

# Jake Carter & the Nightmare Gallery

## Book Club Discussion Questions

What are some of the themes that you noticed throughout Jake's story?

What changes occur in Jake throughout the story? In what ways does he learn or grow?

What changes occur in Jake's brother Luke? In what ways do you think Luke is struggling throughout the story?

How does grief shape Jake's family life? Did losing a family member make them stronger or weaker as a family or as individuals?

Jake's dad explains to him that "you can't run from your problems. You just find new ones everywhere you go." Does this advice ring true throughout the story? Why or why not?

What role do Jake's parents play in this story? In what ways do you think they help him on his adventure?

Why does Dr. Shade choose to recruit and educate 12 year old children with his miraculous technology? Why is it so important for Dr. Shade to impart his worldview on young minds?

Are there some ideas of Dr. Shade's that make sense? Is it possible that Dr. Shade was once a more reasonable person? What do you think made Dr. Shade go bad?

Dr. Shade explains that "greatness is one part intelligence, one part creativity, and on part initiative." Is there any truth to this? What might be missing from Dr. Shade's equation?

How does the phrase "absolute power corrupts absolutely" apply to this story?

What is the role of nature vs. nurture in this story? In what ways are Jake and Luke alike? In what ways are they different? Would the events of this story have been different if Jake and Luke were not identical twins?

What is the role of education in this story? What is unique about Dr. Shade's view of education as compared to Jake's more traditional upbringing? Who are the people in Jake's life who teach him the most valuable lessons?

What are the connections between art, religion, and creation in this story? In what ways is an artist "like God?" How might this have shaped Dr. Shade's ideals? How and why does Jake struggle with the idea of artists being "like God?"

What similarities and differences exist between Jake's everyday life and his adventures at Dr. Shade's house? Were there any parallels between the two worlds of the everyday and the extraordinary?

Who is Denise? Why do you think she goes along with Dr. Shade's twisted agenda?

In what ways does Jake depend on others for help during his adventure? Who helps him the most? In what ways is he on his own?

How does the relationship between Dr. Shade and Luke compare to Jake's relationship with their biological father?

Mark speculates that Dr. Shade's house might exist in another dimension that lies between being asleep and being awake. What evidence might exist to suggest that he's right? Where do you think Dr. Shade's house exists?

In Jake's final showdown with Dr. Shade (p. 203-204), Shade reaches into Jake's mind and tries to take something away from him. Jake describes this as "the most important part of him." What might that be?

Why doesn't Jake confide in his parents that Luke is alive throughout the story? Do you think this will remain a secret after the events of the story? What might happen next?

Why doesn't Luke return home? Does he have good reasons to remain on Dr. Shade's side of the doorway?