

Christmas Terror Tales

Book Club Discussion Questions

What in your opinion is the scariest story in this collection and why?

In “The Christmas Jack-O-Lantern,” Mrs. Fellows goes to great lengths to ensure that her neighborhood is decorated properly for the holidays. Why is this so important to her, and what lesson might there be in her behavior?

In “Home for the Holidays,” what is suspicious about the trucker? Although the hitchhiker proves deadlier, do you think this trucker was entirely innocent? Why or why not?

In “Manger Baby,” why do you think Jessica is so amused by her own mischief? What is it about Jessica’s crime that attracts the attention of the Devil?

In “The Candy Cane,” do you feel that Father Whalen has entirely selfless motives for taking in the orphan he finds? Does Father Whalen deserve his holiday “gift?” Why or why not?

In “The Snowman,” do you feel that the boys’ teacher Mr. Robins deserves to be targeted by the Snowman. Is it possible that the Snowman is trying to help his young creators, or is it fully aware that it is framing them for its crimes?

What do you think is the story behind the strange haunting events in “Open Fire?” How does this story differ from other tales in the collection?

Is there a moral behind “The Frozen Mitten?” Why doesn’t Will take his sister’s warnings more seriously? Is he reasonable to dismiss her dreams?

In “Wassail,” what do you believe are Mr. and Mrs. Scotch’s reasons for poisoning their neighbors? Do you feel that this is a crime that they will get away with? Why or why not?

In what ways is “The Green Box,” a scary story? How might one’s own personal views or values change their perception of what is scary about this story? What might be universally scary about the agreement that Rodney signs? What is realistic about this story, and what is unrealistic?

How does “Like Skeleton Hands” fit into the Christmas tradition of warning children that Santa Claus is watching? What other Christmas traditions or symbols are present in this story? How are they changed or warped to be scary?

“The Smell” is based on a famous Christmas urban legend. What other versions of this legend exist? What is unique about the version found in Christmas Terror Tales? In what ways might this story’s ending be considered happy?

What is frightening about “The Dinner Guest?” What could be the lesson of this story?

The father in “The Dinner Guest” returns in an inhuman state. What kind of supernatural being do you think he has become?

In “The Trunk in the Attic,” Justin becomes infatuated with his wonderful new toys and there is little that he won’t do to have more of them. What real life issues or situations run parallel to Justin’s problem?

Who is the old man in the rocking chair in “The Truck in the Attic?” Why do you think he encourages Justin’s behavior?

“The Maniac” is based on a classic scary Christmas story setup. What is unique about the version found in Christmas Terror Tales?

What is scary about “The Maniac?” How plausible is this story compared to other tales in the collection?

What is the creature in “Something in the Basement?” Where did it come from and why is it so impossible to dispose of? What reasons might there have been for the Kraft family to accept the creature in their basement? Why do they feel they have to live with it?

What lessons might exist in “Twelve O’Clock?” Is the elderly neighbor in the right? Or is she unreasonable?

What do you think are the “three final words” that Lisa mouths to Jason at the end of “Twelve O’Clock?”