

Raven Hill Mysteries: Dirty Tricks
Discussion Guide
Grades 4-7

Before Reading: to activate schema, build background knowledge, and set a purpose.

- Look at the cover, where do you think this story takes place? What makes you think that?
- Have you ever visited a library? What do people usually do at a library?
- What kind of assignment would bring you to a library?
- Frontload vocabulary: Chapter 1-3 (see vocabulary list)

During Reading: to engage students, check for understanding, and make connections.

- Who are the members of Help-for-Hire Inc.? Why do they keep getting involved in strange mysteries? (Ch.1)
- Do you have the same feeling as Miss Spicer? Why or why not? (Ch.2)
- What do you know about Sunny so far? (Ch.3)
- Which is more important to you: “to look nice” or “what’s inside a person”? Why do you think so? (Ch.4)
- What did Richelle hear? Then what happened to her? (Ch.5)
- How many people are there in Richelle’s family? Who are they? (Ch.6)
- What does “Murophobia” mean? Do you have any fears like that?(Ch.7)
- What do you expect to read in a local newspaper? (Ch.8)
- So far, do you think Raven Hill Library is a dangerous place? Why or why not? (Ch.9-10)
- Who agreed to take the offer? Who did not? What are their reasons? Would you take the offer? Why or why not? (Ch.11)
- What were they doing in the storeroom? Which staff have they excluded so far? (Ch.12)
- Why did Richelle want to help Miss Spicer with the computer? What happened then? (Ch.13)
- Do you think Miss Spicer was suspicious? Why or why not? (Ch.14)
- Do you think it was a good idea to go to the library now? Why or why not? (Ch.15)
- Did Miss Spicer change the jokes from kind to unkind? What is your clue? What kind of person is Miss Spicer? (Ch.16)
- Where did Mr. Raven end up at? (Ch.17)
- Are they “troublemakers? Which character do you like best? Why? (Ch.1-17)
- What do you think of Liz’s words: “life is not an open book”? What does reading mean to you? (Ch.1-17)

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After Reading: to summarize, question, and reflect.

If you were a librarian in Raven Hill library, what ideas do you have to encourage more people especially children to come and enjoy reading there?

Why were there fewer people coming to the library these days?

What does reading mean to you?

If your students enjoyed this book...

- Encourage them to continue to discuss it and refer to it in other lessons and conversations.
- Let them explore more about the topic by reading other books with similar themes, structure, characters, or content.