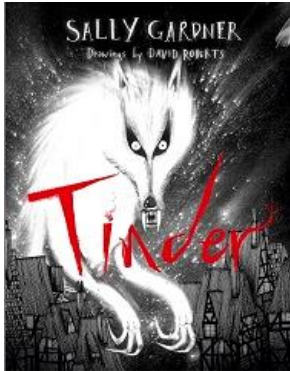


TALKING POINTS CILIP Carnegie Medal Shortlist 2015



TINDER

By Sally Gardner and illustrator David Roberts



Genre

Tinder is described as being a %airytale+. what qualities do you think it has that makes it fairytale-like?

What kind of reader do you think this book is for? Would you call it a children's book?

There are certain kinds of story where it's clear from the moment you meet them who is good and who is bad. Is this one of those stories?

The setting – the Thirty Years War

The book is set in 1642, during the Thirty Years War . why do you think Gardner has chosen this period to set her story?

The war is the backdrop, and we know it's important, but how much do we actually see of it? What do we know about its impact?

The tinderbox

What power, exactly, does the tinderbox in the story have? Is it a good thing or a bad one? (And did you know what a tinderbox actually is before reading this?)

Do you know the Hans Christian Andersen story of 'The Tinder-box' that inspired this book? If so, what are the similarities and differences? (Or if not, does this make you want to read it?)

Superstition and belief

There is a lot of foreshadowing in the story . clues hinting that things are going to end badly. Can you think of examples?

Otto throws dice to learn where to go, and trusts his belief in them. Only once does he disregard what they tell him. what happens?

Otto seeks to defy death, but the ending is inevitable. Is this a world where people believe in destiny?



This story is set in a real time and place, but filled with the kind of things many people don't believe in today . what is the role of superstitions and prophesy in this story? Should they be taken seriously?

The writing

The opening sentence is pretty arresting: "Once in a time of war, when I was a soldier in the Imperial Army, I saw Death walking." Does this set the tone for what's to come?

How would you describe the language Gardner uses to tell this story? (Just read the opening paragraph again and pick out some examples.)

The descriptive writing in this book has been described as "immersive", "atmospheric" and "vivid". It's good at describing feelings like hunger, or the coldness of snow, etc. Can you find really good examples?

The artwork

What were your expectations from the cover? (And have you looked at the hard covers under the dust-jacket, too?)

What do David Roberts's pictures add to your experience of reading the story?

What do you notice about the way Roberts has used colour, or not used it?

Otto

What do you think the pieces of text that are set against blocks of black shading . are they dreams, nightmares? How do you know they relate to Otto's own past? (And how much do we know actually about his past?)

Otto finally tells the truth (mostly) to the Duke . what has kept him from telling the truth before now?

What's the significance of Otto's name . Otto Hundebiss? And do any other characters have significant names?





Quotations

How do each of these little quotations relate to Otto's story?

- "A stranger has a good neck on which to hang the noose of suspicion."
- "My captain once said that you meet people in your life who you believe will be your companions on the road, only to discover that they fall by the wayside. Others who you meet without design climb mountains with you."
- "A wise man knows better than to call fortune his friend."

