

The Man Who Broke the World

A story of magic gone wrong, based on an H.G. Wells classic

About the Story

Lexile: 930L

(informational text)

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

Learning Objective:

to form and support an opinion about a character's decision

Key Skills:

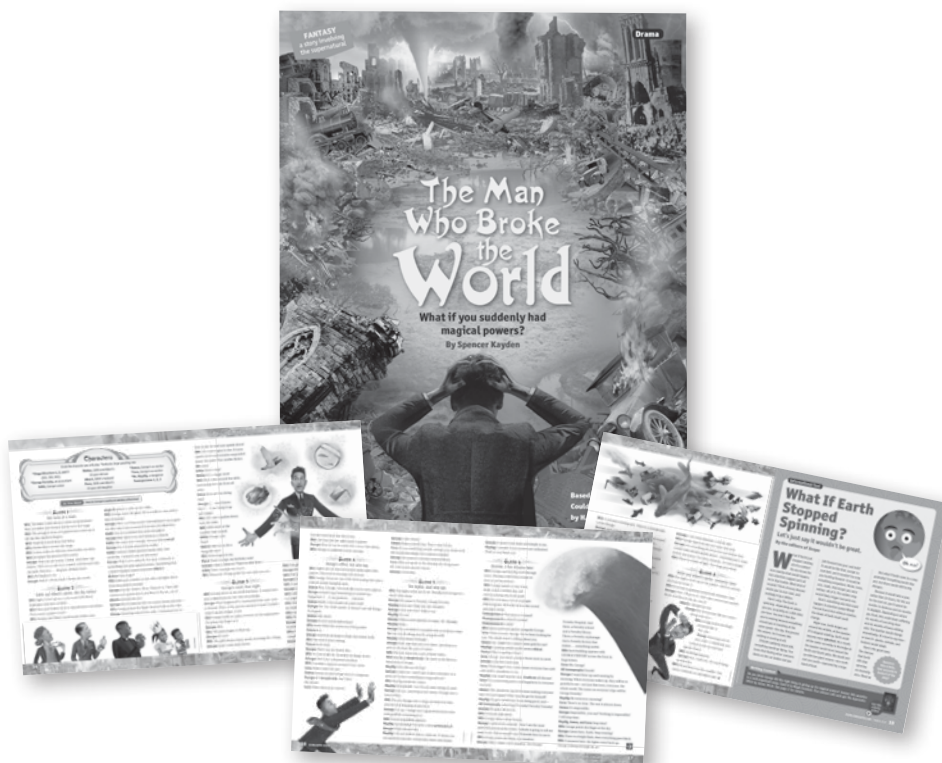
figurative language, mood, inference, compare and contrast, character's motivation, author's purpose, supporting an argument

Essential Questions:

- How does power affect those who have it?
- What happens when humans try to control nature?
- Does power come with a moral responsibility to help others?

Standards:

The texts and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards: **R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.6, R.9, W.1, W.2, SL.1, SL.2, L.4, L.5, L.6.** For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.



Your Teaching Support Package

Find your full suite of materials at scope.scholastic.com.

Audio:

- Vocabulary
- Informational text

Literature Connections: Ideas for connecting to curricular texts

Activities to print or project:

- Vocabulary
- Close Reading and Critical Thinking
- Supporting an Argument: George's Decision
- Quiz*
- **Core Skills Workout:** Mood*, Inference
- **Literary Elements:** Character Thinking Tool, Theme Anticipation Guide
- Contest Entry Form

*Available on two levels

Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Skill Building

1 Preparing to Read

Do-Now: What If . . . ? (5 minutes)

Ask students to imagine that tomorrow they will wake up with magical powers. There is nothing they won't be able to do simply by willing it to happen. What are the first five things they would do with their new powers? Have students write their lists on their own paper.

Preview vocabulary.

(7 minutes, activity sheet online)

Project or distribute the **Vocabulary Words**.

Words: *conjures, cynical, dumbstruck, eradicate, ethical, inexplicable, profound, spherical, willed*

2 Reading and Discussing the Play

(30 minutes, activity sheet online)

- Read aloud the As You Read box on page 14.
- Assign parts and read the play as a class.
- Discuss the following questions in groups.

Close-Reading Questions

▶ In Scene 1, SD2 says that “the mangled roots of toppled trees reach up to the sky like skeleton fingers.” Why do you think the author chose this simile? How does it contribute to the mood? (figurative language, mood) *The writer likely chose the simile to help the reader imagine how desolate and unnatural the world looks in this scene. The words “skeleton fingers” help create the creepy mood by evoking an image of death.*

▶ At the end of Scene 2, why is George's family upset with him? (inference) *They don't know that George suddenly has magical powers, and they think he ruined Flora's birthday cake as a silly trick.*

▶ In Scene 3, George conjures a kitten, a bicycle, a dog, and more. Why? (inference) *George is excited and goes a bit wild testing out his powers. He “giddily” conjures these items just because he can.*

▶ At the end of Scene 4, both James and Cora suggest things that George could do with his power. Compare the suggestions that they make. (compare and contrast) *James suggests that George make himself rich, a miracle that would benefit only George (and maybe James). Cora's idea is to help others. Cora, unlike James, seems to understand that George's new power is a big responsibility; she suggests that George speak to a wise religious leader.*

▶ In Scene 6, George conjures a hospital, a library, and an orphanage. Aside from generosity, what is his reason for doing this? (character's motivation) *George names all the institutions after himself. He seems to be creating these places out of a desire to be famous as much as out of a desire to do good.*

▶ Why does George give up his powers in Scene 7? (character's motivation) *George realizes that he can't predict the consequences of the miracles he performs.*

Critical-Thinking Questions

▶ George's intentions are generally good: He uses his powers to fix a coworker's watch, give another coworker a necklace, and help strangers. So why do things go so wrong? *Students might say that things start to go wrong when George begins to want glory. Others might say that things go wrong because George tries to control things beyond his understanding, like Earth's rotation. Others might say that things were going wrong from the moment George*

ruined the birthday cake, because humans are not meant to have magical powers.

► **By the last scene, has George learned a lesson? Explain.** Some students may say yes, because George decides he doesn't want to be able to work miracles after he nearly destroys the world. Others may say no, because in the last scene, George doesn't remember that he had magical powers, so he still doesn't believe in miracles and has learned nothing.

► **George's magical powers seem to give him control over nature. But ultimately, which is more powerful—nature or George? Some students may say that nature is more powerful. When George tries to control nature by stopping Earth's rotation, the results are more than he can handle. Others may say George is more powerful because even though he "broke the world," he had the power to put it back as it was.**

3 Reading the Informational Text

(10 minutes, activity sheet online)

- As a class, read "What If Earth Stopped Spinning?" (Optionally, play the audio at Scope Online.) Then discuss the following.

Close-Reading Question

► **What is the most likely reason the authors wrote this article?** (author's purpose) *The authors likely wrote this article to provide Scope readers with some factual information about what would happen if Earth stopped rotating, as happens in the play.*

Critical-Thinking Question

► **In Scene 6, George commands Earth to stop spinning. Is what happens after Earth stops spinning accurate based on what you read in the informational text?** *The play is fairly accurate in its description of a sudden stopping of Earth's rotation: Everything goes flying, and there is a tidal wave and overall destruction on a massive scale.*

4 Skill Building: Supporting an Argument

(15 minutes, activity sheet online)

Break students into groups to debate the writing prompt on page 19: Did George do the right thing in giving up his magical powers? Then have them complete the featured skill activity **George's Decision** independently. This activity will prepare them to respond to the prompt. *For alternate culminating tasks, see the box below.*

Differentiate and Customize

For Struggling Readers

Did George make the right decision to give up his powers? Decide what you think. Then make a list of three reasons that support your opinion. Use text evidence.

For Advanced Readers

There is a famous saying: "Power corrupts. Absolute power corrupts absolutely." What does this mean? Is it true in George's case? Use text evidence to support your answer.

For Creative Writers

Choose a character from the play and rewrite one scene as a journal entry from that character's point of view.

For Fantasy Lovers

Choose a character from a story, film, or TV show who has magical abilities. In an essay, compare that character with George Fernsby. Or write a dialogue between the two characters.