Houdini Box

By Brian Selznick

Contributed by: Tambree Krouse

Summary from book jacket:

Victor is forever trying to escape from locked trunks, to walk through walls, and to perform any number of Houdini's astonishing magic tricks…without success. Then – amazingly – he meets his idol and begs Houdini to explain himself. A mysterious, locked box is the only answer, and Victor is left to wonder: Does the box contain the secrets of the most famous magic tricks ever performed?

Book Information:

Time Period: 1874-1926 Setting/Location: New York City

Genre: Historical Fiction

Booktalk: http://nancykeane.com/booktalks/selznick_houdini.htm

Author Information

http://www.theinventionofhugocabret.com/about_brian_bio.htm

Biography of the author, information about his books, updates about 'Hugo: the Movie', and links to "weird websites"

Questions:

1. Why were children interested in Harry Houdini?
2. What kind of person does Houdini seem to be?

3. Do you think that Victor truly stopped thinking about Harry Houdini when he was a young adult? Why?

Journal Topics:

If you could perform any magic trick, what would the trick be and why?

If you met someone you had always wanted to meet, what question(s) would you ask the person?

Vocabulary:

Cupboard – a storage closet

Monument- a structure built to remember an event or person

Vanished – disappeared suddenly

Appeared – came into sight

Bustling – being busy, in a hurry

Crumbled – fell to pieces

Escaped – get out; get away; be free

Magician – person who entertains with illusions

Other Works Written by Brian Selznick:

The Boy of a Thousand Faces (HarperCollins)
The Invention of Hugo Cabret (Scholastic)
The Robot King (HarperCollins)

Other Works about Harry Houdini:

Escape!: The Story of the Great Houdini by Sid Fleischman

Harry Houdini for Kids: His Life and Adventures with 21 Magic Tricks and Illusions (For Kids series) by Laurie Carlson

Harry Houdini (Kids Can Read) by Elizabeth MacLeod

A Picture Book of Harry Houdini (Picture Book by) by David A. Adler

Who Was Harry Houdini? By Tui Sutherland

ADDITIONAL WEBSITES:

http://www.studystack.com/flashcard-128007

flipping flashcards for some of the vocabulary words from the Houdini Box

http://www.adlit.org/authors/Selznick

video interviews with Brian Selznick

http://www.magicexhibit.org/story/story_harryHoudini.html

Short biographies of famous magicians

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/houdini/index.html

Information about the PBS film about Houdini includes: a timeline, a gallery of art posters, and a teacher's guide

http://www.mrsmhoward.com/files/The%20Houdini%20Box%20trifold.pdf

A Trifold worksheet for the story

www.houdinitribute.com/links.html

Houdini information including recordings of his voice and links to additional resources