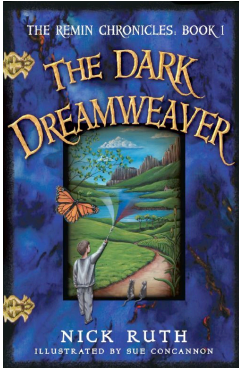


# Teachers Guide for *The Dark Dreamweaver*



## About the Book

Eleven-year-old David is suffering from nightmares. Over and over again, he dreams about a strange, bear-like man with black eyes. He's not the only one; an epidemic of nightmares seems to have infected the Earth. David takes matters into his own hands and embarks on an adventure to Remin, a land powered by dreams. Aided by a caterpillar wizard, a jellyfish-man, two wise-cracking water serpents, and several other unusual characters, he sets out to find and confront the evil wizard who is causing the nightmares. The challenges that he encounters will require all of his intelligence, his courage, and most of all, his imagination.

## Questions for Discussion

Thane starts out with good intentions: he believes that Remin is too dependent on spectrum,, and he steals the Imaginator to teach the people of Remin a lesson. But once he has the Imaginator, his goals change and he becomes obsessed with the power it gives him. Can someone act with good intentions but end up doing great harm? In 1887, a British historian known as Lord Acton said in a letter, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." What does that mean? Do you think it's true?

Houdin tells David that imagination is required to be a wizard in Remin. Is imagination important in the real world? In what kinds of situations would imagination be useful? Albert Einstein once said, "Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world." Why would imagination be important to a scientist like Einstein?

## Curriculum Connections

### Science

**Monarch butterflies:** Throughout the book, the wizard Houdin lives through the lifecycle of the monarch butterfly. One amazing thing about the monarchs is their annual migration. They spend the winter in Mexico, and every Spring they migrate north through the United States and even up into Canada. In the fall, several generations later, the monarchs migrate back to Mexico and overwinter in the same places where their great-grandparents spent the previous winter. Here are some web sites where you can find monarch activities and information:

Track the Spring migration with interactive maps at [www.learner.org/jnorth/monarch/](http://www.learner.org/jnorth/monarch/) This site also has a lot of other monarch activities and information.

Tag butterflies in the fall to participate in tracking the fall migration at [www.monarchwatch.org](http://www.monarchwatch.org) Monarch Watch also has monarch information, seed kits for growing monarch waystations, and information on raising monarchs at home or in the classroom.

Have your students study the Monarch Biology page at <http://www.monarchwatch.org/biology/>

Make sure they understand the meaning of these monarch-related words used in the story: mandibles, prolegs.

**Regeneration:** When David and his friends meet Sir Heads-a-lot, he tells them that in his own world he can regenerate any missing body part. In the real world, some animals have the ability to regenerate. For example, starfish can regenerate limbs that are cut off. Planarian flatworms can be cut into tiny pieces and each piece will grow an entire new flatworm! Have your students read about animals that can regenerate body parts. Some suggestions are at in the resources section at the end of this guide.

**Dreams:** Houdin tells David, “Dreams are the brain’s way of organizing information.” In fact, scientists aren’t sure why we dream, but one theory is that the brain is doing housekeeping, storing important information in long-term memory and discarding unimportant information. Have your students read about the stages of sleep and current theories about dreaming. Some suggestions are in the resources section. Lead a

classroom discussion about sleep and dreams. The land of Remin was named after the REM stage of sleep. Why is the REM stage important? Why do you think that we have dreams and why are some of them nightmares? Do dreams have meaning? Do animals dream?

**Color and Light:** After David defeats the guardian in the wrestle fight, they find themselves in a room with a door on each wall. Opening the doors reveals a sequence of colors. David realizes that the correct door is the one that shows the colors in the order they appear in a rainbow: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. Have your students read about about light and color. Some questions for them to consider and/or discuss are: What causes different colors? Are there really only seven colors in the rainbow? Why is the magical, glitter-like substance in Remin called spectrum?

Chromatography can be used to separate color inks into their component colors, showing which colors are combined to form the final color. There’s an easy chromatography experiment from Crayola that uses markers and sidewalk chalk listed in the resources section at the end of this guide.

## Language Arts

Have your students make a list of spells in *The Dark Dreamweaver*. Most of the spells are made-up words, but many of them are based on real word roots. Other spells are references to famous people or television characters. Using a dictionary and the Internet, see how many spell names they can identify the origins of.

**Dream Journal:** Have your students start a dream journal by keeping a notebook or journal next to their bed and recording their dreams as soon as they wake up, before they forget them. Keeping a dream journal can help you to remember your dreams and to deal with the stresses in your life.

**Creative Writing Exercise:** Have your students write a story about a dream or a nightmare they’ve had, or one they make up. Remind them that while a dream may be disjointed or incomplete, a good story has a beginning, a middle, and an end, so they may have to alter the dream somewhat to make a good story.

**Optional advanced exercise:** Advanced students can read about point of view in writing. Then they can rewrite all or part of their dream story from a different point of view by changing from third person (he/she) to first person (I) or the other way around. Or, if the story is in first person, they can keep it in first person but change the narrator. How does changing the point of view change the feel of the story?

# Resources

Monarch Watch

<http://www.monarchwatch.org>

Journey North (Spring Migrations)

<http://www.learner.org/jnorth/monarch/>

Fact Monster: Animals that Regenerate

<http://www.factmonster.com/ipka/A0768606.html>

Why can some animals regenerate limbs but humans cannot?

<http://www.popsci.com/scitech/article/2002-04/why-can-some-animals-regenerate-limbs-humans-cannot>

Ocean Watch: Starfish a great topic for students

<http://www.susanscott.net/Oceanwatch2002/dec07-02.html>

What Happens When We Sleep?

<http://health.discovery.com/centers/sleepdreams/basics/basics.html>

“To Sleep, Perchance to Dream” at the National Zoo

[http://nationalzoo.si.edu/Publications/ZooGoer/2007/6/To\\_Sleep\\_Perchance\\_to\\_Dream.cfm](http://nationalzoo.si.edu/Publications/ZooGoer/2007/6/To_Sleep_Perchance_to_Dream.cfm)

“Light and Color” at the Franklin Institute

<http://www.fi.edu/color/>

What is Color?

[http://www.crayola.com/colorcensus/science/index.cfm?n\\_id=27](http://www.crayola.com/colorcensus/science/index.cfm?n_id=27)

Crayola Chromatography Experiment:

[http://www.crayola.com/colorcensus/science/colors\\_in\\_colors.cfm](http://www.crayola.com/colorcensus/science/colors_in_colors.cfm)

The Dark Dreamweaver Spell Glossary, by Taisha Turner, Bella Online Children’s Books Editor

<http://www.bellaonline.com/articles/art25531.asp>

# Accelerated Reader

AR Book Level: 6.3

AR Pts: 11.0

AR Interest Level: Middle Grades

Quiz No. 102236