

CURSE OF THE DREAM WITCH: TEACHING MATERIALS

FOR DISCUSSION:

Part One: Empathy Questions

- 1) Either part of this question can be used for discussion or for a debate, drawing up sides pro and con:
 - a) If you were Princess Alina, would you feel responsible for all the stolen children? Why or why not?
 - b) If you or your brother or sister were kidnapped by the Dream Witch, would you (partly) blame Princess Alina for bringing on the Great Dread? Why or why not?

- 2)
 - a) What would be some of the problems of being a mouse, like Ephemera?
 - b) If you were turned into a mouse and couldn't speak, how would you let your family know that you were you so that they wouldn't try and catch you in a mouse trap?

- 3) If you were kidnapped like Milo, would you work with the Dream Witch to capture Princess Alina or would you refuse and risk the lives of your parents who are dying of heartbreak? Why?

Part Two:

Discussions Relating *Curse of the Dream Witch* to Real Life

- 1) Milo thinks he's old enough to go into the woods, but his parents say he's too young.
 - a) What are some activities you would like to do when you're older?
 - b) What do you think would be the right age for those activities and why? Discuss.

- 2) Princess Alina isn't able to go outside to make friends.
 - a) Discuss other situations that can make it hard for children to meet friends. What can we do to help them?

- b) Curse of the Dream Witch takes place a long time ago. What are some of the ways we can communicate today if we are stuck indoors?
- 3) Lead a discussion connecting the Great Dread in Curse of the Dream Witch to other great in the real world. For example, if students are learning about the Great Plague, they could imagine what might happen if there was a widespread disease that couldn't be controlled? How would we cope? How would we get food and water and electricity? (i.e. Imagine how to deal with a pandemic or a nuclear war or a natural disaster, or living in a war zone.)
- 4) Are your dreams connected to real life? (i.e. Discuss the meaning of falling dreams, flying dreams, dreams where you can't run away from something.) What can dreams tell us about ourselves? Do you have dreams that recur? What your scariest dreams? Happiest dreams? Funniest dreams?

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ACTIVITIES

- 1) Listen to Allan Stratton read a chapter from CURSE OF THE DREAM WITCH. (Link/download mp3 at www.allanstratton.com)
- 2) Interview characters from CURSE OF THE DREAM WITCH.
- a) Sit in a semi-circle with a student in a chair facing the semi-circle. The student in the chair pretends to be one of the characters.
- b) The teacher is moderator for the other students who are interviewers. Questions are not to be designed to trip up the students playing the characters; they are to be about how and why "the character" felt what they felt, or about aspects of the character not covered in the book.

For example, questions for the Dream Witch could be: "What is your favourite dream for scaring people?" or "How did you become the Dream Witch?" or "Do you have brother or sister

witches, other family members who are witches?" For Milo: "After you reunited with your parents: "How do you and your parents like living at court?" or "What do you think you'll do for a living when you grow up?" Followups like "Why?" are also good.

Note: There are no wrong answers. The student playing the character IS the character and therefore is the expert on how that character thinks and feels.

c) The student must always answer as "I", not the character name. If something is said that contradicts the book, then the response should be not be, "But that's not what happened," but rather, "Why are you saying this when..." Again, the student IS the character and can make up whatever they like. Or can say, "Well the book about me may say that, but that's not the truth. Here's the real truth."

If there are too many students (over ten), then the teacher can moderate one whole class interview and then divide the class into groups of five or six, with one student in each group being a character and another student moderating; or, if the group is small and responsible, groups can function without a moderator. The teacher moves between groups making sure they are on task, and lets groups know when to rotate the student in the hot seat.

- 3) Write a story about your recurring nightmare or happy dream or make up a dream. Read these to each other.
- 4) Draw a picture of one of your dreams, or make a comic book of one of your dreams (real or made up), or build a set of a dreamscape in a cardboard box.
- 5) Draw a scene from the novel as if you are seeing through the eyes of Ephemera as a mouse (on a dungeon rafter, in the princess's room, in the woods, etcetera.)
- 6) Pretend you are one of the other children captured by the Dream Witch. Write a story or tell the group how you got captured, what happened when you were with the Dream Witch, and what happened to you after you were released. You can also do this in the interview setting described above.

- 7) What would be your dream come true? Imagine a spell and the ingredients you would need for your spell. Use some ingredients that would be hard to find. For instance "three dragon scales, two freckles, etcetera."
- 8) Dreams come from our imaginations. Use your imaginations to adapt any of the suggestions above. Or use your imaginations to make your own activities.