The Night Gardener

AUTHOR: Jonathan Auxier  
PUBLISHER: Amulet Books  
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GENRE: Supernatural, Mystery  
SETTING: The setting is a manor house in England.

SUMMARY:
The Night Gardener is about two abandoned siblings in Victorian England who are looking for jobs and a place to call home. They happen upon jobs caring for a family at an English manor home where things don’t seem quite right. In fact, things seem almost sinister. Each night there is a mysterious visitor to the house while the family sleeps! Each day they stay here could be their last!

BOOK TALK:
Molly and Kip, two Irish children, are traveling by themselves through Victorian England looking for work and a place that they can call home. After many rejections, Molly agrees to take on the housekeeping responsibilities of the Windsor manor house, but soon discovers something is not quite right about this family and their surroundings. Should Molly and Kip stay and accept their newly acquired jobs, or should they follow their instincts and get as far away as possible? What will Meg and Kip decide to do?

BOOK TRAILER:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MP0txNz69jM from the Texas Bluebonnet Award website

AUTHOR’S BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:

AUTHOR’S NAME: Jonathan Auxier  
Author’s Website: www.TheScop.com

Other books written by the author:  
Peter Nimble and His Fantastic Eyes

Other Information:
Jonathan Auxier is a skilled storyteller and the acclaimed author of Peter Nimble and his Fantastic Eyes. He is a college professor and children’s author who currently resides in Pennsylvania with his family. He has just finished his third book for children, Sophie Quire & the Last Storyguard, which should be released in the spring of 2016.

SIMILAR BOOKS/BOOKS WITH A SIMILAR THEME:
Coraline by Neil Gaiman  
The Crossroads by Chris Grabenstein
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
1. Why do you think readers enjoy horror stories?
2. What makes *The Night Gardener* scary? (Cite evidence from the text.)
3. Can telling a story in which you stretch the truth help a stressful situation? At what point does the story just become a lie?
4. Would this story be as effective if the setting were different? What is there about the Victorian Age that draws the reader in and makes the story more believable?
5. Do you think that Hester Kettle’s role as the storyteller is important to this story and why?

ACTIVITIES WITH STANDARDS:

Language Arts

- Behind the Scenes Research for *The Night Gardener* by Jonathan Auxier.

  After reading *The Night Gardener* in its entirety:

  The teacher will divide the class into groups of five for research purposes. At each group location there will be five Internet accessible devices, five 3x5 cards with a topic for research written on each of them, a list of web resources and two overriding questions. Also included will be an exit ticket of ten simple questions in a quiz format to determine if the students were able to discover and share the necessary information about their specific topic with their group.

  Students will have 20-25 minutes to research their topic and answer their two overriding questions. At the end of the research time each student will have five minutes to share the information they have accumulated from their research. After the information has been dispersed, the students will complete the ten question quiz.

  Research topics may include:
  
  **The hurdy-gurdy**

  Questions:
  What kind of musical instrument is the hurdy-gurdy? What other name is the hurdy-gurdy known by?

  Possible Resources:

  - [http://www.organistrum.com/organistrum_uk.htm](http://www.organistrum.com/organistrum_uk.htm)
  - [http://www.hotpipes.com/hgdemo.html](http://www.hotpipes.com/hgdemo.html)
  - [http://youtu.be/QHmML7bu-iM](http://youtu.be/QHmML7bu-iM)
Oral Storytelling

Questions:
What kind of position did a storyteller hold in early society?
What was the purpose of storytelling?

Possible Resources:

http://novan.com/storytel.htm


Night Blooming Flowers

Questions:
Name one flower that blooms at night.
What causes night blooming flowers to appear to glow?

Possible Resources:

http://www.weekendgardener.net/landscaping-ideas/moonlight-080708.htm

http://www.gardenguides.com/119503-list-night-blooming-flowers.html

https://www.ehow.com/info_8169250_do-moonflowers-bloom-night.html

https://youtu.be/bBKtDNNxaO8

Irish Potato Famine

Questions:
What caused the Potato Famine?
What was one consequence of the famine?

Possible Resources:

http://www.britannica.com/event/Irish-Potato-Famine

http://www.historyplace.com/worldhistory/famine/index.html


http://www.eyewitnessstohistory.com/irishfamine.htm
Child Labor in Victorian England

Questions:
Was child labor a common practice in Victorian England?
At what types of jobs were children regularly employed?

Resources:
http://www.victorianweb.org/history/hist8.html
http://www.victorianchildren.org/victorian-child-labor/
http://www.representingchildhood.pitt.edu/victorian.htm

8.W.5 Conduct short research assignments and tasks to build knowledge about the research process and the topic under study.
Formulate a research question.
Gather relevant information from multiple sources, using search terms effectively, and annotate sources.
Assess the credibility and accuracy of each source.
Quote or paraphrase the information and conclusions of others.
Avoid plagiarism and follow a standard format for citation.
Present information, choosing from a variety of formats.

6-8.LH.7.1:
Conduct short research assignments and tasks to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

Challenging Words

sonorous: pg.6,
hurdy-gurdy: pg.6
grouse: pg.17
demurred: pg.21
amorous: pg.27
ambivalence: pg.54
emanated: pg.86
chagrin: pg.87
collateral: pg.91
indescribable: pg.101
conciliatory: pg.161
Reviewer’s Name: Linda Meid
Reviewer’s Position: Media Clerk, Creston Middle School
ichor: pg.181
inexplicably: pg.194
feigning: pg.194
translucent: pg.220 prodigious: pg.221
somnambulism: pg.225.