

# The Night Gardener

Karen Abbott

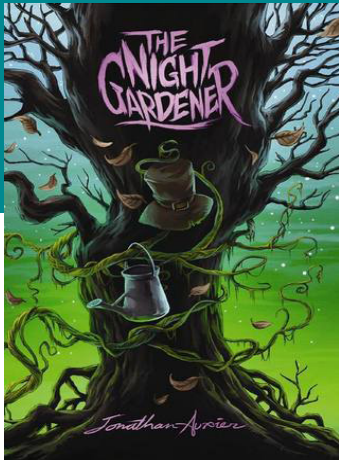
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## Book Review

### The Night Gardener

#### Author

Jonathan Auxier

#### Illustrator

N/A

#### Reviewer

Karen Abbott

#### Rating

Outstanding

#### Level

Intermediate

#### Pages

368

#### Year

2014

#### Publisher

Amulet Books

#### ISBN

9781419711442

Fourteen-year-old Molly has lied her way into a servant's position, but when she and her brother Kip arrive at the mansion, both feel a sense of dread coming from the house and the enormous tree in front of it. But there is nowhere else for the orphaned children to go. Molly gets to work on the house, the kitchen, and the children while Kip (who has a lame leg) sets to work on the grounds around the house. The family all appear to be sick and something isn't quite right in the house. A phantom figure comes each night and enters each sleeping person's room for a mysterious reason that Kip and Molly must discover if they and the family are going to survive. They will also have to face their own darkest secrets and strongest heart's desires. Things they have kept silent even from each other. The love of family is the secret that saves them all in the end.

Fruit taken from an evil tree in what might otherwise be a paradise is an allegory of the story from the beginning. The consequences of trying to get what you want without personal effort is another. This book has many great themes that add both depth and strength to a spooky tale about a tree who both blesses and feeds on the inhabitants of the house. It is a cautionary tale about desire and dreams, sacrifice and selfishness, and family and loss. All of these themes expertly combine and twist together like the branches and roots of the tree and reveal themselves as sneakily as the plot of the story. The story never becomes too scary for the intermediate audience for whom it is intended, but it will definitely give them a thrill. This is a great book to read aloud at Halloween and can be used to discuss bullying and how to tell the difference between a want and a need.

\*Contains moderate violence