

## CHAPTER FOUR: THE WITCH'S HEADSTONE

**Vocabulary:** Many words in English have more than one meaning. Look at the words and the definitions that follow. Then using context clues, write the letter of the definition that best fits the underlined word in each sentence below.

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| 1. ivory | a. smooth, hard, white substance that forms the tusks of elephants<br>b. creamy white color         |
| 2. plain | a. area of level or nearly level land<br>b. clearly seen or heard; distinct                         |
| 3. trunk | a. large box with a hinged lid used for storing things<br>b. main stem of a tree                    |
| 4. crook | a. bent or curved part<br>b. untrustworthy person; thief  |
| 5. grave | a. hole dug for the burial of a body<br>b. earnest and dignified                                    |
| 6. print | a. picture or design made from a block or plate<br>b. write using letters like those made from type |
| 7. turn  | a. become spoiled or rancid<br>b. act or deed   |
| 8. block | a. stop movement through something<br>b. solid piece of wood or stone                               |

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. She wore an ivory blouse made of beautiful silk.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The tall mountain rose abruptly out of the flat plain that stretched for miles.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The monkey scampered up the trunk of the palm in its search for coconuts.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The bird built its nest in the crook of the branch.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The lawyer, wearing a grave expression, read the will in a slow, solemn voice.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. My sister hung a colorful print on her bedroom wall.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. A scout is supposed to do at least one good turn every day.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Downed trees often block the roads after a wind storm.

## Chapter Four: The Witch's Headstone (cont.)

Read to find out what happened when Bod ventured into the living world.

### Questions:

1. Why had Bod been warned to stay away from the far corner of the graveyard?
2. Why was Mr. Pennyworth disappointed in Bod's progress?
3. Why had Liza Hempstock's neighbors determined that she was a witch? How did Liza get her revenge?
4. Why did Bod return to the barrow? How did he plan to use one of the treasures guarded by the Sleer?
5. How did Bod display courage in the face of the Sleer?
6. Why did Abanazer Bolger believe that Bod had presented him with two kinds of treasure?
7. Why did Abanazer Bolger invite Bod into the back room for tea and a chat?
8. Why did Liza thank Bod for doing the first nice thing in five hundred years?
9. How did Liza help Bod escape from the locked room? How did Bod help himself?
10. How did Silas, the Sleer, and Mr. Owens each react when Bod returned to the graveyard?

### Questions for Discussion:

1. What do you think Silas meant when he told Bod that "wherever you go, you take yourself with you"? Do you agree with this observation?
2. Do you think Bod was justified in taking the brooch from the barrow? Did he deserve the punishment he received from Mr. Owens?
3. What kind of information about the buried inhabitants did Bod learn from the epitaphs written on their tombstones?
4. How do you think Abanazer Bolger obtained Jack's card? Why do you think Liza reacted so strongly when Bod wanted to burn it? What do you predict Silas will do with it?
5. What do you think the epitaph that Bod wrote on Liza's headstone meant?
6. In what ways did some of the human characters in the book display supernatural abilities? Do you think some people do have supernatural abilities?

## Chapter Four: The Witch's Headstone (cont.)

### Literary Devices:

- I. *Elevated Language*—Elevated language is formal, dignified language. It can be used to give dignity to a hero, to reveal a self-important character, or to discuss a topic that might be unpleasant or give offense. For example:

“And there are always people who find their lives have become so unsupportable they believe the best thing they could do would be to hasten their transition to another plane of existence.”

What does Silas mean by this statement?

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What purpose does Silas's elevated language serve?

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- II. *Symbolism*—A symbol in literature is an object, person, or event that represents an idea or a set of ideas. What do you think the red apple and Liza's headstone symbolize?

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- III. *Metaphor*—What is being compared in the following passage?

A flash of pain woke him, sharp as ice, the color of slow thunder,  
down in the weeds that summer's night.

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Why is this an apt comparison?

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## Chapter Four: The Witch's Headstone (cont.)

### Social Studies Connections:

1. Do some research to learn about the treatment of women supposed to be witches in colonial New England. See whether the water test that Liza described might have actually taken place.
2. Liza tells Bod that the carpet delivered to Master Porringer "carried the plague in its pattern." The resulting illness caused her tormentors' skin to turn black and made them cough blood. Do some research to learn about the bubonic plague, also known as the "Black Death," that swept through Europe in the Middle Ages. Based on your findings, explain what was in the carpet that caused the outbreak of plague in Liza's village.

### Writing Activity:

Bod is driven by his need to explore and to uncover why the outer boundaries of the graveyard are considered off limits. Write about a time when you pushed past boundaries that were defined for you or you defined for yourself. Tell what happened and whether you gained from this experience.