**Curriculum Guide for Educators and Librarians:**

**The Woods That Never Let Go**

**The Haunted Chronicles**

**Overview**

This curriculum guide is designed to help educators and librarians use *The Woods That Never Let Go* as an engaging teaching tool. The guide integrates the book’s themes of suspense, teamwork, courage, and the supernatural into lesson plans and activities that promote critical thinking, creativity, and literacy skills.

**Target Audience**

* **Ages**: 9-13
* **Themes**: Courage, teamwork, problem-solving, survival, and the supernatural.

**Curriculum Objectives**

1. **Literary Analysis**: Explore themes, character development, and literary devices such as foreshadowing, symbolism, and mood.
2. **Critical Thinking**: Engage in discussions and problem-solving activities inspired by the story’s challenges.
3. **Creative Writing**: Develop writing skills by crafting alternate endings, journal entries, or character backstories.
4. **STEM Integration**: Use the forest’s shifting environment to explore concepts like ecosystems, time distortion, and mapping.
5. **Collaboration**: Promote teamwork through group projects, debates, and escape room-style challenges.

**Curriculum Components**

**1. Pre-Reading Activities**

**Objective**: Build background knowledge and excitement for the book.

* **Discussion Questions**:
	+ What are some urban legends or local stories you’ve heard about haunted places?
	+ Have you ever faced a challenge where teamwork was essential?
* **Vocabulary Preview**:
	+ Introduce key terms from the book (e.g., "threshold," "disorient," "whispers," "curse").
* **Interactive Activity**:
	+ Create a "mystery wall" where students add their predictions about what will happen in the book based on the title and cover.

**2. During Reading Activities**

**Objective**: Foster engagement and comprehension.

**Chapter Analysis**

* **Chapter Themes**:
	+ **Chapter 1: The Dare**: Peer pressure and courage.
	+ **Chapter 5: Secrets in the Trees**: Symbolism and hidden meanings.
	+ **Chapter 10: The Forgotten World**: The impact of time and change.
* **Guided Questions**:
	+ What motivates Hope to agree to the dare?
	+ How does the forest seem to manipulate the group?
	+ What do you think the "heart of the forest" represents?

**Literary Devices**

* Identify examples of:
	+ **Foreshadowing**: Early mentions of the forest’s eerie qualities.
	+ **Symbolism**: The cursed tree as a representation of fear and entrapment.
	+ **Mood**: How does the author build suspense through descriptions?

**Group Activities**

* **Map the Forest**: As students read, they create a map of the forest based on descriptions in the text. Include important locations like the clearing, the cemetery, and the cursed tree.
* **Character Debate**: Split students into groups representing different characters. Discuss whether the group should have entered the forest and how each character’s decisions affected the outcome.

**3. Post-Reading Activities**

**Objective**: Reflect on themes and encourage deeper analysis.

**Discussion Topics**

1. How does the forest represent fear and survival?
2. What role does teamwork play in the group’s ability to face challenges?
3. How does time distortion add to the story’s suspense and emotional impact?

**Creative Writing Prompts**

* Write an alternate ending where Hope and Nate successfully escape without time distortion.
* Imagine the forest from the perspective of Cassie after she’s taken. Write her story.
* Create an origin story for the cursed tree and the forest.

**STEM Connections**

* **Ecosystems**: Discuss how real forests can feel alive through interconnected systems of plants, animals, and fungi.
* **Time Distortion**: Explore scientific concepts of time and relativity, linking them to the story’s themes.
* **Mapping Skills**: Use compass directions and coordinates to create an accurate map of the forest based on clues in the book.

**Art and Design**

* **Design a Book Cover**: Students create an alternate cover for *The Woods That Never Let Go*.
* **Symbolism Collage**: Create a collage using imagery and themes from the book (e.g., trees, whispers, roots).

**4. Projects and Extension Activities**

**Escape Room**

* Use the escape room activity provided in the guide as a hands-on way to immerse students in the story’s themes.

**Research Project**

* Research myths and legends about haunted forests around the world. Compare them to the forest in the book.

**Drama Activity**

* Act out a key scene from the book, focusing on how the characters’ emotions drive their decisions.

**Assessment Tools**

**Comprehension Quiz (Sample Questions)**

1. What motivates Hope to enter the forest despite her fears?
2. How do the characters try to escape the forest’s curse?
3. What is the significance of the cemetery in the story?

**Rubrics**

* **Literary Analysis Rubric**: Evaluate understanding of themes, character development, and literary devices.
* **Creative Writing Rubric**: Assess originality, connection to the story, and writing mechanics.
* **Project Rubric**: Evaluate creativity, teamwork, and presentation skills.

**For Librarians**

* Host a **"Haunted Forest Night"**:
	+ Include read-aloud sessions of key suspenseful scenes.
	+ Set up a scavenger hunt where participants find items related to the story (e.g., a flashlight, a compass, a journal).
* Create a **display of haunted forest books**, featuring *The Woods That Never Let Go* alongside similar titles.
* Offer **book club kits** with discussion questions and creative activity ideas.