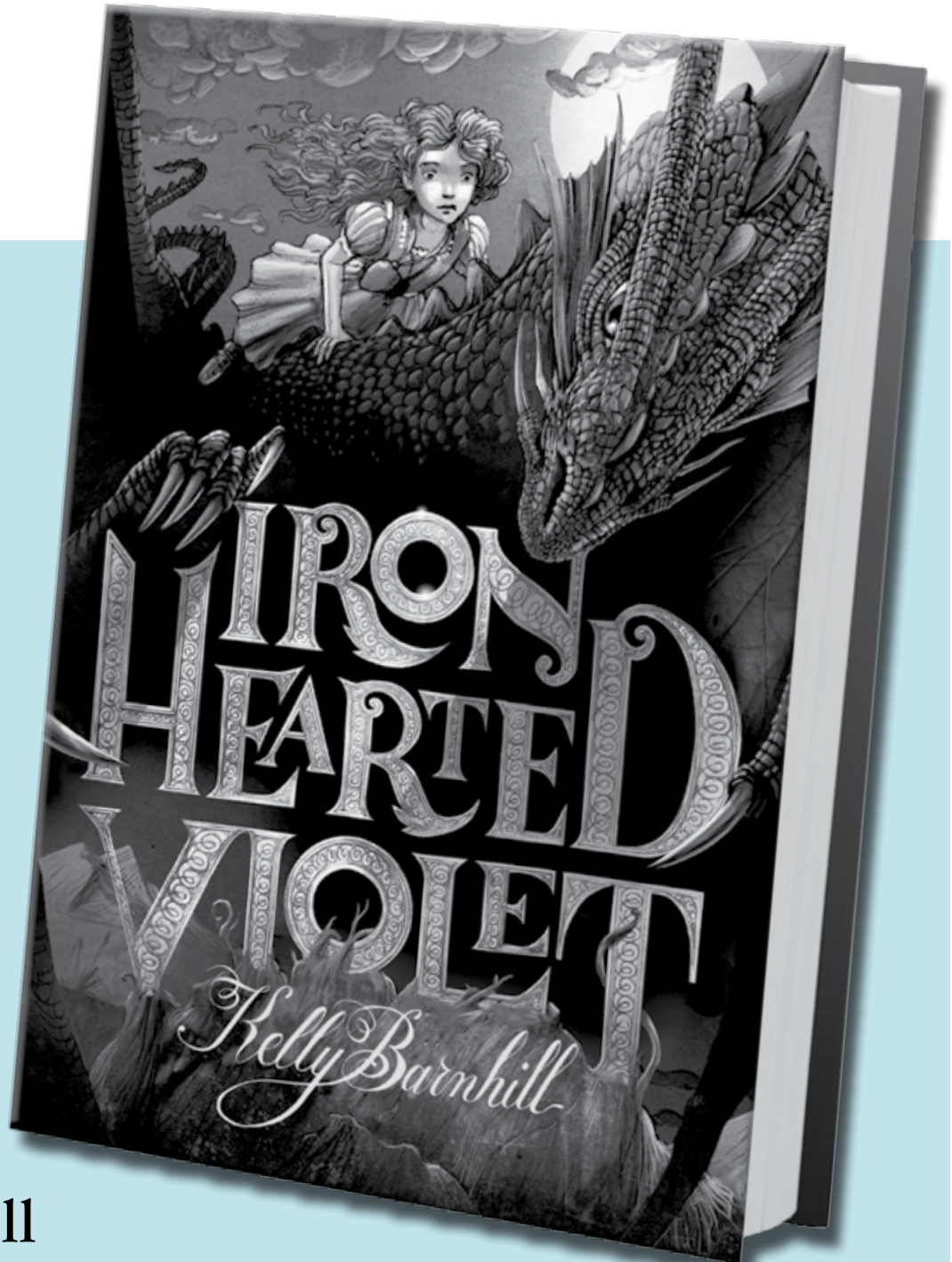


IRON HEARTED VIOLET

Curriculum connections

- ❖ Fairy Tales
- ❖ Friendship
- ❖ Storytelling

Ages 8 - 12



by
Kelly Barnhill

BUILDING BACKGROUND

Powerful Stories

The idea of stories and the power they have is an underlying theme in *Iron Hearted Violet*. Prepare students for this discussion by talking about how stories have affected their lives. Have students compose a written reflection, sharing a book that helped them grow as a person or helped change how they think about a certain topic. They should identify the book, tell how it changed their perspective or helped them grow, and give specific evidence to support their statement. Discuss as a class how stories help us or change us. As an extension, students might want to prepare a book talk about their favorite book and share this with another class.

Before and After

Throughout *Iron Hearted Violet*, there are many examples of people or things not being the way they are “supposed” to be. Some people think Violet does not look like a “real” princess. Some people think King Randall does not behave like a “real” king. What they actually mean, however, is Violet and King Randall do not conform to traditional stereotypes. Before reading, ask students to write a description of a princess and a description of a king. Collect these answers and keep them in a safe place. After reading, return students’ papers and ask them to evaluate their earlier answers. Would they respond in the same way now? Do King Randall and Violet fit their first definitions? Why or why not?

COMPREHENSION CONNECTION

Thematic Essay: The Power of Words and Stories

Building on the idea that stories and words have power, help students craft a thematic essay on this topic. Begin by having students think about how stories and words are powerful in *Iron Hearted Violet*. Students should use evidence from the story to illustrate this point. Then, have them choose an article, current news event, or historical event in which words or stories are powerful or have an impact. This could be an advertisement, war propaganda, political campaign ad, yellow journalism, etc. They should use specific evidence from their article or historical event. After providing details from both the story and a real life example, have students discuss their thoughts about the power of words and stories.

VISUALIZATION

Story Scenes: Familiar and Unfamiliar

The setting of *Iron Hearted Violet* is both familiar and very different from other fairytales. Have students choose one scene from the story that seems similar to other fairytales and illustrate it, using as much detail as possible. Then, have them choose a scene from the story that seems unlike other stories and draw it as well. Have students share their drawings and explain why they chose each scene for each category. Did students choose the same scenes? Were there any images that seemed to appear over and over? Discuss how the author used the familiar as a tool to create a whole new experience.

SUMMARIZING

Character Portraits

The characters in *Iron Hearted Violet* help drive the story. Have students create a summary poster for the character of their choice. Each portrait project should include an illustration of the character based on evidence from the book. It should also include a quotation from the book that helps summarize the character's personality. If students cannot find an appropriate quotation in the book to use as the motto, then challenge them to find a famous person in history with a similar outlook as their character and use a quotation from that historical figure. Students should submit a portrait with the quotation clearly written somewhere on it. On a separate paper, they should submit an explanation using evidence from the book that supports why they chose to draw their portrait in that way and why they chose that particular quotation as the "motto" for their character. If they choose the option of using a quotation from a famous person, then they should clearly explain why they picked that quotation, and how it helps summarize the character's viewpoint or captures his or her personality.

VOCABULARY

Vocabulary Portfolio

The rich vocabulary in this book gives students many opportunities to deepen their understanding and appreciation of the English language. Each chapter contains adjectives, verbs, and adverbs that help the story come to life, and they offer students the chance to expand their own vocabulary. With

so many wonderful words, students will want many different ways to learn the meanings, understand usage, and make them their own. A vocabulary portfolio is one way to do this. Students can choose from a menu of options, using either the suggested word lists or developing their own. For each set of chapters, have students choose one activity from the menu to include in their vocabulary portfolio. Suggested word lists and a sample portfolio menu are included in this guide.

WRITING

Playing at Stories: Improve Writing

In *Iron Hearted Violet*, Demetrius and Violet "play at stories." They take turns telling stories as Cassian suggests topics or settings. Have students write down settings, problems, and main events on slips of paper. Then choose one from each category and challenge students to write a short story using the selected setting, problem, and events. Students may want to work on their stories independently or collaborate with a partner, just like Violet and Demetrius often worked together to tell a story. Share the stories as a class. How were they alike and different?

Alternate Reality: Key Moments

There are key moments in everyone's life that may seem small or insignificant at first, but later it becomes clear that they are life-changing. Have students choose one character from *Iron Hearted Violet*, identify a key moment, and describe how it changed that character. Then, have students who chose the same character share which events they considered the turning points. If they do not agree

already, students should decide on one key moment. Then, working together, have students write an alternate reality ending. How might that character's life path be different? Would this small change alter the story of *Iron Hearted Violet*?

ART AND MUSIC

Illuminated Research

Illuminated manuscripts are referred to several times in *Iron Hearted Violet*. To help build students' background knowledge have students learn about illuminated manuscripts with a short "Question Word Research Project." Begin by writing the words "Who, What, Where, Why, When, and How." Then, divide students into small groups. Have each group create a short presentation that includes questions developed from the question words, such as "What is an illuminated manuscript?" The presentation should clearly answer the questions using a variety of resources. Each group should also present an original piece of art designed to look like an illuminated manuscript page. Museum websites are an excellent resource because many include photographs as well as historical information.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Multicultural Dragons

Dragons are mythological figures found in the folklore of many cultures. Making appearances in folktales and artwork from countries around the globe, dragons have captured the imagination of people for centuries. Have students divide into small groups and choose a culture or country to research. Their goal is to find a story that includes a dragon.

Then, they should explain how dragons are viewed in that society (evil, beneficent, bad omens, good omens), discuss how they were described in the story or in that culture, and locate the origins of the story on a world map or globe. Students may want to re-tell their story using simple props, costumes, and scenery. After all groups have presented, compare and contrast how different cultures viewed or view dragons. Looking at the world map, does geographic location seem to play a role in how dragons are viewed? Do all cultures describe dragons in the same way? Which culture's image of dragons is most similar to the ones in *Iron Hearted Violet*?

CHARACTER EDUCATION

Rumor Experiment

Talk about how irresponsible storytelling and the evil whispering of the Nybbas created negative feelings among the people of the Andulan Realms. The Nybbas gained power because people listened to the negative whispers and then passed these thoughts to others. Help students understand that one very important way to stop gossip and rumors is to refuse to spread them. Demonstrate this with a short classroom activity. Divide students into small groups. Tell one group a piece of "information" in a quiet voice. It can be anything, such as "I heard the teacher is an alien." Then, have each person from that group share what they heard with all other groups. Reconvene as a class. What was shared? How many students were aware of the information? How quickly did the rumor spread? Then, conduct the experiment again, but THIS time, have the students in the first group refuse to tell anyone else. Reconvene the class and determine how many

people heard the rumor. Compare the numbers and discuss. Why did fewer people know the second time? What does this experiment show about the power individuals have to stop rumors and gossip from spreading? End the lesson by having students write a personal pledge or goal to stop gossip and rumors. These could be shared or kept private.

QUESTIONS GUIDE

Chapters 1-5

- *Iron Hearted Violet* begins with the birth of Princess Violet. How did the Queen feel about her birth? How did the citizens of the Andulan Realms feel? How did the rulers of the neighboring nations feel? Be sure to use evidence from the book to support your answer.
- Thinking about fairytale princesses you have read about, what do they usually look like? What was Violet like as a child? What did she look like? Compare and contrast Violet with a fairytale princess you have read about before. How is Violet the same? How is she different?
- After Violet tells her story to the crowd, there is an embarrassed silence. Cassian explains, “Stories have their own *rules*, their own...*expectations*.” What does he mean by this? What are some other “rules” that fairytales usually follow? How did Violet’s stories change after this experience?
- How did Violet meet Demetrius? What realization does Violet come to that makes her sick inside? Why is this an important realization for Violet?

- Why was the friendship between Demetrius and Violet unusual? How did Violet’s parents feel about it? What did the court advisers think about the friendship?
- When Violet and Demetrius “play at stories,” they ask Cassian a question that makes him very uncomfortable. Why do you think he was uncomfortable? What do you think he is hiding?

VOCABULARY:

pomp, recuperated, prosperous, annexation, seethed, gaggle, pompous, revered, fugitive, posthaste, emulate, verve, lisp, incredulously, conspiratorially, vigorous, detested, urgently, shimmied, bellowed, sprawled, piteously, ponderous, apprentice, unorthodox, hamper, precedents, implications, propriety, marvel, unbidden, runty, fervently, splayed, impertinent, chided, resigned, infinite, burnished, expelling, infuriatingly

Chapters 6-10

- What did Violet and Demetrius discover as they were exploring the castle? How did they feel about their discovery? In what ways might this influence the future? Make a prediction based on what you have read up to this point.
- Why was the King determined to lead an expedition? Why did he want Demetrius to come with him? What specific qualities or talents does Demetrius show that make him a logical choice to be part of the expedition? How does Violet feel about this?

- According to Violet, what do “real” kings do? How does her father react to this? What does he believe a “real” king does? Do you agree with Violet or her father? Support your answer with evidence from the story and give reasons for your own opinions.
- Violet’s father says, “There are risks to irresponsible storytelling.” What does he mean by this?

VOCABULARY:

keen, maneuvering, corridors, crannies, revelry, schemes, chocolatier, waning, static, ludicrous, comprised, intricate, impeccably, dingier, predecessors, pristine, bulbous, reluctantly, fierce, avert, affixed, transmogrified, futile, livid, rasped, obstinately, campaign, vociferously, undeterred, relish, notion, trumped, facilitate, afflictions, sally forth, incensed, supposition, verified, petulantly, oilcloth, suppress, glower, rucksack, chagrin, derring-do, undeterred, negotiations, squirreled, filament, brooding, parapet, anxiety, retreating, entourage, scathingly, palpable, pallor, gnarled, supple, writhed, arrested, excursion

Chapters 11-16

- When the Queen becomes ill, Violet tells her a story. What story does she tell her? What do you think this story might mean?
- Compared to the other gods, what was the Nybbas like? How did he plan to use the dragons? What important information about dragons did the Nybbas use to his advantage? How did the other gods defeat him?

- How did Demetrius communicate with the dragon? What was the warning the dragon tried to give Demetrius?
- There are many examples of how a seemingly small action can change the course of the story. How did disrupting the ancient crow during the expedition lead to preparation for war? Why might this be important?
- What is significant about the ringing of the bell? Why does Violet run from her father’s study when she hears it?

VOCABULARY:

phase, sorrowful, enlighten, replenish, dwindling, tedious, indulged, grimace, uncanny, decipher, dolt, wretched, mucking, inevitable, jitter, whimsy, surging, malaise, despair, venerated, resilient, luminous, cunning, debilitating, enslavement, crooned, subjugation, bulged, conferring, mimic, treachery, perils, contented, bide, vigor, wringing, beloved, shearing, dubious, profound, subdued, quarry, grouched, hobbled, jovially, intervene, extinct, treading, tethered, compassion, vain, precipitously, vantage, lamed, haunch, sulfur, accursed, rump, exuberance, ruddy, craggy, Indecipherable, devolved, harried, wincing, ledgers, renderings, satchel

Chapters 17-20

- What information did King Randall use to capture the dragon? Why did this work? How did King Randall feel about capturing the dragon?
- What did Cassian do during the Queen's illness? What did he tell himself he was doing?
- Who captures King Randall? How does King Randall conduct himself? Why does he allow himself to be bound?
- How does Violet react to news of her father's capture? What does she do?

VOCABULARY:

brusque, grotto, rheumy, diminishment, grieved, sinewy, shanks, fibrous, brandished, contempt, abject, radiating, poultice, vaguely, simultaneity, implacable, eclipsed, stiletto, emotive, stanchd, emissaries, flank, unabashed, pallet, mages, leviathan, audacity

Chapters 21-25

- As Violet reads her father's notes, she learns the Forbidden Tale is true. What does this mean for Violet? She says, "I have made it wrong. I am all wrong." What does she mean by this? What do you think Violet will do?
- How does Demetrius help save the King? What does King Randall do to assist his own escape? How does King Randall treat his former captors? Do you think this is what a "real" king would do? Why or why not?
- Who is speaking to Violet from the painting? What does it seem to need Violet to do?

- How does Violet react to her mother's death and her father's return? Why do you think this is her reaction? What does she think might bring her mother back?
- Who overhears Violet's testing of the word "Nybbas"? Using details from the book, describe these characters.

VOCABULARY:

pursuit, balderdash, en masse, unruly, valiant, crooned, inscrutable, thickets, aghast, sullen, malevolence, brazen, retribution, tarry, festered, lieutenant, vestibule, wrought, anguished, encapsulating, lingered, suspense

Chapters 26-31

- Describe Violet's feelings toward the dragon. What were King Randall's feelings for the dragon? What do you think the dragon represented or symbolized for Violet? What did it represent to King Randall?
- What does Nod discover when he follows Violet? What does he bring to Auntie? Is this helpful information? Why or why not?
- Why did Demetrius get into a fistfight? How is this a sign that something is wrong? What does Demetrius notice about the way his own father is acting? What is influencing people's actions?
- When Demetrius finds Violet, she is acting in a very strange manner. What is she like? Auntie says, "The girl is beyond us, I'm afraid." What does she mean? What do you think they are getting ready for?

VOCABULARY:

cognizant, contempt, pertinent, proliferation, abundant, ineptitude, conscripted, loath, berth, spangle, wan, sauntering, sentries, incredulously, grotesque, decrepit, blanched, profoundly, cadence, furtive, catastrophe, reminiscent, displaced, foliage, sidled, telescopic, slumped, menace, agitation, alchemist, paddock, apprentice, reluctant, notorious, unkempt, sniggered, tinderbox, amber, onyx, winced, stealthily

Chapters 32-38

- How did Cassian react to the worries Demetrius shared with him?
- How did the people of the castle and village seem to change as the whispered words grew and were repeated? During this time, what was King Randall doing? What was the Mountain King doing?
- What story did Cassian try to tell? What was significant about this story? What interrupted the telling of this tale? What two pieces of news were delivered?

VOCABULARY:

glean, ruminating, recoiled, insinuations, grievance, exclusion, resentment, forges, alliance, feeble, subtle, adamant, slovenly, disdain, folly, revolted, rioted, regiments, rivulets, dispatched, delegation, ornate, imperative, defile, oppressive, yoke, barricades, catapults, truisms, ebony, grimace, salvaging, reclamation, chafed, infernal

Chapters 39-42

- When Demetrius returns from his visit to the dragon, the world he knew before has changed. What has changed?
- How does Demetrius's father react to Marda's insistence that Demetrius train with the front guards? How does the way Captain Marda sees Demetrius differ from the way his father sees him?
- After being gone for thirteen days, Violet changes drastically. What is different about her? How does she react to these changes at first? What happens that makes her reconsider? How does King Randall react to Violet's transformation?

VOCABULARY:

chaos, ad hoc, imminent, susceptible, fluctuations, flailing, quiver, imperiously, skirmish, fruitless, impotent, din, swath, adversary, salving, rudimentary, prodigiously, reproachfully, amalgamation, nauseated, calluses, abominably, delicacy, parasite, obfuscated, imposters, prevail, lithe, distorted, leer, askew, faltered

Chapters 43-48

- King Randall seems unable to cope with reality. Who does he appoint in his place? How do his advisers feel about this?
- How do Violet's actions while in the dungeon mark her as a true princess? What are some specific examples that show she is a "real" princess?

- What does Violet consider a weakness of the Nybbas? How does she use this to find out what it wants? What does it want?
- Why does King Randall leave the castle? What does Cassian do to stop this from happening?
- Auntie tries to convince Demetrius to jump into the core of the castle, but Demetrius balks at this idea. What does Auntie say that convinces Demetrius to jump? What does she mean by this?
- Violet confronts Cassian in his quarters and commands him to order all mirrors destroyed. How does Cassian react to this idea? Why does Violet insist the mirrors need to be destroyed? How does Violet convince him?

VOCABULARY:

feat, stature, gallivanting, ornery, dolefully, composure, paltry, detached, deferred, sages, incapacitated, adjacent, abdication, painstakingly, genteel, opulent, grace, nourishment, pandemonium, insinuate, simpered, repressed, unfurled, trifle, dissuade, formidable, concurrence, glut, prescient, reptilian, unaddled, derisively, bloated, indolence, sniveling, thrive, tenuous

Chapters 49-54

- When Demetrius lands, what does he learn about his expected role? Although Auntie, Nod, and Moth think they have failed, they soon learn Violet still has a role to play. What does the booming voice tell them about Violet? What do you think this means?

- The Mountain King becomes obsessed with his mirror. What are some details from the story that show this? What happens when the Mountain King utters the words given to him by the Nybbas?
- Demetrius is told, “Intelligence does not mean infallibility, nor does it mean immobility. Intelligence means the ability to learn.” Do you agree with this statement? Explain your thinking using examples from your own life, other books, or the world around you.
- How do Violet and Demetrius use stories to help them reconnect with one another? How are these stories helpful instead of harmful?

VOCABULARY:

nimble, pockmarked, familial, intrigued, disgruntled, bespectacled, saboteur, incantation, ardently, suffice, transfixed, lolled, unnerved, recipient, slaughtered, deferential, infallibility, soothsaying, endeavored, brusque, demeanor, unfettered, precipitate, charlatan, forthright, ruse, thrumming

Chapters 55-62

- Cassian says Violet and Demetrius showed bravery. Moth says Cassian is a fool and it would insult fleas to say he had the bravery of a flea. What does it mean to be brave? How does Violet show she is brave? How does Demetrius show this? What has Cassian done that might be considered cowardly?
- What does Violet do to save the dragon? What does the dragon do to help save Violet? Why would the dragon do this?

- What does Captain Marda show the members of the war council that convinces them Demetrius is telling the truth? How do the council members react?

VOCABULARY:

windlass, welfare, emboldens, apex, diminished, loftily, triumphant, cowed, writhing, uncannily, vitriol, guffawed, skeptical, indignant, implacable, demeanor, duped, miscreants, stymie, rogue, heresy, contempt, cinched, imbecilic, insubordination, inevitable, pilgrimage, incinerate, anguished, molten, sentient, sinew, insurmountable, preposterous, tactile, adhered, concave, servitude, incessant, litany

Chapters 63-69

- What does Auntie advise Captain Marda to do that the Old Gods had warned against? How does Demetrius react to this news? What is Captain Marda's response?
- Violet asks the dragon to take her father and leave. What does the dragon do? What reason does the dragon give for this sacrifice?

VOCABULARY:

swaggering, endeavored, provisions, cudgel, pulverized, guttural, gamy, implements, hordes, brethren, imposter, unveiled, infallible, fissures, dissuading, eddies, reverberating, infernal, relinquish

Chapters 70-73

- After Violet fights the Nybbas, she says, "I am lost." A voice says, "No, child. You are quite found." What did that mean for Violet? How does the runty god answer Violet when she suggests she has failed?
- At the end of the story, Cassian, the storyteller, shares how life changed for Violet. How did things change for Violet and Demetrius? How did the storyteller change because of the events in this story?
- Why do you think this book is called *Iron Hearted Violet*? Use evidence from the book to support your answer.

VOCABULARY:

scathing, insufferable, torso, ramparts, blundered, annex, deference, convalesced, stalwart



Name _____

Date _____

VOCABULARY PORTFOLIO

Words have power. Authors choose words carefully to help readers see, feel, and understand in a particular way. Develop your own word power, and increase your comprehension of the story by exploring and showing your understanding of the vocabulary words in *Iron Hearted Violet*. Choose activities from the following menu for the vocabulary word lists and then submit all of the work in a well-organized portfolio. You are responsible for knowing and understanding all of the words on each list. Indicate on the menu which chapter lists you used for each activity.

MENU

<p>Chapters _____</p> <p>Guess, Check, Use</p> <p>For each word: Write the word. Write the sentence found in the book. Write what you think it means. Look up the meaning in a dictionary. Write your OWN sentence.</p>	<p>Chapters _____</p> <p>Create a Picture</p> <p>Using at least half of the words on your list, create a picture or series of pictures to illustrate the words. Label your drawing with the vocabulary words you chose. Be ready to explain your picture.</p>	<p>Chapters _____</p> <p>Synonyms and Antonyms</p> <p>For each word: Write the word and list at least two synonyms and two antonyms.</p>
<p>Chapters _____</p> <p>Classification</p> <p>For each word: Write the word. Write the definition. Then, tell whether the word is a noun, verb, adjective, or adverb. Remember, a noun is a person, place, or thing. A verb shows action. An adjective describes a noun and an adverb describes a verb or it can modify an adjective or another adverb.</p>	<p>Chapters _____</p> <p>Word Whiz</p> <p>Choose at least 5 words from the list that are not already part of your vocabulary. Write down the words and write their definitions. Then, use the words at least 5 times in daily conversation. Write a written reflection about the experience. How hard was it to do this? How did people react?</p>	<p>Chapters _____</p> <p>Summary Words</p> <p>Choose 3 words from these chapters that were most important. Then, explain why they were most important or help summarize the main idea or main events of the chapter.</p>
<p>Chapters _____</p> <p>Vocabulary Poet</p> <p>Choose at least 5 words from your list and write a poem or story using the words. If the words have multiple meanings, be sure to use them in the same way they were used in <i>Iron Hearted Violet</i>.</p>	<p>Chapters _____</p> <p>Quiz Maker</p> <p>Create a quiz with answer key for the words on the list. Your quiz may be multiple choice, fill in the blank, or matching. Be sure to include the quiz AND the answer key.</p>	<p>Chapters _____</p> <p>Survey Says</p> <p>For each word: Write the word and ask at least three other people (not in your class) what they think they mean. Then, indicate whether or not you agree with the meanings provided by others. Finally, look up the definitions and write them.</p>

about the book



IRON HEARTED VIOLET

by Kelly Barnhill

978-0-316-05673-1

Princess Violet is plain, reckless, and quite possibly too clever for her own good. One day she and her best friend, Demetrius, stumble upon a hidden room and find a peculiar book. A *forbidden* book. It tells a story of an evil being—called the Nybbas—imprisoned in their world. The story cannot be true—*not really*. But then the whispers start. Violet and Demetrius, along with an ancient, scarred dragon, may hold the key to the Nybbas’s triumph...or its demise. It all depends on how they tell the story. After all, stories make their own rules.

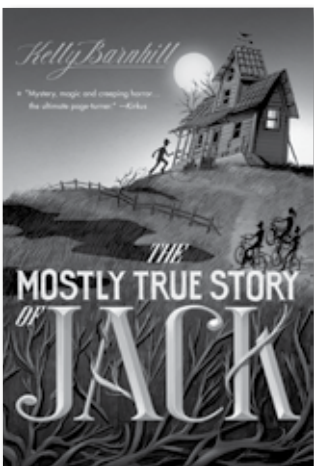
Iron Hearted Violet is a story of a princess unlike any other. It is a story of the last dragon in existence, deathly afraid of its own reflection. Above all, it is a story about the power of stories, our belief in them, and how one enchanted tale changed the course of an entire kingdom.

about the author



Kelly Barnhill is a poet and writer. *The Mostly True Story of Jack*, her debut novel, received four starred reviews. Kelly lives in Minnesota with her husband and three children.

also by Kelly Barnhill



THE MOSTLY TRUE STORY OF JACK

978-0-316-05672-3

★ “This delightful story will captivate readers with its blend of magic, mystery, and adventure.”

—VOYA

★ “Barnhill explores the struggle between good and evil and the power of love and sacrifice.”

—Publishers Weekly

★ “Wonderful in the best possible way.” —Booklist

★ “The ultimate page-turner.” —Kirkus Reviews



LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY
BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS