhere, but were unable to.
3. Storyboard the fight scenes in Chapter 18. Include directions for sound and lighting.
4. Write an additional chapter, describing what happens to Rossamünd after he leaves the world of men **or** describe in detail what could happen in an additional Monster Blood book.
5. Look at Appendix 8. Write a similar pamphlet that includes some events from the closing three chapters and style it in the same way.
6. Using the drawings in the Appendix as a guide, design Europe's outfit as she takes on Maupin at the close of the book.
7. Choose a scene from the novel and create a comic-strip to communicate what happens.

### Analytical:

1. On page 437, Rossamünd wonders: *How many names can one creature have!* Answer his question, with reference to why some beings may have more than one name or title.
2. How important are Cornish's drawings to the success of the novel? Refer to at least five in your essay.
3. How successful is Cornish's fantasy world and what elements help to make it so?
4. Find six objects that link thematically or stylistically with the text and explain each one to the group or class.
5. Of Europe's foes, which is the most frightening and why?
6. How has Cornish succeeded in making Europe a sympathetic character?

## FURTHER READING

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*The Gormenghast Trilogy* by Mervyn Peake

- **ISBN-10:** 0 87951 425 6
- **ISBN-13:** 978-0 87951 425 9

*The Abhorsen Trilogy* by Garth Nix

- **ISBN-10:** 0 06073 419 1
- **ISBN-13:** 978-0 06073 419 0

*The Farseer Trilogy* by Robin Hobb

(Book One: Assassin's Apprentice)

- **ISBN-10:** 0 55357 339 X
- **ISBN-13:** 978-0 55357 339 8

*The Lord of the Rings Trilogy* by JRR Tolkien

- **ISBN-10:** 0 39519 395 8
- **ISBN-13:** 978-0 39519 395 2

*The Amulet of Samarkand* by Jonathan Stroud

- **ISBN-10:** 0 78685 255 0
- **ISBN-13:** 978-0 78685 255 0