

Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark Discussion Guide Grades 3-7

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

- What are the key elements of a scary story?
- What is the best way to tell a scary story? Why?
- What is the best time to tell? Why?
- Frontload vocabulary for chapter 1 (see vocabulary guide)

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

- Which ending do you find scarier? Why? (Ch.1 THE BIG TOE)
- What did “my uncle” scare of? (Ch.1 THE WALK)
- What might happen next? What would you do when you heard your dog singing for the first time? (Ch.1 MY TIE DOUGH-TY WALKER)
- How is rhyme useful or helpful for reading? Do you think rhyme is important in story-telling? Why or why not? (Ch.1 A MAN WHO LIVED IN LEEDS)
- What story-telling strategies do you get from this chapter? (Ch.1)
- Why do you think Bill was killed? What is your take-away from this story? (Ch.2 THE WHITE WOLF)
- According to the young woman, why was she killed? Who killed her? (Ch.2 THE HAUNTED HOUSE)
- Are the elderly man and woman like any ghost we have read so far? What are the similarities and differences? (Ch. 2 THE GUESTS)
- Would you laugh if a hearse drove by in real life? Why or why not? (Ch.3 THE HEARSE SONG)
- How many witches and wizards in total are in this story? (Ch.3 A NEW HORSE)
- Is Blackwell’s dream an augur? What is “the room for one more” for? (Ch.3 ROOM FOR ONE MORE)
- What is the wendigo? (Ch.3 THE WENDIGO)
- Why would a scary story get scarier with objects passing around? (Ch.3 THE DEAD MAN’S BRAINS)
- If we are going to turn this story into graphics, which scenes would you choose to draw? Why would you choose them? (Ch.3 “MAY I CARRY YOUR BASKET?”)
- What are the similarities of the stories in this chapter? (Ch.3)
- What does “Hanging on the door handle was a hook” mean? (Ch.4 THE HOOK)
- Why did the truck driver follow the girl? (Ch.4 HIGH BEAMS)
- What makes stories in this chapter scary? Which kind of stories do you find scarier: real-life or make believe? Why? (Ch.4)

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- Which previous story does this one remind you of? Why? (Ch.5 THE VIPER)
- Why did the widow ask the fiddler to play faster? (Ch.5 AARON KELLY'S BONES)
- What could happen next? What would the ghost say or do? (Ch.5 THE GHOST WITH THE BLOODY FINGER)
- Do you find this chapter amusing? Which story do you like best? Why do you like it? (Ch.5)

After Reading: to summarize, question, and reflect.

- What tips or strategies of story-telling did you get from this book? Use them to tell a story to your friends who like scary stories.
- Besides telling stories when else do you speak in front of other people? What strategies from this book could also be used in other occasions?

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.