



# Kong

Christopher Golden



## Summary

New York, 1933: Ann Darrow, an unemployed actor, meets movie director, Carl Denham. He asks Ann to sail with him and star in his new movie. Jack Driscoll, the screenwriter, is unhappy about using Ann because she is an unknown. But when they start making the movie, Jack begins to find her very attractive.

They sail to Skull Island, where savage islanders kill the sound technician and one of the sailors, and knock Jack down. The crew want to leave, but Carl is determined to make his movie. The sailors turn the ship around, but an islander kidnaps Ann and takes her back to the island. They give her to Kong, a giant gorilla. Dinosaurs try to kill Ann, but Kong fights them off and kills them. The ship returns to the island to rescue Ann.

Eventually, Carl and his assistants put Kong to sleep and take him back to New York. They put him on show in a theater, but Kong runs away and kills or injures many people. He finds Ann and climbs with her to the top of the Empire State Building. Ann tries to save him, but police and airplanes shoot him, and he falls down to the street below. Jack declares his love for Ann.

**Chapter 1:** Unemployed actor Ann Darrow meets Carl Denham, a movie director. He asks her to sail with him on a ship and to star in his new movie with Bruce Baxter, a famous movie actor. Carl tells Jack Driscoll, the writer of the movie, that they are going to Skull Island, but he doesn't tell the rest of the film crew. Preston, Carl's assistant, finds the map of Skull Island. Hayes, one of the sailors, tells a story about a giant gorilla that lives on Skull Island.

**Chapter 2:** When they arrive at Skull Island, the front of the ship hits a huge wall. The sailors want to get away

from the island as soon as they can, but Carl takes the actors and his assistants to look around. On the island they hear the roar of a strange animal. Savage warriors attack them and kill Mike, the sound technician, and one of the sailors. Englehorn, the captain of the ship, fires a gun and scares off the islanders.

**Chapter 3:** Englehorn orders his men to throw things off the ship to help them get off the rocks and away from the island. One of the islanders jumps onto the ship, seizes Ann and takes her back to the island. Jack persuades Englehorn to turn back so they can look for Ann. Meanwhile, the islanders take Ann to the top of the wall, where she sees Kong, the giant gorilla. Kong carries her off into the jungle. Carl, Jack and the others come to the wall. Carl sees Kong and just wants to film him. When they go through a door in the wall, they see two dinosaurs and manage to kill them. Later, they are attacked by about a hundred dinosaurs, one of which eats Herb, the cameraman.

**Chapter 4:** Carl and the others have to get across some marshy ground. They use ropes and wood from the trees to build boats. Suddenly a giant fish rises up out of the water and kills two of the sailors. Ann runs away from Kong and tries to make her way back to the ship. She is attacked by two dinosaurs, but Kong kills them. When he hears the sound of guns, Kong picks Ann up and puts her on the top of a very high rock.

**Chapter 5:** The only bridge across a giant ravine is very long dead tree. At the other end of the bridge Kong jumps out. Hayes shoots him in the face, but Kong picks up Hayes and throws him across the ravine. Then Kong picks up the tree and all the men fall into the ravine. Three sailors are killed, but Jack, Carl and two others fall into the water at the bottom. A hundred repulsive animals come up out of the ground. They kill Lumpy, the ship's cook, but then Baxter and Preston shoot a lot of the creatures. Jack finds Ann in the jungle, and together they run away from Kong, but he follows them back to the wall. Carl and Englehorn use chloroform to put Kong to sleep.

**Chapter 6:** Back in New York, Carl has a money-making plan to show Kong in a theater and tell the story of Ann and the gorilla. Kong is in chains, but Ann is dancing in a different theater, and another actor is playing the part of Ann. Kong breaks free from his chains and runs out of the theater. He tramples a lot of people to death. He finds Ann and climbs with her to the top of the Empire State



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Building. Four airplanes shoot at Kong, and he falls down to the street. Finally, Jack tells Ann that he loves her.

## About the author

Christopher Golden is the author of many comics, including the original 17 issues of *Angel*, and dozens of science fiction and fantasy novels, including the *Body of Evidence* series of thrillers for teen readers and the young readers fantasy series *OutCast*. Golden wrote the original Hellboy novels, *The Lost Army* and *The Bones of Giants*, and edited two Hellboy short story anthologies. He has also written many original novels based on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. He co-wrote *Ghosts of Albion*, an animated supernatural drama for BBC Online, which then became a series of books.

Golden was born and raised in Massachusetts, where he still lives with his family. He graduated from Tufts University. There are more than eight million copies of his books in print.

## The original text

The book is based on the screenplay for Peter Jackson's blockbuster movie, written by Jackson and his two regular co-writers, Fran Walsh and Philippa Boyens. Their screenplay in turn was based on the original story by Merian C. Cooper and Edgar Wallace, which became the classic 1933 film, directed by Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack.

## Background and themes

*Kong* is partly the story of a man who tries—and fails—to use a wild animal to make himself rich. But it is also the story of the strange understanding that develops between Ann and Kong—a modern version of the fairytale, Beauty and the Beast.

This story presents a number of themes related to values:

**Greed and ambition:** How far will some people go in their desire to become famous and make lots of money?

**The morality of zoos:** Is it ever right to capture wild animals and put them on display for entertainment? What about zoos? Is it right to take animals out of their environment and keep them in cages?

**Entertainment:** Should the entertainment industry simply “give the public what it wants”? Or should theater producers and film directors have a greater sense of responsibility?

**Colonization:** What is the effect on other peoples' cultures when they receive visitors from the developed world?

## Discussion activities

The following teacher-led activities aim at **discussion and extension**.

### Chapter 1

#### Before reading

- Discuss:** Have students talk about movies.
  - Do you like the movies? Do you go out to the movies or do you do watch movies at home?*
  - What kinds of movies do you like best? Tell your friends about a movie you like a lot.*
  - Did you see the movie Kong? Did you like it? Which parts of the movie did you like best?*
- Discuss:** Have students divide the list of words and phrases from the story into two sets. *Which of these words and phrases are about the movies, and which are about ships?*

actor sailing writer famous trip love story  
map bad weather cameraman sailor

Movies	Ships

#### After reading

- Guess:** Ask students to imagine the following.
  - Will Carl make his movie?*
  - Will they find a giant on the island? Or will they find a giant gorilla?*
  - Will Ann be happy with Jack?*

### Chapter 2

#### After reading

- Guess:** Have students look at the picture on page 13.
  - What are these people looking at?*
  - What are they thinking?*
  - How do they feel?*
- Discuss:** Ask for students' opinions. Then they check if they are right as they read Chapter 3.
  - Is Jack dead?*
  - Will the ship leave the island now? Will everyone go? Or will Carl stay and make his movie?*



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## Chapter 3

### While reading

- 6 **Write:** Ask students to notice which characters help Carl, and which ones are against him.  
*Write the names of the people who help Carl inside the box. Write the names of the people who are against him outside the box.*



### After reading

- 7 **Discuss:** Have the students discuss what motivates each of the characters.  
*Carl wants to make his movie and make a lot of money. What do the other people in the story want?*

## Chapter 4

### After reading

- 8 **Write:** Have students write Ann's account of her time on the island with Kong.  
*Ann tells her story to a New York newspaper. How did she feel when Kong first carried her through the jungle? Did she feel differently later? Write the story that she tells.*
- 9 **Role play:** Discuss with the students how Kong and Ann seem to feel toward each other. Then get them to dramatize short monologues.  
Student A: *You are Kong. What did you think about Ann when you first saw her? What do you think about her now?*  
Student B: *You are Ann. How did you feel about Kong when you first saw him? How do you feel about him now?*

## Chapter 5

### Before reading

- 10 **Guess:** Ask students to read the words in *italics* under the title and imagine the following.  
*Was Kong right about Ann's idea of him? What did he do next?*

### While reading

- 11 **Guess:** What's going to happen? Get students to stop reading on page 39 and explain what Carl means.  
On page 39, we read:  
"Jack, be careful," Carl shouted to his old friend.  
"Don't close the door in the wall!" Jack shouted back.  
"I won't!" shouted Carl. After a minute, when Jack couldn't hear, he said quietly, "I'm sorry, Jack."  
a *Why does Carl say "I'm sorry"?*  
b *What is going to happen when Jack comes back with Ann?*

### After reading

- 12 **Check:** Have students check the predictions they made in the two previous activities and explain Ann's and Carl's behavior.  
a *Why does Ann dance for Kong?*  
b *Why does Carl not want Preston to put the bridge down?*

## Chapter 6

### After reading

- 13 **Discuss:** Talk about wild animals and entertainment. Carl takes Kong back to New York to put him on show in a theater. Ask students what they think about shows like this.  
*What do you think of Carl's money-making plan to show Kong in the theater? Would you like to see a show like this?*
- 14 **Write:** Have students write a newspaper report of Kong's escape and eventual death.  
*Write a story for a New York newspaper about what happened when Kong ran out of the theater.*

### Vocabulary activities

For the Word list and vocabulary activities, go to [www.penguinreaders.com](http://www.penguinreaders.com).