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ENGL 112B Sec 01

2 October 2023

Murder, Magic, and What We Wore

By Kelly Jones



(<https://www.secretgardenbooks.com/book/9780553535204>)

Author



(https://curiosityjones.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/MG_4010-greyscale2-1.jpg)

About: Kelly Jones is a curious person, interested in chickens, magic, farm life, spies, sewing, the odd everyday bits of history. She has written novels such as *Exceptional Poultry Farmer* and *Happily for Now*. Jones is represented by Mandy Hubbard at Emerald City Literary Agency. (<https://curiosityjones.net/about/>)

Summary: It is 1818 in London. Annis Whitworth learns that her father has died under suspicious circumstances and all of his money is missing. She investigates her father's death while dealing with financial issues that arise due to missing funds. Throughout the book, Annis learns that she is able to sew glamours (garments that magically disguise the wearer) and uses that ability to become a spy and investigate the truth of her father's death.

Quote #1

“Though you do not understand the value of a young lady’s appearance, I should hope you recognize the talent it takes to disguise one.” (48).

This quote is quite important because this is when Annis puts her foot down and demands Mr. Smith that she is able to become a spy like her father and she tries to convince him to let her investigate. Before this scene, Annis finds out that she has a magical talent of sewing glamours giving her the ability to disguise herself. In this quote, Annis hints at her magical ability by informing Mr. Smith about the importance of disguise. While her efforts to convince Mr. Smith fail, she continues to search for clues showcasing her can-do attitude

Quote #2

“True, in theory—but it is much easier to accomplish if the lady in question remains a lady in the eyes of society. That is why we must seek respectable employment. In theory, we could become actresses, or highwaymen—er, highwaywomen—but there would be no path to return to our former lives. You know as well as I do that all our friends’ doors would be barred to us.” (63).

In this quote, Cassia, aunt and legal guardian of Annis, informs Annis how important it is for her to remain a lady in the eyes of the society. During this time, women were accepted to behave a certain way and the only way for women to earn money was if they married rich or they got jobs. When Annis tells Cassia that she wants to be a modiste (stylist), she firmly tells Annis to pick a respectable job for women or she will never be able to get married into a rich family. This really shows Cassia’s point of view of society compared to Annis.

Quote #3

“No. I will prove to you here and now that I have the talent, and I will not waste it on such a

dreary life. Find me—if you can—and we will do it your way. Fail, and we will do it mine.”
(70).

When Cassia gives Annis no option but to become a maid, Annis decides to take action by warning Cassia that she will run out of the carriage and never come back. She says if Cassia is able to find her, she will do what she says but if Cassia cannot find her, she will become a modiste and there is nothing Cassia can do to stop her. Annis jumps out of the carriage and flees her aunt. In this chapter, it is evident that Annis starts to get overwhelmed by everything that is happening around her causing her to partake in a childish game of hide and go seek. Annis makes it clear that she does not want to live a miserable life and while running away does seem childish, it is the only option she seems to have.

Teaching This Book

This book covers a lot of topics such as losing a family member, finding yourself, and standing up for what is right and I think these topics should be discussed in a classroom setting. I would present this book by making a powerpoint about all the key factors in this book and I would discuss important quotes with my students. Another way I would present this book is by discussing important themes in this book and how they relate to our own life. I think this will help students be more attached to this book and it will help them understand what this book is about. This book is appropriate for 7-12 graders. I think teens should read this book because it encourages one to not fall into societal pressures and it encourages one to make their own path in life. This book also encourages one to be conscientious and stand up for what is right. All of these help teens navigate through life and I think teaching teens about these things can help them in the future.

How It Fits Best in Chapters 4-8 in *Adolescents in the Search for Meaning*:

Chapter 4: *Books about Real-Life Experiences*:

- It deals with finding your own path in life.
- Discusses financial issues that could take place in one's life.

Chapter 5: *Books about Facing Death and Loss*:

- The main character finds out her father is dead and later finds out that he was actually murdered.
- The characters lose all their belongings and their house due to financial issues.

Chapter 6: *Books about Identity, Discrimination, and Struggles with Decisions*:

- Annis struggles with her identity because her aunt wants her to be a certain way.
- Annis also struggles with making decisions mostly because of self-doubt.

Chapter 7: *Books about Courage and Survival*:

- Annis shows courage when deciding she will find out who killed her father.
- When they realize they have no more money, Annis and her aunt must learn how to survive.

Chapter 8: *Books on Allegory, Fantasy, Myth, and Parable*

- Annis uses magic to disguise herself which makes this book fantasy.

Quantitative:

Lexile: Age Range 12-18, 870L

AOTS: 4.5, AR points: 8.0

Dale-Chall: 5-6 grade

Flesch-Kincaid: 6th grade

Qualitative:

Structure

- First person POV.
- Straightforward plot; when Annis finds out about the death of her father, she does whatever it takes to find his killer.

Language Conventions and Clarity

- Simple and easy to understand language.
- Word choice can be a little tricky because it talks about specific clothing items that one might not be aware of. Otherwise, the language remains simple and conventional.

Knowledge Demands

- Should be aware of the French Revolution because this book discusses Napoleon and his imprisonment.

Levels of Meaning

- Straightforward meaning because the book mostly focuses on the main character, Annis. Each chapter, she gets closer and closer to finding the killer.