

CHAPTER FIVE: DANSE MACABRE, INTERLUDE: THE CONVOCATION

Vocabulary: Choose a word from the Word Box to replace the underlined word or phrase in each sentence below with a more descriptive word that has a similar meaning. Write the word you choose on the line below the sentence.

WORD BOX			
awe	embrace	mingle	ornate
buff	gazing	municipal	prohibition

1. We were filled with wonder at the fury of the ocean during a storm.

2. Use this soft cloth to shine your shoes after the polish dries.

3. Before leaving for school, Ann bent down to give her cat a quick hug.

4. The city park is filled with gardens, playgrounds, and jogging trails.

5. As a safety measure for walkers, our town has a ban against bike-riding on the sidewalk.

6. Noel stood in front of the photo shop looking longingly at the camera in the window.

7. Not wishing to stand out in the crowd, I chose a simple, rather than a showy outfit.

8. Jonas is so sociable that he finds it easy to freely move about even when he doesn't know any of the other party guests.

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Read to find out why all the dead left the graveyard on the night the winter blossoms bloomed.

Questions:

1. Why did Mistress Owen push Bod out into the cold?
2. How did the living prepare to dance the Macabray?
3. Why did Bod suddenly feel a sense of panic in the graveyard? What helped him overcome his fears?
4. What surprising event happened at the stroke of midnight?
5. How did Bod feel as he danced? How did these feelings change after the dance with the lady in the cobweb dress?
6. How did the inhabitants of the graveyard respond to Bod's questions after the dance?
7. Why did the silver-haired man at the dinner criticize the man Jack?

Questions for Discussion:

1. What do you think Mother Slaughter meant when she said, "Things blossom in their time. They bud and bloom, blossom and fade. Everything in its time"?
2. Why do you think Silas chose this moment to provide Bod with "normal, living people" clothes?
3. What do you think is the purpose of the Macabray? Why do you think the living have no memory of it and the dead refuse to speak of it?
4. What do you think the Lady in Grey meant when she responded to Bod's request to ride on the horse by saying, "One day everybody does"?
5. What do you think the man Jack was referring to when he mentioned the trouble in San Francisco four years ago? What do you think Mr. Dandy was referring to when he mentioned the unfinished business that took place ten years ago?

Literary Devices:

- I. *Symbolism*—What does the Lady in Grey symbolize?

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- II. *Foreshadowing*—Foreshadowing is the use of clues by the author to prepare the reader for future developments of the plot. Explain what you think this exchange between Bod and Silas might foreshadow:

His guardian inspected Bod thoughtfully, a boy in his new clothes. “You’ll do,” he said. “Now you look like you’ve lived outside the graveyard all your life.”

Bod smiled proudly. Then the smile stopped and he looked grave once again. He said, “But you’ll always be here, Silas, won’t you? And I won’t ever have to leave, if I don’t want to?”

“Everything in its season,” said Silas, and he said no more that night.

- III. *Irony*—Irony refers to a situation that is the opposite of what is expected. Considering the speaker’s remarks at the Convocation, what is ironic about the conversation that occurred between the man Jack and Mr. Dandy at the front center table?
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- IV. *Maxim*—A maxim is a short statement that sums up a general truth or a rule of behavior. What general truth was Mr. Dandy referring to when he told Jack the maxim that “time and tide wait for no man”?
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- V. *Cliffhanger*—A cliffhanger in literature is a device borrowed from silent, serialized films in which an episode ends at a moment of suspense. In a book, it usually appears at the end of a chapter to encourage the reader to continue on in the book. What is the cliffhanger at the end of the Interlude?
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Social Studies/Music Connection:

The roots of *danse macabre* date back to morality plays performed during the Middle Ages where a personified Death led people from all walks of life to the grave. In the late nineteenth century, a French composer named Camille Saint-Saëns composed a tone poem for orchestra titled *Danse Macabre*. You can listen to this music at the You Tube website: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=csJJIp7jCYA>. During the piece, listen for the clock chiming, the Devil playing his fiddle, the skeletons' bones rattling, a rooster crowing and the skeletons' slow return to their graves at the break of dawn. Then write a paragraph describing the scenes you pictured in your mind as you listened to this tone poem.

Writing Activity:

Unlike the dead and the other living souls who participate, Bod is the only one determined to preserve his memory of the Macabray. Pretend you are Bod. Write a journal entry in which you describe what you observed and how you felt on the night the winter blossoms bloomed.