

# *Forged By Fire*

## Study Guide

The following questions could be used for small group discussions, whole class discussions, or short answer written questions.	Common Core Standard(s)
1. The first chapter of <i>Forged by Fire</i> was originally written and published as a short story. What textual elements enable this chapter to stand alone as a complete story? What textual elements in the story become thematically developed themes in the novel?	RL.6-12.1 RL.6-12.5 RL.6-12.7
2. What is the effect of seeing the events of chapter one develop through the point of view of a child? How does this method of telling the story affect the reader's response?	RL.6-12.1 RL.6-12.6
3. At the end of chapter one, what assumptions or predictions might be made about Gerald? His future? His mother? Support your answer with details from the text.	RL.6-12.1 RL.6-12.3
4. Would those predictions be the same if chapter one is read only as a short story that ends with Gerald, curled up behind the sofa, and seeing "colors with his eyes closed?"	RL.6-12.2 RL.6-12.5 RL.6-12.7
5. Discuss the use of color and music as images in the story. Give specific examples from the text that help explain how the images are used.	RL.6-12.1 RL.6-12.3 RL.6-12.4
6. How is music laced into the lives of Gerald and Angel, and how does music allow Angel moments of release from her pain?	RL.6-12.1 RL.6-12.2
7. Many young people live in homes where abuse is a secret, silent pain. Discuss how realistic the lives of Gerald and Angel are portrayed and how they can become a voice for young readers who are afraid to speak out. Support your answer with details from the text.	RL.6-12.1 RL.6-12.3 W.6-12.1
8. Discuss the socio-economic level at which the family lives. Discuss abuse as a family problem, not merely as a problem of a certain level of society.	RL.6-12.1 RL.6-12.3 W.6-12.1
9. How might the story have included a broader base of society to demonstrate that the problem of abuse is found in all social and economic levels?	RL.6-12.1 W.6-12.1
10. How are Gerald and Angel like many young people today? How are they different? What strengths are found in them that help them to survive the situation in which they live? What explicit and implicit details led you to that answer?	RL.6-12.1 RL.6-12.3 RL.6-12.4 W.6-12.1
11. Describe the relationship between the friends in the book. Support your answer with specifics from the text. Discuss whether you think friendship is enough when situations become monumental and overwhelming to young people.	RL.6-12.1 RL.6-12.3 W.6-12.1
12. Gerald's mother Monique had numerous problems. She loved him, but seemed to be consumed with the problems in her own life. Why was Monique not willing or able to see Jordan's abuse of Angel? How realistic do you think Monique's reaction is?	RL.6-12.1 RL.6-12.3

13. Monique is abused as well--physically and emotionally. What do you think is the relationship between domestic violence and child abuse? Why do you think this relationship exists?	RL.6-12.1 W.6-12.1
14. How can families learn to cope effectively with tragedy, pain, and difficulties? When is it necessary to seek assistance from someone from outside the family?	W.6-12.1
15. Why did Angel let Jordan's abuse continue? Why didn't she tell? What effect did Jordan's abuse have on Angel's life? What long-range effects might develop? Support your answer with specific details.	RL.6-12.1 RL.6-12.3
16. What are the problems created by discussing the problem of physical and sexual abuse in a novel for young adults? What positive influences can result from a discussion of these problems?	W.6-12.1
17. Discuss the character of Jordan Sparks using specific details from the text. Does he have any redeeming qualities or is he purely a negative character? What might have made Jordan the person he is?	RL.6-12.1 RL.6-12.3
18. Discuss the character of Aunt Queen using specific details from the text. What are her limitations? What are her strengths? How does the memory of the strength of Aunt Queen affect and influence the rest of Gerald's life?	RL.6-12.2 RL.6-12.3
19. Discuss the character of Angel using specific details from the text. What are her strengths? What does Angel's love of ballet reflect about her life, her pain, and her personality?	RL.6-12.1 RL.6-12.3
20. How does the death of Robert Washington affect Gerald and Angel? What advantages did Robbie have that Gerald wished for? Support your answer.	RL.6-12.1 RL.6-12.3
21. Describe the gradual buildup over the course of the plot to the final confrontation between Jordan and Gerald. What makes this confrontation inevitable?	RL.6-12.1 RL.6-12.3
22. Explain how is fire an important image in the novel using specific examples from the text, starting with the first chapter and ending with the concluding action between Jordan and Gerald. How is fire an image of pain as well as release for Gerald and Angel?	RL.6-12.1 RL.6-12.2 RL.6-12.4
23. Discuss the death of Jordan and whether it was necessary for him to die in order to bring the plot to a logical conclusion.	RL.6-12.2 RL.6-12.3
24. Why is dancing an easy way to explain complicated feelings? How can self-expression be used as a tool for helping or healing?	W.6-12.1
25. Explain the title of the novel. Define the word "forged." Why does the title have one than one possible interpretation?	RL.6-12.1 RL.6-12.3 RL.6-12.4
The following questions are designed to be individual writing projects or small group writing projects depending upon the needs of your classroom.	Common Core Standard(s)
<b>Narrative</b> Write a narrative paper about something interesting or exciting or dangerous that happened in your life, or you can invent an adventure. Your reader should be able to picture the scene.	RL.6-12.5 W.6-12.3 W.6-12.4

<p><b>Newspaper Article</b></p> <p>You are a reporter at one of the following scenes. Write the story for your newspaper.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the fire at Gerald's apartment at the beginning of the book</li> <li>○ the fire at Gerald's apartment at the end of the book</li> </ul>	<p>RL.6-12.1 RL.6-12.2 W.6-12.3 W.6-12.4</p>
<p><b>Letters</b></p> <p>Write a letter to one of the characters in the book explaining your feelings about the events in the story. What advice would you give Angel, or Gerald, or Monique, or Jordan?</p>	<p>RL.6-12.1 RL.6-12.3 W.6-12.3 W.6-12.4</p>
<p><b>Point of View Paper</b></p> <p>" Gerald liked to pretend he was driving a big, fine silver car down the expressway. Sometimes the cart would be a tank, as he passed cautiously through rows of armed cling peaches and silent sentinels that looked like boxes of frosted flakes. And at the checkout lane, the armies rolled smoothly down the long black road that disappeared under the counter. He started to ask Mama where it went, but it was more fun to imagine that it went to a secret hideout where only sweet potatoes and boxes of oatmeal were allowed."</p> <p>Read the quote above and explain how the point of view of the character who makes the observation influences the description. How would this be described differently if the character was not three years old? Explain how point of view makes a difference in the description of a scene. Use other examples from the book to support your statements.</p>	<p>RL.6-12.6 W.6-12.1 W.6-12.4 W.6-12.9</p>
<p><b>Descriptive Paper</b></p> <p>"After numerous flicks, he got the fire to stay on. He grinned with delight. The dancer was there, smiling at him and bowing for him, changing from splendid orange to icy green to iridescent purple. The lighter flame flickered magically, making golden the purple shadows on the wall. With sudden inspiration, Gerald shouted, 'Hey Joe, we got a torch!' as he and GI Joe marched around the kitchen table. Gerald crawled under the table then, flicking the lighter over and over again to light the way for GI Joe. They fought shadows and monsters; they blew up cities and kingdoms."</p> <p>Using the passage above as a guide, write a descriptive paper that uses sensory imagery. Use vivid verbs and powerful adjectives and adverbs as you write. Use as many of the senses as you can--sight, sound, smell, touch, taste--as well as deep, rich colors.</p>	<p>RL.6-12.5 W.6-12.3 W.6-12.4</p>
<p><b>Research Topics</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Investigate child abuse and/or domestic violence. Call the phone numbers at the back of the book and ask where would be the best place to go to get written information. (Do not tie up their lines--they are for people in crisis.) Find out how best you can help in your community. Find at least 3-4 current, relevant, authoritative, accurate, and credible sources that talk about the issue. Be sure to cite your sources used.</li> <li>2. Investigate the recent laws concerning those who are convicted of child abuse or domestic violence. What is the usual punishment? Is Jordan's</li> </ol>	<p>W.6-12.1 W.6-12.2 W.6-12.4 W.6-12.7 W.6-12.8 W.6-12.9 RI.6-12.1 RI.6-12.2</p>

<p>punishment realistic or not true in many states? What do you think should be the punishment for adults convicted of child abuse? Find at least 3-4 current, relevant, authoritative, accurate, and credible sources that talk about the issue. Be sure to cite your sources used.</p>	<p>RI.6-12.4 RI.6-12.8</p>
<p><b>Persuasive Paper</b></p> <p>"Gerald sat next to the phone, thinking about how things had gradually changed since last year. Andy was still silly, making yo-yo grades, Rob was still the best on the team, Tyrone spent most of his time with Rhonda, and BJ was still short. But Andy drove to school every day this year. Gerald thought it was odd that of the four of them, Andy had the worst grades, but he was the only one who had been given a car by his folks. Andy's parents rarely came to their games, but Andy always had plenty of money to spend--on food, the latest CD's and beer. Most of the boys --all except BJ--had started drinking. At parties, after games, after school--beer was easy to get and started feeling better than soda pop on a Saturday night. Even Gerald, who had seen up close what a drunken man can do, would split a six-pack with Andy and Rob. It made him feel strong and in charge of his life. He was tired of being scared and depressed and worried all the time. The beer made him forget. He liked that. Rob's dad didn't know and Andy's dad didn't notice, so splitting a few beers after a game had become routine. "They can handle it," Gerald thought to himself. "They probably just found a new place to party tonight. Girls worry too much."</p> <p>Read the passage above, and then write a persuasive paper that includes an introduction, three support paragraphs, and a conclusion. You can use one of the ideas below, or you can choose your own:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Three problems caused by teen drinking."</li> <li>• "Three issues that lead to teen drinking."</li> <li>• "Three things I wish parents understood."</li> </ul>	<p>W.6-12.1 W.6-12.4</p>
<p><b>Expository Essay</b></p> <p>A) "She had given him permission to take the old wheelchair apart, and he had made something that he had called his go-cart. It was lopsided, but it rolled, and when he was in it, he felt like he was king of the world. He had begun it in the basement, but it was cold down there, and there was not much room, so he brought it out to the back porch, and every day after school, he hammered and nailed and pounded on it, making it the "ultimate racing machine."</p> <p>B) "BJ removed his book bag, slowly turned around, and whipped his short, wiry frame around to face the much larger boy. Danté started to laugh as BJ crouched in a karate attack position, but his laughter stopped short as he found himself sitting on the floor in the main hallway, a calm and smiling BJ offering his hand to help him up.</p> <p>"How'd you do that, man?" asked Danté, who was more amazed than angry.</p> <p>"Black Belt. Master Kim. Tae Kwan Do. Paid for by my mama and my greasy granny," he added. "Ever need me to watch your back, call me." BJ had disappeared into the crowd. Danté just shook his head and chuckled at the nerve of the tough little guy with the powerful whip kick. He never bothered BJ again.</p>	<p>RL.6-12.1 RL.6-12.3 W.6-12.1 W.6-12.4 RI.6-12.1 RI.6-12.2 RI.6-12.4 RI.6-12.8</p>

<p>Chose one of the passages above. Write an expository (explanatory) paper on how to make a go-cart OR the basics of Tae Kwan Do. You may have to use the library or the internet to get this information. Find at least 3-4 current, relevant, authoritative, accurate, and credible sources that talk about the issue. Be sure to cite your sources used.</p>	
<p><b>Character Sketch</b> Write a character sketch of Gerald-what made him unique-his personality, his strength, his ability to overcome serious obstacles. Use specifics from the book to illustrate your points.</p>	<p>RL.6-12.1 RL.6-12.3 W.6-12.3 W.6-12.4</p>
<p><b>Conversation/Dialogue</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a conversation between Aunt Queen and Gerald, or Aunt Queen and Angel. What do you think she would say to them at the height of their problems with Jordan and Monique? What do you think she would say to them at the end of the book?</li> <li>2. " Gerald sighed, and with shoulders stooped, followed Monique to the telephone. He didn't care about anything anymore. He and Angel stood there, listening to Monique's side of the conversation. "Yes, but . . . ." "I'm sorry . . . ." "But we talked about . . . ." "Well, it's not my fault . . . ." "I'm sorry . . . ." "How was I supposed to know . . . ." "But you promised . . . ." "I'm sorry . . . ." "Well it's too late now . . . ." "I'm sorry . . . ." "It'll be all right, you'll see . . . ." "I'm sorry . . . ." She hung up the phone, turned to the children, and smiled brightly. "He's really happy about it, Gerald. Really, he is."</li> </ol> <p>Write the other half of this one-sided conversation, or write a conversation between two people who are having an argument or an uncomfortable discussion. Make sure the personality of the two speakers is clear in your dialogue.</p>	<p>RL.6-12.1 RL.6-12.3 W.6-12.3 W.6-12.4</p>
<p><b>Poetry</b> Write a poem about one of the following topics, or choose a topic of your own that deals with the ideas in the book.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fear</li> <li>• Guilt</li> <li>• Loneliness</li> <li>• Confusion</li> <li>• Abuse</li> </ul>	<p>RL.6-12.4 W.6-12.3</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pain</li> <li>• Loss</li> <li>• Hope</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Literary Analysis</b></p> <p>Read the poem “My Papa’s Waltz” by Theodore Roethke or another similar work in which the poet describes family abuse that your teacher provides. Use what you have learned from reading <i>Forged by Fire</i> by Sharon Draper and the poem to write an essay that provides an analysis of how different characters or narrators discuss their experience with abuse. Think about what is emphasized in each text. Think about what is different about each text. What implicit message is each author trying to send to the reader? Be sure to provide evidence to support your argument from both texts.</p>	<p>RL.6-12.1          RL.6-12.2          RL.6-12.4          RL.6-12.5          RL.6-12.7          W.6-12.1          W.6-12.4          W.6-12.9</p>