

THE CAVENDISH HOME FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

Chapter Questions

Chapter One

What type of person is Victoria? Describe her characteristics and support each with specific evidence from the text.

What type of person is Lawrence? Describe his characteristics and support each with specific evidence from the text.

How would you describe Victoria and Lawrence's friendship? Use specific examples from the text to support your response.

How does Victoria view her friendship with Lawrence? Support with specific evidence from the text.

How does Lawrence view his friendship with Victoria? Support with specific evidence from the text.

How would you characterize Victoria's parents? What type of people are they? Describe and support with specific evidence from the text.

Would you want parents like Victoria's mom and dad? Why or why not?

Chapter Two

Why do you think Victoria denies knowing Lawrence? What are some possible reasons?

What conflicts (both internal and external) does Victoria face in this chapter? Explain each in detail.

How do Victoria's classmates view her? Explain their view by using specific examples from the text.

Victoria feels driven to be the best. Do you believe this is a good way to live or a bad way to live? Why?

Examine the different settings in this chapter. How does the author use specific elements and descriptions to show that something is not quite right? Cite specific examples from the text to support your response.

Victoria reflects on her behavior and thinks, "She should have been more polite, but she had tolerated enough strange people for one day, and this man was the strangest of all." What else has seemed strange that day? Cite specific examples that show things aren't quite right in Victoria's world.

Chapter Three

When talking to Mr. and Mrs. Prewitt, “Victoria refused to be frightened by them and their rotten berries and their strange, wolfish smiles.” Why do you think Victoria refuses to be frightened? What does that say about her?

The author creates a world that is not quite right in this chapter. Pull out specific examples from the text to help support the fact that something seems to be off.

What is motivating Victoria in this chapter (consider the fact that she may have multiple motivations). Explain each in detail.

Hypothesize: What do you think is going on in Victoria’s town? Find clues in the chapter to support your view.

Look at the traits of the three missing children (Lawrence, Jackie, and Donovan). Is there anything they have in common? Why would the three of them be missing?

Chapter Four

Victoria comments that, “People who cried couldn’t handle their lives...” Do you believe this is true? Why or why not?

When thinking about her friendships, Victoria reflects on Lawrence: “Victoria Wright had only one friend, and he wasn’t even a real friend; he was a project, someone to fix and whip into shape.” Do you believe this is true? Is Lawrence not really a friend to Victoria? Find specific evidence from the book to both support this and to dispute it.

How is the atmosphere in the Cavendish Home different from the outside world? Support your response with specific examples from the text.

Chapter Five

When describing her plan, Victoria thinks:

“This time, however, it was a different sort of plan from her usual ones.
It was a plan of investigation.
It was also a plan of deception.”

Describe how Victoria’s plan is both a plan of investigation and a plan of deception. Then, come up with another adjective to describe her plan and explain why you chose this adjective.

Although Mr. Alban tells Victoria that he is okay, it is obvious that he isn’t. Cite specific physical features and behaviors that show he isn’t doing well.

Why do you think Victoria was spared by whatever it was in the room that took Mr. Alban? Explain your guess.

The narrator states that, “in real life, Victoria Wright always got exactly what she wanted.” How might this be a bad thing? Explain.

Chapter Six

Evaluate Victoria’s decision to go back to the Cavendish Home. What are the pros and cons to her visiting the house?

What about a time you were brave and faced a fear.

Examine the paragraph, “They stopped at a tall, narrow door beneath a painting of a woman and a boy and a girl,” and the one below that starts with, “The door had etchings of scenes upon it...” What sort of atmosphere do these images create? Use specific examples to support your view.

Victoria thinks, “It was a fine line, between being brave and being too brave.” Do you believe this is true? Why or why not?

What do you think is going on at the Cavendish Home? Come up with a theory and explain it using specifics from the text to support your guess.

The Cavendish Home for Boys and Girls seems almost human. Pull out specific examples to show the personification of the home.

The chapter ends with Beatrice holding a gleaming knife. What do you think is going to happen? Predict potential outcomes.

Chapter Seven

Why do you think Beatrice leaves without helping Victoria? Do you think she was justified in leaving her? Why or why not?

Do you believe you have a duty to help people when you can, even if it puts you in danger? Why or why not?

Victoria thinks, “This time she wouldn’t let her fear get the best of her.” Describe a time when you let fear get the best of you. What was the outcome?

Do you think it is wise for Victoria to continue investigating Lawrence’s disappearance and find out what is going on in her town, even after the frightening things she has witnessed? Why or why not?

Chapter Eight

Earlier in the book Victoria says that she never lies, yet as the story goes on she finds herself doing it more and more. List some of her lies. Do you think they are justified? Why or why not?

Do you think there are times when lying is okay? When? Or if you believe you should never lie, explain why not.

Mr. Tibbalt says, "People don't care about much as long as everything looks as it should, as long as they can show off and feel good about themselves." Do you believe this statement is true in our world? Explain your view.

Mr. Tibbalt tells Victoria that she is like Mrs. Cavendish. In what ways are Victoria and Mrs. Cavendish alike? List the similarities. In what ways are they different?

Examine the following conversation between Mr. Tibbalt and Victoria:

"Beatrice said I may be all right, since Mrs. Cavendish likes me."

"Or maybe you're worse off than anyone."

"Yes, that's what Beatrice said."

Why would Victoria be worse off than anyone since Mrs. Cavendish likes her? Hypothesize some reasons.

When Mr. Tibbalt was talking about Beatrice, he said, "She never spoke up, just like I never did. It kept us safe, you see. We were so afraid." Is it okay to speak up if you're afraid? Why or why not?

The events that Mr. Tibbalt and Beatrice witnessed changed them forever. Where do we see other characters in literature who are changed because of events that have happened to them. Think about other books, short stories, and poems that you've read and identify the character, the event, and explain how they've been changed.

When Mr. Tibbalt tells Victoria the story of his childhood friend Vivian Goodfellow, he says, "[Vivian] said she thought I was different, that I could see people's value." What do you think Vivian meant by this? How did she think Mr. Tibbalt was different from the other people in their town? Do you think it's important to find and appreciate the value of other people, even if they are different from you? Why or why not?

Victoria tells Mr. Tibbalt that Mrs. Cavendish, "...doesn't know that I'm not afraid of her." Do you believe this is true? Is Victoria not afraid of Mrs. Cavendish? Explain why you feel this way.

What positive traits does Victoria have? What negative traits does she have? Support each response with specific examples from the text to show why you gave her these traits.

Do you believe that some traits that people have can be both positive and negative? Why or why not?

Why do you think Mr. Tibbalt decides to confide in Victoria?

Chapter Nine

How has Victoria changed in this chapter from how she used to be? Use specifics from the text to support your response.

If Mrs. Cavendish changes kids who are different, what do you think is wrong with Victoria? What would Mrs. Cavendish want to change about Victoria? Explain using specifics from the text.

Victoria tells Mr. Alice, “My parents will be here any minute now, you just wait. They won’t let you do anything to me. Father will sue you and take all your money.” Mr. Alice laughs at this. Why do you think he laughs? Explain.

Compare the way Victoria viewed the house the first time she was there to how she views it now. (Hint: Look at your response to the question about the house in Chapter Four.) Explain using specifics from the text to support your view.

Victoria makes sure not to forget that there are thirty seats at the table in the Cavendish home: “All the same, Victoria held the number thirty (not counting the two big chairs) in her head. Perhaps it would be useful later. *But useful for what?* Victoria asked herself. She did not have an answer.” Do you have an answer? What might that number be useful for? Come up with some possible reasons.

Victoria notes that Mrs. Cavendish looks different: “...she could see the tight gray color of Mrs. Cavendish’s skin, and beneath the pretty blue of her eyes, an angry red. Last time she had seen Mrs. Cavendish, she had looked bright and happy, but now her hair was not quite as shiny, her skin not quite as smooth.” Why do you think this is? Come up with some possible reasons.

Chapter Ten

How is the Cavendish Home for Boys and Girls a reflection of the Academy? What similarities do we see? Explain using specific examples.

Why does Victoria realize it was a mistake to go up to Lawrence? Explain your response.

What do you think is going to happen next? Why?

Chapter Eleven

Mrs. Cavendish has the children chant, “Be careful of what friends you pick. You’ll catch their faults, they’ll make you sick.” Do you agree with this? Can people pick up the good and bad qualities of their friends? Explain your view.

What faults does Victoria have? Support with specific evidence from the text.

What faults does Lawrence have? Support with specific evidence from the text.

The children laugh at Lawrence and use the word “degenerates.” What does this word mean? How does it relate to the Cavendish Home for Boys and Girls? Explain the links.

Why do you think Mrs. Cavendish chose to put Lawrence in the hanger and not Victoria? What might her motivation be? Explain in detail.

Chapter Twelve

Why do you think Jacqueline is risking getting in trouble to help Victoria? What might her motivation be? Hypothesize some potential reasons.

The narrator states, “For the first time in her life, Victoria thought she understood the word ‘heartbreak.’” What do you think Victoria means by this? What could be causing her heartbreak?

The book states, “Victoria and Jacqueline whirled to face Mrs. Cavendish, who seemed somehow taller, sharper, and hungrier than before Lawrence’s hanging.” Why do you think Mrs. Cavendish looks different after Lawrence’s hanging? Hypothesize some potential reasons.

Examine the following section:

Victoria narrowed her eyes at Harold.

“Can’t remember me all the way, huh?” he said. “It’s okay. That’s part of it. You come here and people forget about you. People don’t like to notice. They turn the other way.”

“She turns them the other way,” said Jacqueline. “Pushes them around, confuses them. But they let her. It’s easier than fighting.”

Who in the book turns the other way and forgets? Explain how. Who doesn’t? Explain.

How can you relate the ideas in the above passage to your world?

When Victoria goes to find Lawrence, she thinks, “It was silly, it was stupid, but she had to try.” Evaluate the pros and cons of Victoria talking to Lawrence.

Victoria thinks, “And besides, Lawrence was hopeless without her; he needed her.” Do you believe this is true? Why or why not?

Chapter Thirteen

The setting is very important in this chapter. It acts as a living, breathing thing. Pull out specific lines that show how the house is working against Victoria and how it is helping her.

The house seems to be speaking to Victoria. Who/what do you think this voice belongs to? Hypothesize some possible answers and explain each using support from the text.

Why do you think humming seems to help Victoria? Explain.

When Victoria is scared, she hums. Describe what you do when you're scared.

Chapter Fourteen

How is Victoria and Lawrence's relationship changing in this chapter? Support your view with specific examples from the text.

Victoria is different from the girl she was at the beginning of the book. Describe how she's changed up until this point by using specific examples from the book.

Chapter Fifteen

The narrator states, “Victoria studied Jacqueline's face. Her coaching was making her into something different, prettier, more normal- better, supposedly. Victoria wasn't sure she agreed. It would be one thing for Victoria to help Jacqueline be prettier and more normal while they were both safe at home. Why, it would be just like helping Lawrence keep his hair combed and reminding him to please not hum to himself in public.”

Explain in your own words what you think Victoria means in the passage above.

This chapter looks at appearance in many different ways. List specific examples and explain what the author is trying to say with each.

Chapter Sixteen

How has Victoria's mood and way of thinking shifted? What has caused this to happen? Explain in detail.

Victoria thinks, “What was the point in saying anything? No one cared what she had to say. All her efforts toward perfection meant nothing. Her parents didn't care about her and her trophies and honor rolls and awards. No one did. And without that, who was Victoria? Nothing. She was nothing?”

Do you think Victoria's thinking in the above passage is true in relation to the book? Is Victoria nothing without these things? Was this what made people care about her?

Relate this way of thinking (in the above passage) to the real world. Do you think people who have trophies, make honor roll, and win awards are regarded as more important? Do people feel that others below them are nothing? Describe your views and support them with examples from your life/current world.

Victoria looks at the paintings that Jacqueline is now painting and while she thinks they are respectable, she also feels that they are boring: "It was also perfectly boring—pretty, but boring... They were very respectable. Victoria could imagine her father hanging a copy alongside all the other boring, respectable paintings hanging in the stairwell at home."

Looking at the above passage, why do you think Victoria feels this way? Why would she say that Jacqueline's pictures were boring? Explain your view.

Looking at the above passage, what do you think the message is that the author is trying to make? Explain.

React to the way that Mrs. Cavendish is trying to cure the children. What is your view on this method? Explain your thinking.

Chapter Seventeen

Examine the following statement: "Mrs. Cavendish had taught them how to be different, had frightened them into being exactly what a Belleville girl should be." How is this statement ironic?

Lawrence yells at Victoria when she tells him to trust her. He says, "Why should I? You're just like Mr. Alice. You sit back and watch her hurt people, and you don't even care." Do you think this statement is true? Why or why not? Why do you think Victoria has reacted to the other children's coaching the way she has?

At the end of the chapter, Lawrence tells Victoria that he has a bad idea about what they are about to do—go exploring in the Cavendish Home gardens—and Victoria agrees. Do you agree? Is this a bad idea? Why or why not? Weigh the potential risks and gains for what they are doing.

Chapter Eighteen

The voices continue to whisper to Victoria. Look back at your initial guess at who the voices belong to (in Chapter Thirteen). Do you still feel the same way? Or do you think they belong to someone else? Explain your view.

What obstacles are in the way for Victoria and Lawrence as they try to escape in these last two chapters?

Do you think they will successfully get out to the gardens? Why or why not?

What do you think Mrs. Cavendish is doing with the puppets? Think about what puppets are, how they are controlled, and what they are used for.

After Victoria discovers Professor Alban in the wall, she gets upset: “She tried to tell herself that it wasn’t her fault Professor Alban got snatched, but it wasn’t really working.” Do you agree that it wasn’t her fault? Why or why not?

Chapter Nineteen

What is symbolic about the name Vivian Goodfellow? Explain. Examine the other names in the book. Which other names have symbolism? Explain what the symbolism is.

Victoria and her friends discover that the gofers who help Mrs. Cavendish are children who never made it out of the Cavendish Home and have been somehow magically transformed. They also discover that the meat in their food is actually parts of children who never made it out of the Cavendish Home. Why do you think Mrs. Cavendish uses children like this? What message do you think the author is trying to communicate by having Mrs. Cavendish literally use past children from the Home to scare and feed current children at the Home?

Chapter Twenty

The narrator states: “Victoria clenched her fists and thought about Lawrence never playing music again or Donovan never eating cake again or Jacqueline painting boring pictures. They wouldn’t be better; they would be *someone* else.” What do you think she means by this? Explain.

Think about some things you can do or personality traits you have. Would you be the same person you are today without those things in your life? How do elements in your life make you uniquely *you*? What would you do if someone tried to take those unique things away from you?”

Do you think it’s better for everyone to be the same? Or for everyone to be different, even if that makes the world more unpredictable or harder to control? Explain your view.

Chapter Twenty-One

Mrs. Cavendish tells Victoria what is wrong with her: “You don’t know when to stay *quiet*.” Find examples in the book that show instances where Victoria doesn’t stay quiet. Explain if these instances have affected Victoria in a negative or positive way.

Do you think not knowing when to stay quiet is a good thing or a bad thing? Why? Are there specific times when you should stay quiet? What about times when you should speak up? Describe.

Epilogue

Victoria writes to Lawrence about different types of jobs she might like. She says, “I don’t know what I want to do yet, but I think maybe I’d like to be a professor—a good one, like Professor Alban. Or a journalist, so I could investigate things. Or maybe a detective.” Why might she be interested in these three things? Link each of these possible professions to events in the book. What helped to inspire each? Explain.

How is the ending ominous? Explain using specific examples from the text.

These questions align with the following Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL. 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.9, 4.10, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.9, 5.10, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.9, 6.10, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.9, 7.10