



Jade Green: A Ghost Story

Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

Teacher's Guide

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LIVING
LITERATURE
SERIES

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Synopsis

Chapter 1

In the late 1880s, newly orphaned Judith Sparrow, age fifteen, arrives at her Uncle Geoffrey Sparrow's home in the South Carolina seacoast town of Whispers. Uncle Geoffrey, whom Judith only met once previously when she was a baby, has agreed to give Judith a home, with one condition: she must not bring anything green into his house. Judith has obeyed this condition, except for one thing—a photograph of her mother in a green silk frame, which her mother had given to her. Judith also holds another secret: her mother died in a mad-house.

Chapter 2

Uncle Geoffrey is rather remote, but Mrs. Hastings, the cook, is warm and welcoming, and Judith is surprised and grateful to be given a second-floor bedroom and treated as family rather than as a servant. Judith keeps the green frame tucked away out of sight in her trunk, in her bedroom closet. At dinner, Judith meets forty-year-old Cousin Charles, who stays in rented rooms in town but eats most meals at his father's house. As she is falling asleep that night in her bedroom, Judith hears a faint scratching noise in her closet.

Chapter 3

The next day, Judith meets Zeke Carey, the handsome son of the miller, as he delivers a bag of flour to the house. Judith busies herself over the next days by helping Mrs. Hastings with household chores. One night, she hears the scratching from

her closet again and discovers the lid of her trunk askew.

Chapter 4

A week after Judith's arrival in Whispers, Mrs. Hastings takes her to Helene's Hat Shoppe, where Helene hires Judith as a ribbon clerk. Judith is delighted that she will be earning her own money and that she now has a new friend, Violet, who will be teaching her about hat-making. But Violet startles Judith when she says another girl used to live at Uncle Geoffrey's—Jade Green, who has been dead for three years.

Chapter 5

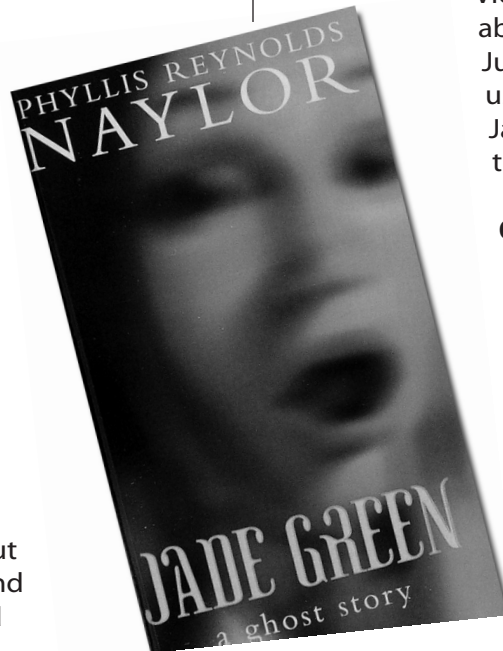
Back at home, Judith asks and Mrs. Hastings tells her about Jade. Uncle Geoffrey had taken her in at his minister's request. An orphaned street urchin, Jade eventually settled into her new way of life. Lighthearted, saucy, and fond of laughter, Jade brought a happy new spirit to the Sparrow home. Mrs. Hastings cries as she describes finding Jade's body, an apparent case of suicide.

Chapter 6

At dinner that night, Charles and Uncle Geoffrey argue—Uncle Geoffrey wants Charles to get a job; Charles thinks Uncle Geoffrey should give him more income and let him manage his father's estate. Later, upstairs, Charles grabs Judith by the wrist, warns her to pay no attention to his and his father's affairs, and finishes by running his finger down the buttons of Judith's bodice.

Chapter 7

That night, Judith's bedroom closet door creaks open. Next day, Judith dusts the entire house. From the spare bedroom, which was Jade Green's,



a stairway leads up to the attic. Judith cautiously ascends, but on her way down, she suddenly sees a large bloodstain on the lower stairs; she realizes this must be where Jade Green died. At breakfast out in the garden, Charles quizzes Judith about whether she really did arrive penniless and disconcerts Judith by staring openly at her figure. At Helene's, Violet says that people believe Jade Green's ghost haunts the Sparrow house.

Chapter 8

At the end of the work day, Zeke drives Judith around town. The two enjoy a friendly, teasing camaraderie, but then Zeke warns Judith to beware of Charles. At home, wondering how Jade had taken her own life, Judith opens the door to the attic stairs and is terrified to see a girl's glove lying there and, under it, deep cleaver cuts on the step. That night, Judith awakes from sleep feeling something brush across her forehead. Judith decides Charles must be trying to drive her mad so she would not be a rival for any of the inheritance.

Chapter 9

The next week, Judith feels something brush across her lips as she lies in bed; she fears she may be going mad, as her mother did. At the hat shop, Violet tells Judith that when someone dies a violent death, the ghost may appear at the place of death, drawn by a favorite thing—which, in Jade's case, was the color green. Judith fears that her mother's green picture frame may have drawn Jade's ghost to Uncle Geoffrey's house, and perhaps this is why her uncle bans anything green from the house. Then, one night, a ghostly severed hand appears in Judith's bedroom; it stands up and then scurries off!

Chapter 10

Judith is torn with her dilemma—tell about the ghostly hand and then reveal that she brought something green into the house? Then surely Uncle Geoffrey will evict her. At the hat shop, Violet reveals the cause of Jade's death: she cut off her own hand with a cleaver and bled to death. After work, Judith arranges to meet Zeke in the garden to give him something. In her room, Judith removes the picture frame from her trunk—and sees a photograph of Jade Green looking back at her. Judith runs frantically through the garden to rid the house of the green frame and runs right into Charles.

Chapter 11

Charles grabs Judith and tries to force a kiss on her. She hits him with the frame and screams; Zeke calls for her, and Charles walks off. Judith gives Zeke the frame, with a picture of herself at age ten in it, but doesn't tell him why. That night, Judith wakes up to the sound of the piano playing Jade Green's favorite song.

Chapter 12

Downstairs, Judith sees the ghostly hand playing the piano. Next morning, Mrs. Hastings and Uncle Geoffrey question Judith about sleepwalking. Later that summer, Judith and Zeke go on a shoreside picnic and discover Charles watching them.

Chapter 13

Packing up the picnic, Judith and Zeke share their first kiss. At work the next day, Violet shocks Judith by telling her that Charles has a dreadful reputation for spending his late evenings with "ladies of the night." At dinner, Charles makes sexual accusations about Judith's deportment with Zeke at the beach; Uncle Geoffrey angrily silences him. After dinner, Judith cleans up the kitchen alone and is horrified to see the ghostly hand methodically hitting the chopping block with a cleaver.

Chapter 14

In the following days, Judith attempts to catch the hand by setting rat traps all over the house. Zeke tells Judith that he worries about the way she broods over Jade Green, but Judith still doesn't think she can tell Zeke what's troubling her. Zeke also says that Charles has been dropping suggestions at the local pub that his uncle is becoming senile. Zeke also takes Judith to the cemetery to see Jade Green's tombstone; the words describing her death as "by her own hand" have been scratched over.

Chapter 15

As the weeks pass, Judith and Uncle Geoffrey and Mrs. Hastings settle into a very happy way of life. Cousin Charles, however, becomes silent and continues to eye Judith's body. One evening, home alone, Judith again sees the ghostly hand playing the piano. She throws a brick doorstep at it, nearly severing its pinky, yet it limps away.

Chapter 16

Violet tells Judith that Jade Green clearly commit-

ted suicide, because she was found dead on the stairs with the cleaver in her remaining hand. At dinner that night, Uncle Geoffrey announces that he is going to Charleston for two days to update his will. Mrs. Hastings will inherit the house and receive a tenth of his estate; the remaining ninety percent will be split evenly between Charles and Judith. Charles reacts with fury and strides out of the house.

Chapter 17

The next afternoon, with Uncle Geoffrey gone, Judith and Mrs. Hastings work in the root cellar. As Mrs. Hastings goes back up to the kitchen, she is terrified to see the ghostly hand coming across the floor. Judith slams the door to the root cellar shut as she and the cook retreat down the stairs. Then they hear the hand climbing up the door frame and the bolt clicking, locking the door from the outside.

Chapter 18

Sobbing, Judith confesses to having brought the color green into the house. Mrs. Hastings concedes that they could not have kept Jade away forever. Upstairs, they hear Charles muttering to himself. After he leaves, they smell smoke—the house is on fire and they are trapped!

Chapter 19

Zeke and some neighbors arrive, free the two women, and put out the fire, which only damaged the kitchen. Later, alone in the parlor, Judith finally tells Zeke all about the ghostly apparitions. He doesn't believe her, but professes his love. Then the hand appears again on the piano keys, and Zeke sees it.

Chapter 20

After Uncle Geoffrey returns, he bans Charles from the house but does not cut him out of his will. As autumn comes, a hurricane approaches Whispers. Uncle Geoffrey and Mrs. Hastings evacuate, while Zeke and Judith stay behind to board up the windows. When Judith is upstairs packing, Charles comes into her bedroom. He has locked Zeke out and prepares to rape Judith. She threatens him with a knife; he laughs at her and tells her that Jade Green attempted the same threat with a cleaver. He then proceeds to confess to murdering Jade Green, telling Judith that if she doesn't submit, he will likewise murder her with the knife and

make it look like suicide. As he presses her to the bed, Judith sees the severed hand climb swiftly up the bedpost. It leaps to Charles's throat and strangles him. Charles is now dead, and Jade is able to let Zeke into the room. As Judith and Zeke watch, the ghostly fingerprints on Charles's throat begin to fade, leaving no evidence of strangulation. Charles lies dead, with no marks on his body, a knife clutched in his hand, and his fly undone; it would look to an observer as if he had died of a stroke or heart attack in the middle of an attempted rape. As Judith and Zeke drive away from the house, Judith sees the hand cross the roof and descend the drainpipe, disappearing forever into the swirling water.

Timeline

three years ago	Jade Green died violently in Uncle Geoffrey's house.
early spring	Judith arrives in Whispers.
first week	Judith hears scratching sounds in her bedroom closet; she learns about Jade Green and her death; she sees blood on the attic steps.
next week	Judith begins her job at the hat shop; ghostly fingers brush Judith's face at night.
third week	The ghostly hand appears in Judith's bedroom.
that Friday	Judith gives Zeke the green picture frame; Charles tries for a kiss; the ghostly hand awakens everyone by playing the piano.
a summer week	Zeke and Judith go on a picnic and kiss; the hand appears in the kitchen wielding a cleaver.
weeks later	The hand plays the piano again.
one day	Uncle Geoffrey goes to

Charleston to change his will; Zeke and neighbors rescue Judith and Mrs. Hastings from the root cellar after Charles sets fire to the house.

autumn, two weeks later

Charles attempts to rape Judith as the hurricane bears down; Jade Green's ghostly hand kills Charles, then disappears forever.

Author Sketch

Phyllis Reynolds Naylor is an extremely prolific and very popular author of over one hundred books for children and young adults (plus thousands of short stories), dealing with many different subjects in a variety of genres. Born in 1933 in Anderson, Indiana, Naylor grew up listening to her parents tell and read stories to her and her two siblings. She began writing stories herself in grade school and was just sixteen when her first story was published, in a church newspaper. She married at the age of eighteen, in 1951, graduated from Joliet Junior College in 1953, and then worked as a secretary and a teacher.



When Phyllis was twenty-three, her husband began to suffer from paranoid schizophrenia; his fears of persecution caused the couple to move repeatedly, and Phyllis wrote "in earnest and in panic" to support themselves. Her husband was finally institutionalized as incurable, and Phyllis divorced him. Fifteen years later, she wrote about this very difficult experience in *Crazy Love: An Autobiographical Account of Marriage and Madness*.

Phyllis married Rex Naylor, a speech pathologist, in 1960, in Maryland, where the couple still lives. They had two sons and now have several grandchildren. Naylor earned a B.A. degree from American University in 1963, planning to become a clinical psychologist, but decided to turn to full-time writing instead. Her first book, *The Galloping Goat and Other Stories*, was a collection of short stories. Her first novel for children, *What the Gulls Were Singing*, was published in 1967. Since then, she has published one or more books every year. Some of

her books focus on serious non-fiction topics—mental illness, religious doubts, parental divorce, a parent's death. Her fiction works include mysteries, Gothic fiction, and supernatural fantasy. Yet others are lighthearted. Naylor's perceptive and humorous Alice series, following the growing-up odyssey of adolescent Alice, is extremely popular. Naylor has said her head teems with story ideas and characters clamoring to get out. She keeps notebooks filled with material for future novels, and she writes, "On my deathbed, I am sure, I will gasp, 'But I still have more books to write!'"

Critic's Corner

Phyllis Reynolds Naylor has garnered critical praise in all the varied genres in which she writes. Critics admire her ability to create authentic, complex characters with whom her readers can empathize as they work through the many problems of young life. Critics also praise Naylor's deft hand with humor and, in her gothic novels, her ability to create and sustain suspense within a suitably eerie atmosphere. Of *Jade Green*, *School Library Journal* wrote, "This is a satisfying ghost story that demands to be read in one sitting." *Publishers Weekly* called the novel "a satisfying spine-tingler," while *Book Report* rated it as Highly Recommended. *Kirkus Reviews* declared, "A truly scary, gripping ghost story from a master of the genre will keep readers engrossed until the last suspenseful page. ... This one blends [Naylor's] best writing and some fairly horror-filled ideas to riveting effect."

Other Books by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

- The Galloping Goat and Other Stories* (1965) and other short story collections
- What the Gulls Were Singing* (1967)
- To Shake a Shadow* (1967)
- To Make a Wee Moon* (1969)
- The Keeper* (1986)
- Making It Happen* (1970)
- The Year of the Gopher* (1987)
- Wrestle the Mountain* (1971)
- Beetles, Lightly Toasted* (1987)
- No Easy Circle* (1972)
- Maudie in the Middle* (1988)
- To Walk the Sky Path* (1973)
- One of the Third Grade Thinkers* (1988)

Witch's Sister (1975)
Send No Blessings (1990)
 and *Witch* sequels
Josie's Troubles (1992)
Walking Through the Dark (1976)
Shiloh (1991) and sequels
How I Came to Be a Writer (1978)
The Grand Escape (1993)
How Lazy Can You Get? (1979)
 and *Club of Mysteries* sequels
Eddie, Incorporated (1980)
The Boys Start the War (1993)
Shadows on the Wall (1980)
 and *Boys and Girls* sequels
 and *York* sequels
The Fear Place (1994)
All Because I'm Older (1981)
Being Danny's Dog (1995) and sequels
A String of Chances (1982)
Ice (1996)
The Solomon System (1983)
Sang Spell (1998)
The Mad Gasser of Besseldorf Street (1983)
Walker's Crossing (1999)
 and *Besseldorf* sequels
Jade Green: A Ghost Story (1999)
Night Cry (1984)
Blizzard's Wake (2002)
The Dark of the Tunnel (1985)
Cuckoo Feathers (2006)
Roxie and the Hooligans (2006)
 The *Alice* series—*The Agony of Alice* (1985)
 through *Alice on Her Way* (2007); 22 titles as of
 2007

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 February 2000, pp. 199–200.
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 Authors & Illustrators*. New York: H.W. Wilson,
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*Something About the Author Autobiography
 Series*, Vol. 10. Detroit: Gale Research, 1990.
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 Winarski, Diana L., "Phyllis Reynolds Naylor:
 Virtuosa with Words," *Teaching PreK–8*,
 November/December 1998, pp. 42ff.

Internet

"A Conversation with Phyllis Reynolds Naylor":
www.childrenslit.com/f_naylor.html
 "A Recent Conversation with Phyllis Reynolds
 Naylor": www.childrenslit.com/f_naylormore.html
 "Featured Author: Phyllis Naylor":
www.carolhurst.com/authors/pnaylor.html
 "Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds":
www.edupaperback.org/showauth.cfm?authid=64
 (see also sites listed for students in "Cross-
 Curricular Sources" below)

General Objectives

1. To examine the issues involved in adjusting to a new home
2. To understand the issue of inheritance and the stresses this can cause within a family
3. To become familiar with the conventions of the gothic literary genre
4. To consider the ways in which keeping a secret can create complications and impact relationships
5. To discuss various literary treatments of the

theme of murder and revenge / justice

6. To discuss ghost stories and actual reports of ghostly happenings

Specific Objectives

1. To understand Judith's family background and the ways in which Judith's connection with her mother impacts her life at her uncle's house
2. To identify the sources of the conflict between Cousin Charles and Uncle Geoffrey
3. To trace the escalating incidents that announce Jade Green's presence, and Judith's intensifying reactions to these incidents
4. To understand why people have accepted Jade Green's death as a suicide, and what the circumstances of Jade's death really were
5. To recognize historical details that set the novel in its time period
6. To analyze Jade Green's character
7. To examine Judith's relationships with both Zeke and Charles
8. To identify elements of the gothic genre in this novel
9. To analyze the tone of Judith's narrative as related to the novel's time period

Literary Terms and Applications

For a better understanding of Phyllis Reynolds Naylor's style, present the following terms and applications to the novel:

First-person narration: the telling of a novel or short story from the point of view of only one person. In this novel, Judith relates her adjustment to her new life and the ghostly happenings that increasingly terrorize her. We learn about other characters through Judith's eyes.

Gothic novel: originally, a romance featuring suspense and terror set in gloomy castles featuring ghosts and other supernatural phenomena, secret passageways, and an innocent heroine threatened by a lustful villain. Today, the gothic romance continues to feature the endangered heroine and an atmosphere of suspense and terror, often with

supernatural plot elements, as in *Jade Green*.

Historical novel: a narrative that presents an imaginative series of events occurring in an actual historical setting. The characters may be both fictional and historical. In this novel, the characters are all fictional. The author of a historical novel often does considerable research to incorporate accurate everyday historical detail into the novel. Naylor has filled this novel with details about everyday life in Judith's era, including running a household, women's fashion—especially hats—and social mores.

Suspense: expectant uncertainty about the outcome of a plot. This novel maintains a high level of suspense, as the ghostly signs of Jade Green's presence increasingly terrorize Judith, who feels unable to appeal to anyone for help.

Settings

The main setting of the novel is Uncle Geoffrey's large, dark house in Whispers, on South Carolina's seacoast. Judith has a sense of foreboding when she first sees the house, but she is delighted with her comfortable second-floor bedroom. The family gathers here each evening in the formal dining room for a multi-course dinner, and they often repair afterward to the parlor, where Judith enjoys playing the piano for her uncle and Mrs. Hastings. Yet the house increasingly holds terror for Judith, as Jade Green's ghostly presence repeatedly announces itself to her, including multiple appearances of the ghostly severed hand—in Judith's bedroom, in the parlor playing the piano, in the kitchen wielding a cleaver. The novel's climax occurs in Judith's bedroom, as Charles attempts to rape Judith, and Jade Green's hand leaps on him and strangles him. Other significant settings include Helene's tony hat shop where Judith works, and the seashore where Judith and Zeke enjoy a picnic afternoon and their first kiss.

Cross-Curricular Sources

(Books—Fiction)

Joan Aiken, *A Foot in the Grave* and other ghost titles
Piers Anthony, *Shade of the Tree*

Libba Bray, *A Great and Terrible Beauty*
 Margaret Buffie, *Someone Else's Ghost*
 David Gale, ed., *Don't Give Up the Ghost: The Delacorte Book of Original Ghost Stories*
 Virginia Hamilton, *The House of Dies Drear*
 Sollace Hotze, *Acquainted with the Night*
 Shirley Jackson, *The Haunting of Hill House*
 Margaret Mahy and Susan Cooper, *Don't Read This! And Other Tales of the Unnatural*
 Barry Moser, ed., *Great Ghost Stories*
 Joan Lowery Nixon, *The Haunting* and other titles
 Andre Norton and Phyllis Miller, *House of Shadows* and other titles
 Arthur Slade, *Dust*
 Michael O. Tunnell, *School Spirits*
 Robert Westall, *Ghost Abbey* and other titles
 Betty Ren Wright, *The Dollhouse Murders* and other titles

(Books—Nonfiction)

Michael Allaby, *Hurricanes*
 Richard Cavendish, *The World of Ghosts and the Supernatural*
 Daniel Cohen, *Ghostly Tales of Love and Revenge* and other *Ghost* titles
 Rosemary Ellen Guiley, *The Encyclopedia of Ghosts and Spirits*
 David C. Knight, *Best True Ghost Stories of the 20th Century*
 Patricia Lauber, *Hurricanes: Earth's Mightiest Storms*
 John Macklin, *World's Most Bone-Chilling "True" Ghost Stories*
 Phyllis Reynolds Naylor, *How I Came to Be a Writer*
 Michael O'Neal, *Haunted Houses*
 Lois Thomas Stover, *Presenting Phyllis Reynolds Naylor*.
 (CD-ROM)
Nancy Drew: Message in a Haunted Mansion (Her Interactive)
Weather Essentials Pack (see Video/DVD listing below; Discovery Channel School)
Writer's Workshop 1: Middle School Program (Holt, Rinehart & Winston)
 (Internet)
 "Ghosts in the Castle":
www.nationalgeographic.com/castles/enter.html
 "Hurricanes":
hurricanes.noaa.gov/
 "The Supernatural World":

library.thinkquest.org/27922
 "The Victorian Era Fashion History":
www.fashion-era.com/the_victorian_era.htm
 "Victorian Ghost Stories":
www.lang.nagoya-u.ac.jp/~matsuoka/ghost-stories.html
 "Women's Fashion Headwear":
www.vintagefashionguild.org/content/view/604/75/

Phyllis Reynolds Naylor on the Internet

"About the Author": www.simonsays.com/content/feature.cfm?sid=510&feature_id=450
 "Alice: Phyllis Reynolds Naylor":
www.simonsays.com/content/destination.cfm?tab=4&pid=368174
 "Author: Phyllis Reynolds Naylor": <http://www.kidreads.com/authors/au-naylor-phyllis-reynolds.asp>
 "Author Spotlight: Phyllis Reynolds Naylor":
www.randomhouse.com/teens/authors/results.pperl?authorid=21893
 "Meet the Author: Phyllis Reynolds Naylor":
www.eduplace.com/kids/tnc/mtai/naylor.html
 "Phyllis Reynolds Naylor": www.childrens-bookguild.org/naylor.htm
 "Phyllis Reynolds Naylor": www.ipl.org/div/kid-space/askauthor/Naylor.html

Video/DVD

Good Conversation! A Talk with Phyllis Reynolds Naylor (Tim Podell Productions)
Raging Planet: Hurricane (Discovery Channel School)
Southeast (Regions of the United States Series) (United Learning)
Weather Essentials Pack—"Hurricane" section (with companion CD-ROM) (Discovery Channel School)
What Is Sexual Harassment? (Learning Seed)

Themes and Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in Jade Green should include these aspects.

Themes

- murder, justice, and revenge
- ghostly happenings
- suspense and terror
- lust

- innocence
- family relationships
- adapting to a new home
- youthful romance
- secrets
- social mores
- mental instability
- inheritance

Motifs

- ladies' hat-making
- gossip
- orphans
- historical details
- food preparation and meals
- the color green
- picture frame and photograph
- cleaver
- social station
- hurricanes

Meaning Study

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have a particular meaning in the novel. Explain the meaning of each. Page numbers indicate the context from which the item is taken.

1. I did not tell him that after my father's death she gave birth to a stillborn daughter, all of which grieved her so that she eventually died in a madhouse. (Ch. 1, p. 3)
(A stillborn baby is dead at birth. Judith's mother was so distraught by the death of her husband, followed by the stillbirth of her second daughter, that she became mentally disordered and was confined to a facility for mental patients, called a madhouse at that time. As the ghostly incidents caused by Jade Green mount up, Judith grows increasingly worried that she may have inherited her mother's madness.)
2. "Takes some rooms in town, I believe. No birds of a feather, them two." (Ch. 1, p. 4)
(The driver is telling Judith that her cousin Charles rents some rooms in town rather than staying at his father's house. This is an early indication that there is some strain in the relationship between Charles and Uncle Geoffrey.)
3. Indeed, I had only eight years' schooling, which was quite enough, it was decided, for a girl of my station, though less than

some of the boys I knew had acquired. But I could play the piano well enough. ... (Ch. 1, pp. 4-5)

(Station in this context refers to social position, a prominent consideration in people's lives in Judith's time. This comment tells us that Judith's family was not high in the social hierarchy—but it was not low, either, as shown by the fact that Judith did have eight years of education and also was taught to play the piano.)

4. We had brought up potatoes and onions from the root cellar beneath the kitchen. ... (Ch. 3, p. 19)
(A root cellar is a pit or cellar used to store fruits and vegetables, especially root crops such as turnips, potatoes, and onions. Because it is underground, the root cellar remains naturally cool all year round, providing ideal storage conditions. The root cellar takes a prominent role toward the end of the novel, when Judith and Mrs. Hastings are locked into it while the house begins to burn above them.)
5. When I had finished the first floor, I went up to second, where there were five bedrooms and the water closet. (Ch. 3, p. 22)
(A water closet is a room with a toilet, a precursor of the bathroom. Judith's mention of the water closet helps place the story in its historical setting.)
6. "The coroner said you can never tell about those people—it's in their makeup, these violent urges, these 'strange unaccountables,' he calls them." (Ch. 5, p. 39)
(A coroner is a public official who holds a hearing, called in inquest, into the cause of any death that may not be due to natural causes. Because Jade Green's death did not involve natural causes, the local coroner held an inquest. He inaccurately concluded that Jade had committed suicide, partly because of social snobbery ascribing violent urges to people of Jade's low social class.)
7. He let one finger slide down the buttons of my bodice. (Ch. 6, p. 49)
(A bodice is the upper part of a woman's dress. By the social mores of the time, it is a shocking and utterly inappropriate thing for Charles to do. It is a hint about his sexual interest in Judith and, perhaps, formerly

in *Jade Green*.)

8. "Your cheeks are so pink, you must be going to meet a lover." (Ch. 11, p. 90) *(Today, the term lover means someone with whom a person has a sexual relationship. In Judith's time, however, lover referred to a person in love—specifically, a man in love with a woman.)*
9. Charles would inherit his father's estate, being his only living heir. (Ch. 14, p. 120) *(An estate consists of the assets and liabilities left by a person at death. An heir is a person who inherits, or legally receives the net assets of, an estate. Charles is very concerned about inheriting his father's estate, which will be substantial. He sees Judith as a threat because Uncle Geoffrey might make her an heir as well.)*
10. And grasping the cleaver was the ghostly hand. (Ch. 13, p. 114) *(A cleaver is a butcher's tool for cutting apart animal carcasses. It is a heavy, very sharp implement; a cleaver cut off Jade Green's hand.)*

Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important, and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the book.

Literal Level (Questions 1–4)

1. Why has Judith come to live with her Uncle Geoffrey? What surprises Judith about her new living arrangements once she has arrived? *(Judith has recently become an orphan, and Uncle Geoffrey is the only one of her relatives who has been willing to take her in. Judith expects to work for her keep, as assistant to the cook and as housekeeper. She also looks forward to the companionship of her cousin Charles, whom she believes must be about her own age. Judith is unpleasantly surprised to learn that Charles is forty years old. But she is very pleasantly surprised to learn that her household duties will be very light, that she has her own comfortable bedroom on the second floor rather than a small room in the attic, and that she is free to take a job in town and come and go as she pleases.)*

2. What conflict exists between Uncle Geoffrey and his son, Charles? *(Charles does not work for a living and lives a dissipated life focused on alcohol, gambling, and "ladies of the night." Uncle Geoffrey, who is prudent and proper and a sober businessman, thoroughly disapproves of Charles's way of life, although he supports Charles (but not lavishly). Charles expects to inherit his father's considerable estate, whereas Uncle Geoffrey has doubts about leaving his estate in Charles's name when Charles refuses to get a job and prove his management skills. Father and son become estranged when Uncle Geoffrey makes Judith his co-heir and Charles in response sets fire to the house.)*
3. In what ways does Jade Green increasingly announce her presence to Judith? Why does Jade's ghostly hand keep appearing? *(On Judith's first night in her uncle's house, she hears a faint scratching sound in her bedroom closet. A few days later, the scratching is louder, and Judith's trunk lid is askew in the closet. Then Judith hears a scurrying sound inside the closet and sees that the door to her closet is open several inches. The next day, Judith sees a blood stain on the attic steps. Days later, Judith finds a girl's white glove on an attic step and deep cleaver marks in the step. That night something scurries across the floor of Judith's bedroom. Other nights, Judith feels something brush across her face. Jade Green's face appears in the frame instead of Judith's mother. Then the hand begins appearing—in Judith's bedroom, in the parlor playing the piano, in the kitchen wielding the cleaver. Finally, the hand attacks and kills Charles as he attempts to assault Judith in her bedroom. The hand then disappears for good in the swirling hurricane waters.)*
4. Why does everyone assume that Jade Green killed herself? What really caused her death? *(Charles set up the death scene to appear that Jade had committed suicide, placing the cleaver in her remaining hand. The coroner expresses a biased assumption that people of Jade's low social class of origin are prone to violent urges. In reality,*

Charles murdered Jade in a fury after she threatened him with the cleaver to ward off his attempted rape.)

Interpretive Level (Questions 5–8)

5. In approximately what year do the events of this novel take place? Cite historical details in the novel to support your answer. *(The story takes place around 1887 or 1888. We know this both from details of setting, from the dates given for Jade Green's headstone in Chapter 14, and from the statement earlier in the story that Jade Green had died some three years before Judith's arrival. Story details support this timeframe: the story takes place in the horse-drawn-vehicle era but also when train travel from Ohio to South Carolina was commonplace. Photography was available for families like Judith's. Homes were not electrified, and bathroom facilities consisted of a water closet. Ladies wore bonnets and petticoats and carried parasols. Young people like Zeke and Judith could go on picnics together alone, but Judith considers the concept of swimming naked with a beau to be quite shocking, although an alluring thought. Charles's sexual innuendoes and advances toward Judith are also outside societal norms.)*
6. What secrets does Judith bring with her to her uncle's house? What secret does the house hold? *(Judith has secretly violated her uncle's condition of living in his house by bringing something green into the house. But Judith cannot bear to leave behind the photograph of her mother, which she had given to Judith in a green silk frame. Judith has the frame and picture secretly tucked away in her trunk. Judith's other secret is that her mother died in a madhouse and that she worries about inheriting her mother's mental illness. The house harbors the ghostly presence of Jade Green and the secret reality that Charles murdered Jade on the attic stairs.)*
7. Using information that Judith learns about Jade Green from various sources, write a character description of Jade. *(Jade was lighthearted and careless, delighting in pranks and making people*

laugh. She liked to tell lively tales, and she enjoyed pleasing Uncle Geoffrey by playing simple tunes on the piano. She was free-spirited and had a saucy look. She was happy to work for wages and enjoyed a pint after work.)

8. Describe Judith's relationship with Zeke and her relationship with Charles. *(Judith and Zeke are immediately taken with one another. She enjoys his forward manner, and they both enjoy their easy and often teasing give-and-take. They acknowledge their growing romantic feelings with their first kiss. Zeke senses that something is disturbing Judith, yet she can't bring herself to tell him about the ghostly happenings until after the house fire. Charles's attitude toward her disturbs Judith, but Judith doesn't know what to do about it because Charles is her cousin and she has been welcomed into the house as part of the family. Charles is alternately teasing and rude toward Judith. As Uncle Geoffrey becomes more fond of Judith, Charles perceives her as a growing rival to his sole inheritance, which makes Judith uneasy, as does Charles's obvious sexual interest in her.)*

Critical Level (Questions 9–10)

9. What conventions of the gothic genre does Phyllis Reynolds Naylor use in this novel? *(Conventions include the newly orphaned heroine who has just traveled a distance to a new home to live with relatives she knows little about; additional conventions include the imperiled heroine, the threatening villain, and the unexplained phenomena in the atmospheric house, all of which create a mood of suspense and growing terror.)*
10. How does the tone of Judith's narrative help place the story in its time frame? *(Judith's voice is somewhat old-fashioned in its diction and use of words from the outset; e.g., "Forty!" I cried in dismay. "Surely not!" Students could share with classmates examples they identify of this old-fashioned tone.)*

Creative Level (Questions 11–13)

11. Imagine you are Zeke, and write a series of

journal entries about Judith. Or, imagine you are Jade Green and write a series of journal entries about Charles.

12. Write news stories for media of your choice on Jade Green's death and then on Charles Sparrow's death. Do reporters suggest any link between the two deaths?
13. Does the truth ever come out about Charles's death and the real cause of Jade Green's death? Explain your ideas about this.

Across the Curriculum

Science

1. The carriage driver tells Judith that the storms off the Carolina coast are legendary. Research and report on these storms.
2. Research and report on sleepwalking. Cover such topics as what may cause people to sleepwalk, ways to keep sleepwalkers from harming themselves, and possible ways to "cure" people of sleepwalking.
3. Create a multimedia presentation on hurricanes. Explain such things as the characteristics of hurricanes, how and why hurricanes form, the paths they follow, their effects when they make landfall, and planning for and reacting to a hurricane.
4. Create a presentation on the development of photography in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Social Studies

1. Discuss with classmates the social roles of teenage and older women in U.S. society during the era in which this novel is set.
2. Research and report on the treatment of people with mental illness in the nineteenth century and the reforms in this treatment spearheaded by Dorothea Dix.
3. Zeke Carey is the son of the local miller. Explain the miller's profession and role in a community at the time in which this novel is set.
4. Research and report on the typical education given to girls of Judith's era.

Geography

On a map of the United States, locate the places mentioned in the novel, including Judith's home state and the state she moves to and the city where she ends her train journey. Include on your map a likely location for

Whispers based on information in the novel.

Mathematics

1. Calculate the number of miles Judith traveled during her train journey. How long would the trip have taken?
2. According to Jade Green's tombstone, how old was Jade when she died?

Language Arts

1. Read other gothic ghost stories and, with classmates who have done the same, discuss similar and differing elements among the novels.
2. Write your own gothic ghost short story. Share with classmates.
3. Phyllis Reynolds Naylor makes her writing more vivid with the use of similes such as: "There were two gables with a window in each, the curtains slightly parted like cats' eyes, not quite closed, spying." Write some sentences of your own that use interesting similes.

Art

1. Draw a map of the town of Whispers, or a floor plan of Uncle Geoffrey's house and its surrounding yard.
2. Design some fabulous trimmed bonnets for Helene's Hat Shoppe.
3. Create an illustration of the exterior of Uncle Geoffrey's house as it first appears to Judith the day she arrives.
4. Create illustrations of various characters from the novel. Either draw your own, or find illustrations in the media that fit your mental image of what these characters may look like.

Music

1. In poster, booklet, or multimedia format, show and explain the different types of pianos.
2. Play or find recordings of some of the songs that Judith plays on the piano, especially "Springfield Mountain."

Student Involvement Activities

1. Learn how to play checkers, or teach someone who doesn't know how to play. Or, have a class checkers tournament.

2. Demonstrate to classmates how to ride a unicycle, or invite someone to your class to do so.
3. Draw a family tree for Judith. Or, draw your own family tree.
4. Learn how to make a pie crust, or demonstrate to classmates how to do this.
5. Discuss ghosts with classmates. Do they exist? Might they exist? Do they not exist? Have any classmates had what they think is or might be a paranormal experience?
6. With some classmates, read about ghost lore and share what you learn. Is the idea that a ghost of someone who dies a violent death returns to the house where that death occurred common ghost lore?
7. Determine what type(s) of violent storm(s) are possible or to be expected where you live. Then develop a list of storm-preparation steps and supplies for your family.
8. Draw up a list of food and other items that you would take along on a perfect picnic.
9. Describe a picture that is very meaningful to you, and explain why it is so meaningful. You might want to share the picture with classmates.
10. Do you like to fish? Demonstrate to classmates your fishing gear and techniques. Show photographs of your memorable catches.

Alternative Assessment

1. Draw up a detailed character list for the novel under two headings: major characters and minor characters. List each character's name, give a brief character description, and tell what role she or he plays in Judith's life.
2. In Chapter 19 of the novel, Judith finally tells Zeke the story of what has been happening. Imagine you are Judith, and write what she tells Zeke.
3. List the ghostly occurrences that happen in the novel, including those that Judith doesn't recognize at first as ghostly. Under each occurrence, describe Judith's reaction to it.
4. With classmates, conduct a police/coroner's inquiry into Charles's death. Include a number of witnesses, including Judith and Zeke (will they talk about the ghostly hand, or not?). What is the conclusion of the inquiry

- as to the cause of Charles's death?
5. Write character sketches of Jade Green and Judith that compare the two young women.

Vocabulary Test

Match each underlined word with its meaning listed below. Write the letter of the meaning in the space next to the sentence number.

- | | | | |
|-------------|-------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| a. lawyer | f. proper behavior | k. embarrassed | p. slowly |
| b. live | g. in a friendly way | l. pretending | q. bordered |
| c. soothed | h. sense of coming evil | m. became pale | r. cut apart |
| d. suitcase | i. ghostly figure | n. unwholesome | s. warnings |
| e. hate | j. woman's dress | o. out of line | t. ill will |

- _____ 1. It was when we turned up Stone Street that I felt the first foreboding.
- _____ 2. The solicitor had told me that there was a certain condition to living in my uncle's house.
- _____ 3. "We'll have dinner in an hour or so," Mrs. Hastings told me, picking up my small valise.
- _____ 4. Now the trunk's lid had been raised a few inches and rested slightly askew on its frame.
- _____ 5. "Now that's a nice frock!" Mrs. Hastings exclaimed.
- _____ 6. Mrs. Hastings blanched as white as an onion.
- _____ 7. "Where Mr. Sparrow was all stiffness and propriety, Jade Green was lighthearted and careless."
- _____ 8. The slightest sickness would bring with it thoughts of dying, and such morbid thoughts, in turn, made me fear my mother's madness.
- _____ 9. When I looked up again I was disconcerted, for Charles's eyes were not on my face but on my figure.
- _____ 10. Wasn't it human nature to suspect a ghost to reside in a house where a girl had died violently?
- _____ 11. We were now traveling along the narrow lane that skirted the sea.
- _____ 12. Zeke's admonitions to be watchful of Charles played upon my mind.
- _____ 13. "Charles, you yourself profess to abhor gossip."
- _____ 14. Once the waves broke, the water rolled more languidly into the cove.
- _____ 15. "I'll talk with you," said Mrs. Hastings genially.
- _____ 16. The malice in his words did not escape Mrs. Hastings.
- _____ 17. "What has our orphan been up to," Charles asked, feigning friendliness.
- _____ 18. His apology mollified my uncle, however.
- _____ 19. Was I to go on living like this, never knowing where the severed hand would next show itself?
- _____ 20. As frightened as I was of the apparition, I could feel an anger growing inside me.

Comprehension Test A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

Read each character description. In the list below, find the character who matches the description. Write the letter of the character in the space next to the description number. You will use one name twice.

- | | | |
|------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| a. Judith | d. Mrs. Hastings | g. Helene Harper |
| b. Charles | e. Uncle Geoffrey | h. Jade Green |
| c. Violet | f. Zeke Carey | i. Judith's mother |

- _____ 1. Sober, serious businessman with a very warm heart.
- _____ 2. Judith's girl friend and confidante.
- _____ 3. Warm-hearted cook and mother-figure to Judith.
- _____ 4. High-spirited former street urchin.
- _____ 5. Orphaned teenager who starts a new life with relatives.
- _____ 6. Elegant woman who owns the shop where Judith works.
- _____ 7. Very blond and handsome son of the local miller.
- _____ 8. Middle-aged man with a very poor reputation.
- _____ 9. Woman who died in a madhouse.
- _____ 10. Girl who refused to attend school.

Part II: Fill-In (20 points)

Write one or two words in each blank to make each statement true.

- 1. Judith's uncle Geoffrey lives in a town named _____.
- 2. Judith used to live in the U.S. state of _____ with her parents.
- 3. Uncle Geoffrey travels to the nearby city of _____ on business.
- 4. At first, Judith mistakenly looks forward to living with a(n) _____ who will be around her own age.
- 5. Judith gives Zeke a(n) _____ as a gift.
- 6. Uncle Geoffrey bans anything that is _____ from his house.
- 7. The shop where Judith works is called Helene's _____.
- 8. Violet and Judith often buy their lunch next door at the Bib and _____.
- 9. Judith uses _____ to try to capture the ghostly hand.
- 10. Charles becomes extremely angry when his father updates his _____.

Part III: Multiple Choice (30 points)

Underline the choice that correctly completes each of these sentences.

- 1. Judith is thrilled that this body of water is within walking distance of her house: (river, ocean, lake, stream).
- 2. At first, Judith thinks the scrabbling sounds in her closet are caused by (Jade Green, rats, bad wiring, mice).
- 3. The cause of Jade Green's death was (suicide, fever, murder, drowning).
- 4. Jade Green died in/on the (attic stairs, root cellar, parlor, spare bedroom).
- 5. Judith is horrified to see the ghostly hand in the kitchen wielding a(n) (pistol, axe, butcher knife, cleaver).
- 6. Judith's new home is in this part of the country: (North, South, East, West).
- 7. On the beach, Judith and Zeke exchange (gifts, love notes, a kiss, secrets).
- 8. Uncle Geoffrey teaches Judith how to play (checkers, chess, bridge, croquet).
- 9. The picture frame that Judith brings with her contains a photograph of her (father, sister, cousin, mother).

10. Judith lights her room with a(n) (gas light, candle, flashlight, oil lamp).
11. Violet tells Judith that ghosts return to a house because of (**revenge, jealousy, violent death, love**).
12. Judith is disturbed when Charles touches her (**bodice, ankle, hair, photograph**).
13. The ghost awakens Judith, Uncle Geoffrey, and Mrs. Hastings with (**singing, crying, moaning, piano playing**).
14. Zeke and the neighbors save Judith and Mrs. Hastings from (**assault, fire, drowning, the hurricane**).
15. Charles is this many years old: (**forty, fifty, thirty, twenty**).

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Who helps Judith adjust to her new home and life, and in what ways?
2. In what ways is Charles a threat to Judith?
3. How does Judith react to the escalating signs of Jade Green's presence? What two things about this does Judith especially fear?

Comprehension Test B

Part I: Matching (20 points)

Read each character description. In the list below, find the character who matches the description. Write the letter of the character in the space next to the description number. You will use one name twice.

- | | | |
|------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| a. Judith | d. Mrs. Hastings | g. Helene Harper |
| b. Charles | e. Uncle Geoffrey | h. Jade Green |
| c. Violet | f. Zeke Carey | i. Judith's mother |

- _____ 1. Helps Judith protect the windows of her uncle's home from the violent storm.
- _____ 2. Presses unwanted sexual overtures on some women.
- _____ 3. Interviews Judith for the wage-paying job.
- _____ 4. Reluctantly agrees to have Judith come to live in his home.
- _____ 5. Gave Judith the precious gift that Judith cannot leave behind.
- _____ 6. Is trapped with Judith in the dark behind a bolted door.
- _____ 7. Tells Judith details about Jade Green that Judith doesn't hear from Mrs. Hastings.
- _____ 8. Was murdered, although people believe she committed suicide.
- _____ 9. Worries about becoming as mentally ill as her mother was.
- _____ 10. Sets fire to Uncle Geoffrey's house.

Part II: Short Answer (20 points)

Write a one- or two-word answer to each of the following questions.

- 1. Who is the author of this novel? _____
- 2. What is Judith's last name? _____
- 3. What U.S. state becomes Judith's new home? _____
- 4. How old is Judith when she arrives to live with her uncle? _____
- 5. What forbidden green item does Judith bring with her to her uncle's house?

- 6. What musical instrument is in Uncle Geoffrey's parlor? _____
- 7. What ghostly thing haunts Judith? _____
- 8. Where do Zeke and Judith go for their first picnic and share their first kiss?

- 9. What part of the house are Judith and Mrs. Hastings locked into and trapped in?

- 10. What type of storm occurs at the end of the novel? _____

Part III: Multiple Choice (30 points)

Underline the choice that correctly completes each of these sentences.

- 1. Charles often addresses Judith, mockingly, as (Cousin, M'Dear, Orphan, Judi).
- 2. Judith keeps her secret treasure in the closet, inside her (trunk, valise, wardrobe, bodice).
- 3. Judith's mother died in a(n) (almshouse, madhouse, jail, hospital).
- 4. Zeke often takes Judith for rides in his (carriage, Model T, steam car, wagon).
- 5. The weapon that killed Jade Green was (a gun, a candlestick, a cleaver, poison).
- 6. Until she was a teenager, Judith lived in this part of the country: (East, West, North, South).
- 7. Jade Green died this long before Judith's arrival: (three months, one year, eighteen months, three years).
- 8. Judith's new job is to be a (butcher's helper, ribbon clerk, barmaid, teacher's aide).
- 9. The water closet in Uncle Geoffrey's house is the (bathroom, pantry, laundry room, indoor garden).

10. Judith believes she has been brought to Uncle Geoffrey's home to be an assistant to the (**gardener, cook, midwife, governess**).
11. In the summer, Uncle Geoffrey and his family eat their dinner salads in the (**dining room, parlor, sun-room, garden**).
12. Violet teaches Judith the career skill of (**dress-making, cooking, hat-making, piano-playing**).
13. Judith tries to defend herself against Charles with a (**knife, gun, crowbar, verbal threat**).
14. Under Uncle Geoffrey's new will, Mrs. Hastings inherits the (**house, kitchen, piano, garden**).
15. Charles steals this from the house: (**silver, paintings, stock certificates, money**).

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. From what sources does Judith gain her knowledge about Jade Green? What does she learn?
2. What are Cousin Charles's attitude and behavior toward Judith?
3. In what ways does Jade Green make her ghostly presence known? Why?

Answer Key

VOCABULARY TEST

- | | | | |
|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. h | 6. m | 11. q | 16. t |
| 2. a | 7. f | 12. s | 17. l |
| 3. d | 8. n | 13. e | 18. c |
| 4. o | 9. k | 14. p | 19. r |
| 5. j | 10. b | 15. g | 20. i |

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. e | 6. g |
| 2. c | 7. f |
| 3. d | 8. b |
| 4. h | 9. i |
| 5. a | 10. h |

Part II: Fill-In (20 points)

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Whispers | 6. green |
| 2. Ohio | 7. Hat Shoppe |
| 3. Charleston | 8. Bottle |
| 4. cousin | 9. rat traps |
| 5. picture/picture frame | 10. will |

Part III: Multiple Choice (30 points)

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. ocean | 9. mother |
| 2. mice | 10. candle |
| 3. murder | 11. violent death |
| 4. attic stairs | 12. bodice |
| 5. cleaver | 13. piano playing |
| 6. South | 14. fire |
| 7. a kiss | 15. forty |
| 8. checkers | |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. f | 6. d |
| 2. b | 7. c |
| 3. g | 8. h |
| 4. e | 9. a |
| 5. i | 10. b |

Part II: Short Answer (20 points)

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Phyllis Reynolds Naylor | 6. (grand) piano |
| 2. Sparrow | 7. severed hand |

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 3. South Carolina | 8. cove/seashore |
| 4. fifteen | 9. root cellar |
| 5. picture frame | 10. hurricane |

Part III: Multiple Choice (30 points)

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. Orphan | 9. bathroom |
| 2. trunk | 10. cook |
| 3. madhouse | 11. garden |
| 4. wagon | 12. hat-making |
| 5. a cleaver | 13. knife |
| 6. North | 14. house |
| 7. three years | 15. money |
| 8. ribbon clerk | |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.



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