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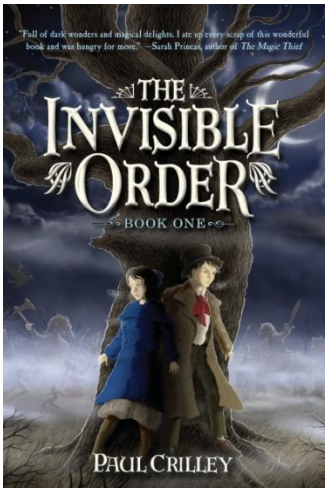

The Invisible Order, Book One:

Rise of the Darklings

by Paul Crilley

Ages: 10 Up

Summary:

Emily Snow is twelve years old, supporting herself and her younger brother on the streets of Victorian England by selling watercress. One early winter morning on her way to buy supplies, she encounters a piskie—a small but very sarcastic fey creature that has been cornered by a group of the Black Sidhe, piskies from an opposing clan. She rescues him and unknowingly becomes involved in a war between the Seelie and the Unseelie, two opposing factions of fairies that have been battling each other throughout the long centuries of human history, with London—and England itself—as the ultimate prize.

When the Invisible Order—a centuries-old secret society of humans that has protected mankind from the fey's interference—gets involved, things really start to get complicated.

Discussion Questions:

1. *The Invisible Order* takes place in London, England, during the Victorian Era. What do you know about Victorian England? Research this time period. What do you discover? Were living situations like Emily's common?

2. Author Paul Crilley includes two quotations at the start of the book, one being, "Some day you will be old enough to start reading fairy tales again." —C.S. Lewis. What do you think C.S. Lewis meant when he said that? Why do you think Paul Crilley chose this particular quotation to be included in the book? Do you think its inclusion is appropriate now that you have read the story?

3. After waking up at five o'clock in the morning and arguing with William, Emily heads to work wondering "if this is what all twelve-year-old girls had to go through every day of their lives." (pg. 4) How is your life different from Emily Snow's? Are there any similarities?

4. Imagine if you woke up one morning and stumbled upon a fairy war on your way to school. How would you react? Would you be curious or afraid? Explain.

5. Emily and Jack come from totally different backgrounds: she was well off and educated before her parents disappeared, and he has grown up on the streets and has a talent for picking locks. Why do you think they get along? List examples from the text where Jack has proven himself a worthy ally.

6. Corrigan gives Jack the "sight" so that he can help Emily break into Somerset House to steal the stone. Given the option, would you want to be given the sight? Why or why not?

7. Corrigan helps Queen Kelindria deceive Emily into helping them steal the stone from the Invisible Order's headquarters. Once Emily has delivered the stone, the Queen reveals her true plan, the fact that she kidnapped William, and locks them both up in the dungeon. Just when Emily thinks all hope is lost, Corrigan helps them escape. Why do you think he helps after getting her into that mess in the first place? Why the change of heart?

8. Upon returning to Somerset House after escaping from Queen Kelindria, Emily, William, and Jack run into Sebastian, who promises to answer all their questions if they will tell him everything that happened. If you were Emily, would you trust Sebastian? After everything she has gone through, what makes her decide to tell him the truth?

9. In this story, Christopher Wren was a member of the Invisible Order who locked the gateway to Faerie and built both Monument and St. Paul's, which each hold a half to the key Emily seeks. In real life, Christopher Wren was a famous architect who helped design and build those two buildings, among others. Do some research about St. Paul's and Monument. What interesting facts do you find?

10. Black Annis and Jenny Greenteeth are two nasty creatures working for the Dagda. Research both of their the legends. Do you think they are accurately portrayed in the book based on what you read of their legends? What do you imagine they would look like? Draw a picture of each based on what you have read.

11. Emily must decide whether she will hand the key over to the Dagda and fulfill their arrangement or keep it and break their agreement. She hesitates and thinks of Merlin's words: "You must try and make decisions that are true and pure. Those decisions might not necessarily be what you want, but such is life. We all have to make sacrifices for the greater good. You are no different." (pg. 318) What do you think Merlin meant by this statement? Do you agree with him?

12. Do you think Emily made the right choice by not giving the Dagda the key? What would you have done if you had been in her place? Explain your answer.

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978-1-60684-031-3 * $16.99

About the Author:

Paul has always wanted to be a writer, and luckily for him his parents didn't think it was too strange that he spent every available moment reading. In fact, they pretty much encouraged it, making sure he always had new books to read, so a lot of what you see or read here is probably their fault.

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