

THE BLACK HEART CRYPT

Study Guide

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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Chapters 1-10

1. What is a crypt?
2. When does the story take place?
3. What sensory words does the author use to describe the scene?
4. Would you be afraid of the demon dog? Explain.
5. According to Zack, what can ghosts do? What can't ghosts do?
6. What family "lived and died in these parts"? What family wasn't from around there?
7. Who wants revenge on Zack? Why?
8. Besides Zack, who sees ghosts?
9. What did Virginia do to help George when he was Zack's age?
10. Who "fancies herself a witch?"
11. Who is Susan Potter Jennings? Describe her.
12. What warning does Grandpa Jim give Zack?
13. What does the voice tell Jenny to do? Whom do you think she is supposed to bring?
14. Who are Sophie, Hannah, and Ginny? Do you think that they are good or evil?

Chapter 11-20

1. In Chapter 12, we find out about a lot of characters who can see ghosts. Who are they?
2. Describe Malik and Azalea.
3. Do you think Malik and Zack should go into the maze alone? Explain.
4. What warning does Mad Dog Murphy give Zack?
5. Describe Norman Ickes and his father.
6. Describe Stephen Snertz.
7. What does the crow's voice tell Jenny about the "nerdy guy in an ugly tie" at Ickes & Son Hardware store?
8. Why are the great-aunts coming to visit?
9. What does Zack realize about Aunt Ginny?
10. What do you think happened on George Jennings' thirteenth birthday?

Chapters 21-30

1. What's a familiar?
2. What do you think happened when Malik solved the interlocking puzzle?
3. How many souls are released? Who trapped them?
4. What are the Ickelbys planning?
5. Do you think that Zack should drink the milkshake and give up his powers to see ghosts? Explain.
6. What do the three sisters plan to do to protect Zack?

7. What costume do Zack, Malik, and Azalea wear? Do you like it? Why?
8. What is Malik giving Norman? Do you think it's a good idea for Malik to give that to Norman?

Chapters 31-40

1. Whom does Eddie see?
2. What happens to Francine Potter?
3. When are where are Norman and Jenny going to have their date? What is going to happen?
4. What can be used to ward off ghosts, according to chapter 35?
5. What ghost does Zack meet? Should he be afraid?
6. What happens to Eddie Boy? How many ghosts are left?
7. What does Ginny ask Sophie and Hannah to bring to her? Why?
8. What does Judy think of Francine?
9. What message does Francine have for Zack?
10. Do you think Francine is good or evil? Why?
11. What did Jenny steal?
12. Do you think Norman will trust Jenny? Should he? Why?

Chapters 41-50

1. How is Paulie related to Norman and Herman Ickles?
2. How many hours do the ghost have to use their superpowers?
3. Why does Zack decide to keep his ability to see ghosts? Do you agree with his decision? Why?
4. Why does Norman want to be a man who is feared? Do you think he should change?
5. Who visits Judy?
6. What happens to Paul Ickleby?
7. Who takes over Norman Ickle's body?
8. Should Zack tell Aunt Ginny about the brain teaser? Explain.

Chapters 51-60

1. What happens to Jenny?
2. What does Norman/Izzy need to do with the black heart stone?
3. Who supervised the transfer of the Icklebys?
4. Who is Ebony?
5. What does the priest tell Zack about the Ickleby Crypt?
6. Why did the Icklebys start causing trouble in North Chester?

Chapters 61-70

1. Who is "going on a pony ride"?
2. What does Norman want to do to Stephen Snertz?
3. What does Izzy do at the diner?
4. Do you think Izzy will get caught? Why?
5. Why does Zack hear thundering hooves?
6. Do you think the horse is real or ghostly? Why?

7. Why did Barnabas want a black Arabian stallion?
8. Who controls Norman now?
9. How did Barnabas fool everyone into thinking he was good?
10. What do the three sisters need to stop Barnabas?
11. Who arrives in Chapter 67?
12. What is a dybbuk?
13. Who has taken over Francine? Should Zack trust her?
14. What is Norman being accused of?

Chapters 71-80

1. What happens to Susan Potter?
2. What do you think 9:52 means?
3. Describe how Jack the Lantern looks.
4. How is Jack the Lantern going to get to Saint Barnabas church?
5. Why does Judy kick Francine out?
6. What do you think the sealing charm is?
7. Should Zack feel guilty about the sealing charm? Explain.
8. What do you think will happen to Father Abercrombie? Explain.
9. What do the three aunts and Zack have to do about the black heart stone?
10. Whom might Jack kidnap?
11. What is difficult about "capturing and distilling the essence of a family's soul"?

Chapters 81-90

1. What was crazy Izzy trying to say?
2. What does Zack learn from the nine ghosts?
3. Who is Grizzmaldo?
4. What does Jack the Lantern find in his strongbox?
5. Where is Jack the Lantern headed?
6. What happened to Barnabas' skull? What must be done now?
7. What does Jack the Lantern tell the raven to do?
8. What happens to Father Abercrombie?
9. What advice does Grandpa Jim give Zack?

Chapters 91-100

1. Should Zack trust his mother? Explain.
2. What animal "visits" Zack?
3. What does Zack learn about Jack the Lantern?
4. What protects the house from evil spirits?
5. What happens to Aunt Ginny?
6. What does Jack plan to do to the children on the bus?
7. Whom does Zack think is in danger? Why?
8. Who tricked Zack and his friends into opening the black heart stone? Why? Do you think that Zack should be angry about being tricked?
9. Where does Zack think the black heart stone is? Why?

Chapters 101-110

1. Who is on the roof of the bus?
2. Who is going to help Zack find and take apart the black heart stone?
3. What does Norman tell Jack the Lantern to do?
4. Who is being used as a shield?
5. What does Jack the Lantern tell Stephen Snertz?
6. When Judy says, "We three are needed," to whom is she referring?

Chapters 111-123

1. What does Zack have to do to find the black heart stone?
2. What had followed Zack to the clock tower?
3. What did Jack the Lantern do to Stephen?
4. Who are the three hostages?
5. Do you think Zack, Malik, and Azalea will be able to defeat Jack the Lantern? Explain.
6. How do Zack, Malik, and Alalea work together in chapter 120?
7. What does Norman reveal about being evil?
8. How does Norman die?
9. Why do Aunt Ginny and Zack promise to do with their ability to see ghosts? Do you think that they should make that promise? Explain.

VOCABULARY WORDS

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|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1. hearse | 21. interminable |
| 2. menacingly | 22. transmogrified |
| 3. paranormal | 23. nonchalantly |
| 4. sinister | 24. evasive |
| 5. ominous | 25. nefarious |
| 6. apparition | 26. miscreants |
| 7. aficionado | 27. sage |
| 8. translucent | 28. condolences |
| 9. grody | 29. dilapidated |
| 10. incantation | 30. munificent |
| 11. eerie | 31. strident |
| 12. gabled | 32. congenial |
| 13. vanquish | 33. fumigate |
| 14. realm | 34. predecessors |
| 15. havoc | 35. purloined |
| 16. lionhearted | 36. undulating |
| 17. influx | 37. gilded |
| 18. cower | 38. dank |
| 19. foreboding | 39. demented |
| 20. notorious | 40. bucolic |

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think people like ghost stories?
 2. What was your favorite Halloween costume? Why?
 3. In Chapter 91, Zack realizing that his mother is trying to make amends. What does it mean to make amends?
 4. Some people say that it is never too late to do the right thing. What do you think that means? Do you agree? Is it too late for Zack's mother to do the right thing?
 5. Which characters in the book are motivated by revenge? What happens to them?
 6. Do you believe in getting revenge? Why or why not?
 7. Which character do you most admire? Why?
 8. Ginny and Zack say that some things "run in the family." What good things run in your family?
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SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Use as many of the vocabulary words as you can to write a scary Halloween story.
2. Ask your family members to help you create a family tree. Try to find out about your grandparents, great aunts and great uncles, and your great-grandparents. Share any interesting stories with your classmates.
3. Research the following topics mentioned in the book: Halloween, Jack the Lantern, pinochle, Al Capone, Black Shuck, Stingy Jack, and killer bees.
4. Think of another "haunted place" that would be a good setting for one of Chris Grabenstein's stories. Write a letter explaining why that place would make a good setting, and then email Chris at author@chrisgrabenstein.com.