

A JOURNEY WITH STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

Author Insights and Back-Story "Secrets"

Educator's Edition

Jan C J Jones

"More goes into a story than what ends up on the page."

— *Jan C J Jones*

How Educators Can Use Author Insights

Author Insights is a companion resource to the *Educators' Guide* session plans for *A Journey With Strange Bedfellows*. While the *Educators' Guide* provides structured lesson frameworks, learning objectives, and assessment tools aligned with S.T.E.A.M. curricula, *Author Insights* offers the deeper creative context behind each scene, character decision, and thematic thread.

Use these insights to enrich classroom discussions, provide authoritative answers to student questions about authorial intent, and extend lesson activities with the backstory details, symbolism explanations, and cross-curricular research prompts found throughout this document. Each discussion point corresponds to specific pages in the graphic novel and can be paired with the relevant session in the *Educators' Guide* for a comprehensive "listen, look, learn" experience.

This document supports public, private, and homeschool programs — both secular and non-secular. Whether you teach in a traditional classroom, a co-op setting, or around the kitchen table, you will find material here that adapts readily to your context and your students' needs.

The **Discussion** prompts and **Flash Research Challenges** found throughout are ready to use as-is or to adapt to your specific classroom requirements, grade level, and curricular goals. Consider them starting points for inquiry — springboards that invite students to think critically, research independently, and engage with literature on a deeper level.

General Overview

A Journey With Strange Bedfellows is a Victorian Gothic horror story with "steampunk lite" sensibilities, suitable for readers aged twelve and up. It is a mash-up of six lesser-known yet immortal short stories — each carrying timeless, relevant themes — originally penned by a remarkable group of literary masters: Nathaniel Hawthorne, Bram Stoker, Jack London, Jerome K. Jerome, Wilkie Collins, and H.H. "Saki" Munro.

These resurrected stories are melded into a single, harrowing adventure that follows Hunter Brown on a quest to find true love in Faith Geibel — a woman who protects, and is herself the handiwork of, a centuries-old secret. In a surprise ending, Hunter must sacrifice everything to ensure Faith's continued existence.

The graphic novel was adapted from a two-hour audio drama that received a Mark Time Ogle Award for excellence in audio storytelling and was featured as an Official Listening Selection at the HEAR Now: The Audio Fiction and Audio Arts Festival. Together, the graphic novel and audio drama — along with a S.T.E.A.M. core-curriculum educational guide — form a "listen, look, learn" literacy education package that can align with public, private, and homeschool programs, both secular and non-secular.

Journey also pays homage to popular themes found in tales such as *Beauty and the Beast*, *Frankenstein*, and other creature-transformation narratives. It poses the central question: "**What is one willing to sacrifice — or do — to obtain true love?**" This may encompass making personal changes, or accepting a situation or a person deemed "outside the norm."

If you find the opportunity to read the original authors' stories (and I encourage you to do so), you should "hear" a distinctly different, unique voice in each author's writing style — cadence, vocabulary, sentence structure, and narrative patterns. During the adaptation process, considerable effort was taken to preserve and maintain each original author's tone and intended themes while balancing consistency in presentation, aligning with current literary standards, and remaining understandable to the majority of students.

Original Stories and Themes

Story Title	Author	Central Theme(s)
The Dancing Partner	Jerome K. Jerome	Be careful what you wish for; revere the potential of karma
A Wicked Woman	Jack London	Innocence versus ignorance
A Traveler's Tale of a Terribly Strange Bed	William Wilkie Collins	Be wary of others' intentions
Young Goodman Brown	Nathaniel Hawthorne	People may not be as they seem (hypocrisy)
The Music on the Hill	H.H. "Saki" Munro	Do not take nature's (or God's) wrath for granted; do not ignore it
Dracula's Guest	Bram Stoker	Curiosity can be dangerous; discovery, innovation, and invention create both positive and negative outcomes

These six stories were chosen through extensive research into public-domain classic short stories written during — or available to readers of — the Victorian era. The goal was to identify stories that provide specific "story beats" aligning with an emotionally satisfying narrative structure. Each story contributes a distinct tonal and thematic element, and together they build a cohesive arc that carries the reader from intrigue through terror to resolution.

Structural and Design Notes

Inside Front Cover

The inside front cover is intentionally left blank so that students, schools, or libraries can apply their own identification or tracking systems. It can also be used to collect signatures or notations using sticky notes.

Page Numbering System

Only actual story pages are numbered, which involves basic math skills and facilitates a Page Game activity. Only even-numbered pages display printed page numbers. The side on which page numbers appear alternates with each of the four parts: Part One places numbers on the right, Part Two on the left, and so forth. By observing this pattern, readers can determine which part of the story a specific page falls in. Some even-numbered pages omit printed numbers where the numeral would detract from the artwork.

Part	Page Count
Part One	37 pages
Part Two	34 pages
Part Three	28 pages
Part Four	21 pages

Note: Each successive section is shorter than the last. As events compress, the perception of time becoming more critical intensifies — mirroring the rising urgency of the story itself.

Page Number Game — Example

Page 44 appears on the left side. In which of the four parts of the 120-page story does this page appear?

Answer: Part One. Because the four quarter-sections contain varying page counts, the deduction process is trickier and more challenging than simple division might suggest. Encourage students to work through the logic rather than guess.

Flash Research Challenges

When appropriate, educators may initiate **Flash Research Challenges** in which students use smart devices to research a topic instantaneously, then apply their discovered facts to an immediate classroom discussion. Points — paid as markers, chips, glass rocks, or similar tokens — may be earned and later redeemed for extra credit.

Understanding the Page Reference System

Throughout this document, each discussion entry is identified by a reference code alongside the graphic novel's page number. For example, "**Page 39 (3-B)**" uses a two-part locator:

The number before the hyphen identifies which of the six original stories the entry belongs to:

Number	Story	Author
1	The Dancing Partner	Jerome K. Jerome
2	A Wicked Woman	Jack London
3	A Traveler's Tale of a Terribly Strange Bed	Wilkie Collins
4	Young Goodman Brown	Nathaniel Hawthorne
5	The Music on the Hill	H.H. "Saki" Munro
6	Dracula's Guest	Bram Stoker

The letter after the hyphen marks the sequential discussion entry within that story, in alphabetical order (A, B, C, and so on).

So "**3-B PAGE 39**" means: Story 3 (Wilkie Collins), second discussion entry, corresponding to graphic novel page 39. This system allows educators to quickly identify which story and discussion point is being referenced and to cross-reference between the graphic novel, the audio drama, and this Author Insights guide with ease.

Part One — Pages 1–37

"The Dancing Partner" by Jerome K. Jerome

Begins on Page 4

Purpose: Introduce the Victorian time period — its science, technology, curiosities, dress, and customs. Establish attraction, intrigue, mystery, and desire while cautioning readers to "be careful what you wish for" and to hold reverence for the potential of karma.

Title Page

DISCUSSION

Who are the "strange bedfellows"? They are the six authors whose stories are woven together in this graphic novel. Why are they described as "strange"? Because many people considered these creative individuals strange for writing stories that contained morbid, dark, bizarre, or paranormal elements.

Page 1 / Pages 119–120

The Crystal Vase and Rose. The story begins in the present but is told in retrospect. The crystal vase holding a rose symbolically represents Hunter's goal: to pursue something beautiful while recognizing the danger involved. This image also pays homage to *Beauty and the Beast*.

Page 2

DISCUSSION

Hunter's statement — "*Man is no more born a predator than woman is born his prey*" and "*Although we males engage in the chase, the female is more adept in the capture*" — foreshadows what he

ultimately learns from his journey. What appears to be pursuit may actually be enticement, luring an unsuspecting victim into a trap.

X-TREME DETAILS

The newspaper on this page depicts a skeletal arm pulling a corset cord, symbolizing that such garments could lead to injury, suffocation, or even death. This cautionary element encourages women to break free of constraining mechanisms.

DISCUSSION

What conventions have women broken free of, or what constraints do they continue struggling to overcome?

Page 2 continued — *"Predator becomes prey. Innocence mistook for evil. Evil... innocence."*

Hunter foreshadows the central lesson of his journey. During his initial encounters with the werewolf, Hunter presumed the creature to be threatening and evil — but he ultimately learned otherwise. The werewolf was a man who had sacrificed everything for Faith. This parallels real-world situations in which people sacrifice themselves for a cause or belief.

Page 4

DISCUSSION

What does Hunter's narrative indicate about the social gathering? Historically and today, sexuality has been part of the social arena across all cultures. The Victorians maintained strict rules governing behaviors and communication between attracted men and women. Hunter notes the

mixed messages the women present physically, emphasizing the confusion in identifying who is the pursuer and who is the pursued. The females' costumes send conflicting signals: one portion alluring, another representing a formidable challenge — effectively separating confident suitors from immature ones.

EDUCATORS' DEFENSE

"On the grounds that human sexuality and courtship (and the fears and insecurities associated with it) are legitimate topics for literary examination, and that supernatural literature forms part of the literary canon and can be studied profitably with respect to psychological and religious themes — fear of the unknown, awe at the numinous, good and evil, and how fiction allows us to explore our responses and reactions to each."

— C.R., Master of Education, Graduate Diploma of Divinity, Mt. Carmel Christian School / Morling College, Leneva, Wodonga, New Zealand

Page 5

DISCUSSION

Once it is revealed that Old Geibel is actually Faith's son, how does that change what we believe about earlier scenes? On page 97, we learn there was an explosion in what was probably a laboratory at Oradea castle. Annette's mother was likely Old Geibel's sister and Faith's daughter, making Annette Faith's granddaughter. Old Geibel not only disdained the young women's complaining — he despised how Annette disrespected Faith, his mother.

Page 6

The Coach Accident Backstory. Within the wreckage is a child's doll that has fallen from a pram. As a young child, Annette was left behind with a nanny while her parents went out. Upset, Annette pushed her baby doll's pram into the approaching coach's path, causing the horses to bolt, the coach to overturn, and her parents to be killed. Old Geibel would have known this history and likely harbored a far greater grievance with Annette. Faith provides the inspiration Old Geibel needed to create the mechanical dancer.

Pages 8–9

DISCUSSION

Knowing Annette's backstory changes Old Geibel's motive. Annette turning eighteen may signify her legal emancipation. Given that she caused the death of his sister, Old Geibel may have had a stronger motive to harm Annette than initially apparent.

Page 10

Faith strokes the mechanical dancer's cheek and says: *"Though he is neither flesh nor bone, in one way he is superior... He cannot suffer the torments of a broken heart or loves lost."* In this moment, Faith reveals clues about her long history of loves eventually lost. The dancer is incapable of feeling emotion, including remorse. Faith's statement makes Old Geibel visibly nervous — he cannot allow her to disclose her past.

Page 11

Old Geibel warns the crowd not to knock against the clockwork dancer, as it will *"surely alter their course."* Meanwhile, Annette unwittingly predicts her own destiny: *"I think I shall dance with him the rest of my life."*

DISCUSSION

When Faith asks Hunter, "*Could you really dance with me forever, Mister Brown?*" — she was ascertaining whether Hunter would be her next true love.

The Hair Ribbon — Its Multiple Meanings. Faith tells Hunter, "*I'm no longer perfect.*" The ribbon she gives him serves several functions simultaneously:

- **A memento** — so Hunter will not forget Faith
- **An allegory** — representing Hunter's obsession and goal
- **An invitation** — beckoning Hunter to return
- **A tie that binds** — paralleling the Celtic hand-fasting tradition
- **A literal string** — tying the six stories together throughout the narrative

Knowing Faith's history, she could no longer be considered a virgin. She may also have been assuring Hunter that unlike the "perfect" programmable clockwork dancer, she possessed the capacity to think and reason.

Page 14

Faith indicates her "programming" — she could love only one man at a time, or she was currently bound to Wilhelm Geibel, whom she knows is now aged and dying.

Page 16 — The Color Red

Red represents the color of blood and foreboding danger. Old Geibel slips in Annette's blood, falls, and is mortally wounded — paying homage to tales in which creators are destroyed by their own creations, echoing the Prometheus myth and *Frankenstein*. The overarching message: "*Be careful what you wish for.*"

DISCUSSION

The clockwork dancer killing Old Geibel raises the question of karma — an eye for an eye. Was this justice, accident, or fate?

Page 17

Hunter establishes his willingness to put himself in danger to save others. His determination to deactivate the clockwork dancer may have demonstrated to Faith that he might someday attempt to do the same to *her* — possibly explaining why Faith vanished from the ballroom.

Page 19

Old Geibel tells Faith, "*You know you must go.*" They both understand that she cannot continue alone, that her secret needs protection, and that blame for Annette's death might fall on Faith. We witness Faith's visible distress as she watches her caregiver and son die.

X-TREME DETAILS

The magnified newspaper text reads: "*These are words about things and if you're reading them, you have far too much time on your hands. Put down the magnifying glass and go outside.*" — a playful encouragement for readers to participate in their own adventures rather than embracing a sedentary lifestyle.

Page 20

A depressed Faith is seated as Hunter prepares to leave. A framed photograph shows an unidentified woman standing with Old Geibel behind a seated Faith — this woman is Matron Kitt, a close friend and possibly a past love interest of Old Geibel. A gear wheel in the scene hints at Faith's internal mechanics. The misaligned curb and steps in the street scene symbolize that "all is not as it appears."

Page 21

"Finding Faith became my obsession." This line exemplifies how obsession can overpower judgment and make a person vulnerable. One form of obsession can be faith or beliefs, where people look for "signs." For Hunter, the telegraph was that sign. The monogram "K" on the telegraph introduces yet another mystery.

"A Wicked Woman" by Jack London

Begins on Page 23

Purpose: Introduce Victorian travel, rules of courtship, and the contrast between innocence and ignorance.

Page 22

DISCUSSION

The Ribbon as Badge and Perpetuator of Obsession. Hunter has embraced Faith as his obsession. The telegraph validated the righteousness of that obsession, giving him "permission" to dedicate himself to it. The ribbon becomes the constant physical reminder and justification for his mission. In what professions and situations is this pattern of symbolic commitment observed? Consider leaders, sports fanatics, the religiously zealous, soldiers, addicts, and authority figures.

Page 23

The mysteries from pages 20–21 are solved. Faith ran to Matron Kitt — a familiar, trusted person. The only way Kitt would have known to send Hunter a telegram is if Faith asked her to, confirming that Faith was deliberately luring Hunter into pursuit.

Pages 24–33

Jack London's *"A Wicked Woman"* demonstrates the tension between innocence and ignorance. Page 28 reveals a note signed "Billy" — Faith's former lover. We later learn that Faith was cared for by "Wilhelm Geibel," which, Americanized, becomes William, shortened to Billy. Faith's seemingly silly confusion may represent partial recall of a previous life with Wilhelm.

London's skill is on full display here as he elongates tension by hinting at, but containing, Faith's inconsequential secret. On pages 30–31, Hunter is mesmerized by Faith's eyes — falsely supporting suspicion that she may be a vampire. This is a classic literary "red herring."

This section reveals more about both characters: Faith's desire for truthfulness shows how deeply she cares about Hunter; Hunter's willingness to defend Faith is established; and their mutual attraction is confirmed through their first kiss.

Page 34

DISCUSSION

Matron Kitt appears to have been crying. What caused Kitt's distress? Was it Faith's sudden departure, or does Kitt know more than she is telling?

Pages 35–36

DISCUSSION

Kitt discloses where Faith may have gone and describes the dangers involved, including the coach and its ominous driver. How did Kitt conclude there are dangers? How might she know?

Page 37

DISCUSSION

Examine Panel 3 and discuss the narrator's questions. Have students surmise possible or probable outcomes before turning the page.

Part Two — Pages 38–70

"A Traveler's Story of a Terrible Strange Bed" by Wilkie Collins

Begins on Page 41

Purpose: Introduce the mystery and horror genres, character studies, and the contrast between trust and wariness. Core messages: beware of others' intentions; listen to your inner voice; heed your gut feelings; consider others' motives.

Page 38 (3-A)

Hunter ventures out of his comfort zone toward Paris, seeking help in his quest for Faith.

Page 39 (3-B)

DISCUSSION

Hunter reminisces about Francis Cook, his college roommate and friend — a person of color whose interests center on building fantasy civilizations. What life circumstances might inspire Cook's interests? Consider the British imperial actions of occupying and conquering other countries before and during the Victorian era.

Page 40 (3-C)

Hunter finds Cook living a pathetic life in Paris and admits regret for having contributed to Cook's overindulgence in drinking.

Author's Backstory: If Francis Cook's ethnicity was Indian or from another non-white colonized culture, he was possibly multiracial — the offspring of a British father and a non-white mother. Such mixed-race offspring were sometimes sent to Britain for education but rarely accepted by either ethnic

culture. Paris became known for its liberal acceptance of diversity, attracting many marginalized people.

Page 41 (3-D)

Cook issues the second warning to Hunter about Eastern Europe, referencing the "gate of hell" — foreshadowing Hunter's encounter with Satan on page 67. Cook empathizes with Hunter's need for love, then quickly retreats into his distracted lifestyle.

Page 42 (3-E)

DISCUSSION

Hunter questions his judgment in allowing Cook to lead him into uncomfortable areas. Why didn't Hunter heed his own intuition? Friendship — or the perception of it — can be a deceptive element. Fraudsters often cultivate the appearance of trustworthy relationships to exploit their targets.

Page 43 (3-F)

DISCUSSION

Coming upon a murderous scene occupied by police, Cook pushes Hunter into an alleyway. Is Cook avoiding the authorities, or is he obscuring the danger that lies ahead?

Page 44 (3-G)

Cook leads Hunter to a clandestine location that requires a password to enter. His remark — *"It is a game we play"* — reveals this has been Cook's routine.

Page 45 (3-H)

Cook's true nature is revealed, with a possible twist: he may be attempting to perpetrate fraud using Hunter's help and money.

Pages 46–48 (3-I)

These pages illustrate the stages of deception practiced by the card parlor's crooks, all steered by its Hostess. Hunter is their prey, with Cook serving as a Judas goat — facilitating the scheme until he finally realizes what is happening but cannot stop it.

Pages 48–49 (3-J)

The Hostess discovers Hunter's weakness by snatching Faith's ribbon and using his obsession as leverage. The crooks were probably already aware of Cook's agenda and had motive to kill him as a traitor.

DISCUSSION

How do these situations compare to present-day gang activities?

Pages 50–52 (3-J continued)

Hunter is taken to an isolated bedroom. The Hostess had drugged him.

Author's Insight: Hunter's numerous cups of coffee (a stimulant) may have offset the narcotic effects, allowing him to remain somewhat alert. The thugs who carried Hunter to the room were likely too busy dealing with Cook to be concerned with Hunter, whom they presumed unconscious.

Page 53 (3-K)

Hunter counts. The room is dense with symbolism:

DISCUSSION — Symbolism on the Page

- **48 florals** — symbolizing passion. (Gautama Buddha sat under a Bodhi tree for 48 days.)
- **8 stripe patterns** — biblical symbolism of new beginnings and resurrection.
- **2 broken handles** — the dichotomy of good versus evil.

- **1 damaged mirror** — Roman superstition of seven years' bad luck. Could Hunter consider himself broken because he lacks love?
- **4 pins in an oversized pincushion**
- **5 towering feathers** — paralleling the five wounds of Christ.

The Spanish cavalier's eyes gaze upward "*as if looking at a gallows*" — possibly suggesting crucifixion. Hunter struggles to overcome the drugs' effects. How does Hunter's struggle parallel the struggles of disabled people in the world?

Page 54 (3-L)

DISCUSSION

The Spanish cavalier seems to draw Hunter's attention to Faith's hair ribbon, alerting him to the sinking canopy. Is Faith symbolically acting to save Hunter, or is this Hunter's subconscious projecting meaning onto a painting?

Page 55 (3-M)

"With panic came realization."

DISCUSSION

What biochemistry occurs during panic? The fight-or-flight mechanism involves catecholamines — norepinephrine and epinephrine — secreted in response to perceived threats. What indicates Hunter's world has returned to normal? The portrait's expression reverts to its original appearance.

Page 57 (3-N)

DISCUSSION

Hunter remembers childhood escapades using a drainpipe to climb down from his room. What valuable lessons can youthful mischief teach that we might value as adults?

Page 58 (3-O)

Having survived a near-death experience, Hunter feels *"alive as never before."* Cook's fake signature hints that he is now an "X" person — formerly alive, now dead.

DISCUSSION

From Hunter's and Cook's experience, what do you now know about the events on page 43?

Page 59 (3-P)

DISCUSSION

Since we observed the murderous canopy bed and its rooftop mechanism, what can we surmise about Cook? There must be other mechanisms, or a single machine operated multiple canopies. Which makes more sense?

Pages 60–61 (3-Q)

Hunter hires a Romanian coach driver — *"a coach for a reason few would."*

DISCUSSION

Why wouldn't others hire a Romanian driver during this time period? Fear and prejudice. What does this choice reveal about Hunter's character? How is this attitude — positive or negative — demonstrated in the world today? Note that page 61 foreshadows events yet to come.

Pages 62-63 (3-R) — The Map of Europe

DISCUSSION

Use the map to stimulate discussion about various countries during the Victorian era, especially potential dangers travelers faced.

FLASH RESEARCH CHALLENGE

Students use smart devices for impromptu searches, calling out facts about the countries depicted on the map. How might students help prepare Hunter for the journey ahead?

"Young Goodman Brown" by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Begins on Page 66

Purpose: Introduce psychological terror and contrast suspicion with fear. Core message: people may not be as they seem. It is prudent to understand that people can have a dark side that causes harm.

Page 66 (4-A)

Hunter notes the sudden absence of sound — *"the quiet before the storm."* In Panel 6, Hunter spits out bitter herb ale onto unhallowed ground, unknowingly summoning Satan. This occurs on page 66, Panel 6 — or 666.

DISCUSSION

The number 666 in the Book of Revelation signifies a wake-up call to pay attention to reality, elevate one's thoughts, and return focus to love.

Page 67 (4-B)

The Cleric carries a staff bearing a snake's head.

DISCUSSION

The snake symbolizes evil, power, chaos, fertility, life, and healing across cultures. The Hebrew word *nachash* is associated with divination. Hawthorne's "Goodman Brown" advises looking beyond facades to find truth.

The Cleric states, *"I saw you before you saw me,"* indicating he already knew everything about Hunter.

DISCUSSION

Where does the behavior of reading naivety and exploiting vulnerability occur in the real world? Consider corrupt leadership and the misuse of power. The Cleric's statement about sacrifice —

"What little was sacrificed, the firmament quickly consumed" — means that what a person sacrifices will be wholly consumed by those who only take.

Page 68 (4-C)

The Cleric demonstrates extreme competency in knowing about Hunter, even mimicking Cook's language from page 41.

DISCUSSION

Invite students to cite instances of warnings they heeded or ignored. How do rules and laws serve to protect people?

Page 70 (4-D)

DISCUSSION

Hunter's unease is validated when the strange old woman says "*Devil!*" Invite students to share examples of experiencing undefined anxiety and how the situation eventually resolved.

Page 70 — Panel 4 (4-E)

DISCUSSION

Discuss the narrator's questions in Panel 4 and revisit the suppositions students made about page 37. How have their predictions held up?

Part Three — Pages 71–99

"Young Goodman Brown" by Nathaniel Hawthorne (continued)

Page 72 (4-F)

DISCUSSION

Based on the clues gathered so far, deduce who the Cleric and the old woman are and what their relationship might be.

Page 73 (4-G)

DISCUSSION

Hunter expresses disbelief. Why do people undergo denial, and when can it become dangerous?

Page 74 (4-H)

The Cleric transforms a maple sapling into a snake-headed staff and tosses it to Hunter.

DISCUSSION

This references the Biblical serpent in the Garden of Eden, symbolizing Satan's enticement with the fruit of knowledge. What parallels can students draw to real-world temptations?

Pages 75–76 (4-I)

DISCUSSION

Hunter picks up the staff despite his fear. What has Hunter learned about himself? He was gullible, vulnerable, and open to suggestion. He has learned to be warier — but in thinking ahead, he neglected to notice what was happening in the present. This signifies there is always more to learn.

Page 77 (4-J)

DISCUSSION

The staff allows Hunter to understand a foreign language. Apply this revelation to how the staff helped the Cleric. What other powers might it have?

Page 78 (4-K)

Hunter notes weather changes — *"the calm before the storm."* The road is well-worn. He hears what he believes is Faith's voice.

DISCUSSION

Review the final panels of previous pages. What common element do they share? They are cliffhangers — "page-turners" — designed to compel the reader forward.

Page 79 (4-L)

DISCUSSION

Hunter's perception of hearing Faith's voice is confirmed by a matching hair ribbon. How might the story change if Hunter hadn't heard her voice or seen the ribbon?

Page 80 (4-M)

A tree limb strikes and cuts Hunter's forehead.

DISCUSSION

If good and evil are both in play, which events represent each? Faith's voice and ribbon are evil lures, while the tree branch attempts to "knock sense" into Hunter.

Page 81 (4-N)

DISCUSSION

Hunter hears a maddening chorus and implores divine intervention. What should Hunter have realized sooner? That invoking God holds protection and power against evil.

Page 82 (4-O)

DISCUSSION

Hunter recognizes individuals in the crowd. How would Hunter identify people without prior knowledge of them? He may be dreaming. Under what circumstances would this unusual mix of individuals gather as equals? They are sinners, equal in their sins.

Pages 83-84 (4-P)

DISCUSSION

The Cleric reveals the sins of his "congregation." What messages are presented about people in general and about Faith specifically? Have students ever experienced deception when someone turned out to be very different from what they expected?

Page 85 (4-Q)

The Cleric transforms into Satan and threatens Faith.

DISCUSSION

Evil takes 18 pages to galvanize Hunter, yet God's intervention quashes it in just 2 panels. What does this difference symbolize? Can students identify current examples of innocent people being victimized? What actions would be prudent or imprudent to take in such situations?

EDUCATORS' DEFENSE

"On the grounds that human sexuality and courtship (and the fears and insecurities associated with it) are legitimate topics for literary examination, and that supernatural literature forms part of the literary canon and can be studied profitably with respect to psychological and religious themes — fear of the unknown, awe at the numinous, good and evil, and how fiction allows us to explore our responses and reactions to each."

— C.R., Master of Education, Graduate Diploma of Divinity, Mt. Carmel Christian School / Morling College, Leneva, Wodonga, New Zealand

Page 86 (4-R)

Hunter finds himself standing alone as *"rain washed from me every remnant of that horror."*

DISCUSSION

What do rain and washing symbolize? Cleansing of the soul. Many cultures utilize water in purification rituals — discuss examples students are familiar with.

Page 87 (4-S)

In the pub, Hunter is confronted by Satan's congregants — a stark reminder not to forget the lessons he has learned.

Page 88 (4-T)

Head bandaged, Hunter awakens, throws up, and discards his drinking bag and walking stick.

DISCUSSION

What do these actions symbolize? Hunter is purging evil: internal evil through vomiting, and external evil by discarding the stick and drink bag — the physical objects associated with his corruption.

DISCUSSION

Hunter ties together the two lengths of hair ribbon. This symbolizes his determination to endure, to repair his mission, and to continue forward.

Author's Note: Elements from Story 5 (*The Music on the Hill*) and Story 6 (*Dracula's Guest*) are somewhat blended to form the final section of the narrative.

"The Music on the Hill" by H.H. "Saki" Munro

Begins on Page 94

Purpose: Introduce mythology and contrast curiosity with fear and terror. Core message: do not take nature's (or God's) wrath for granted, and do not ignore it.

Page 90 (5-A)

Hunter awakens in the coach with no sense of how much time has passed. He observes a distant castle and considers two possibilities about its purpose.

DISCUSSION

If Faith was taken from the castle so "*she might see the world was full of life,*" what does this tell us about her existence there?

Page 91 (5-B)

A wind shift brings a scent that distresses the horses. The coach driver reveals himself to be both religious and superstitious. Romanian translations: "*tata'l, Fiul, Duhul Sfant, maica lui Dumnezeu*" = Father, Son, Holy Spirit, Mother of God; "*un loc rau*" = a bad place.

Review prior warnings from Matron Kitt (page 35) and Francis Cook (page 41).

DISCUSSION

Is love a powerful force? Can love conquer all? What does one commonly sacrifice for love?

Page 92 (5-C)

The abandoned village underscores the severity of the plague and how a lack of scientific understanding devastated entire communities.

FLASH RESEARCH CHALLENGE

Research and discuss the lasting effects of the plague on European society, culture, and demographics.

Pages 93–95 (5-D)

The Manservant and Mistress Caretaker pose formidable roadblocks, but Hunter's polite persistence earns him just over 24 hours to search for Faith.

DISCUSSION

When is polite persistence advisable, and when does it become inadvisable? Note that Hunter briefly ponders his experience with the diabolical canopy bed — a sign of his growth and increased wariness.

Page 96 (5-E)

Hunter's door is mysteriously unlocked. The Mistress Caretaker is absent. Ancestral portraits on the walls show strong resemblances to one another.

DISCUSSION

What are the possible explanations? A ghost? A faulty lock? Imagination? Consider that the Caretaker may be a vampire, absent during daylight hours. The portraits may depict the same woman — Faith — through the ages.

Page 97 (5-F)

DISCUSSION

Hunter discovers ruins containing specific items. Deduce the earlier use of the site. It was a laboratory — paying homage to *Frankenstein* — destroyed by fire and explosion.

Page 98 (5-G)

Hunter observes Faith tending what appears to be an altar.

FLASH RESEARCH CHALLENGE

Identify the Greek god Pan depicted on the altar. Compare and contrast Pan with Satan. As Hunter was once lured to Satan's altar, Pan's flute now begins to play. Given Pan's mythology, what can be surmised about Faith's intentions?

Page 99 (5-H)

DISCUSSION

Pan's flute lures a stag, which in turn brings a large predator into view. Compare how this scene parallels Hunter's connection to Faith: grapes attract Pan, Pan lures the stag, the stag draws the predator. What role does each element play in this chain?

Part Four — Pages 100–120

"Dracula's Guest" by Bram Stoker

Begins on Page 105

Purpose: Provide the story's climax as the protagonist confronts an internal dilemma and must choose between loneliness and death. Core messages: curiosity holds danger; discovery, innovation, and invention create both positive and negative outcomes.

Pages 100–102 (6-A)

Greek mythology explains Pan's power to control animals using his flute. Pan calls a stag that charges Hunter and Faith.

DISCUSSION

What is Pan — real, imagined, or automaton? What motivates him? Faith offers grapes to Pan in exchange for luring a stag as food for the dying werewolf. Pan may also be luring the werewolf back to the castle and testing Hunter's willingness to protect Faith.

Page 103 (6-B)

DISCUSSION

Faith courageously shields Hunter from the charging stag. What might have happened if Faith had not acted?

Page 104 (6-C)

DISCUSSION

The wolf clearly is not interested in harming Faith or Hunter. Consider the werewolf's true motivations: hunger and protecting Faith.

Page 105 (6-D)

DISCUSSION

Hunter wakes to find Faith's lantern and a blood trail. Why doesn't Hunter give up his quest? Consider pride, investment, curiosity, and love for Faith.

Pages 106–107 (6-E)

DISCUSSION

In the graveyard, Hunter contemplates Walpurgis Nacht. Why are the graves open? Were bodies needed for experimentation? Zombies? Something else entirely?

Page 108 (6-F)

DISCUSSION

A copper pike with luminescent energy is driven through a burial vault's roof. This may be an innovative power source inspired by Nikola Tesla's early work, propelled during the laboratory explosion. Note the irony: Hunter hides from a wolf only to discover his shoes are covered in blood.

Page 109 (6-G)

An enormous wolf corners Hunter but does not attack. The dying werewolf has guided Hunter here, using fear as a tool to persuade him to enter the burial vault.

Page 110 (6-H)

DISCUSSION

What is revealed about Hunter? He chooses the danger of the unknown over certain harm. He is spiritual and respectful. His curiosity overcomes his fears.

Page 111 (6-I)

Faith's secret is revealed — she is a robot.

DISCUSSION

Did students predict this, or were they led to think "vampire"? Re-read pages 8–14 and 19–20 to discuss visual hints and what the characters' words really meant in light of this revelation.

Page 112 (6-J)

The machine facilitating Faith's immortality is explained by the Mistress Caretaker, who encourages Hunter to let Faith "die" when the machine fails.

DISCUSSION

What else must the machine do beyond healing? It must prevent aging and maintain Faith's body. Have students research artificial intelligence, then re-read page 13 to discuss Faith's self-awareness of her own imperfection. How does self-awareness align with current AI capabilities versus true sentience — the capacity to feel, perceive, or experience subjectively?

Page 113 (6-K)

DISCUSSION

Pan's true purpose is revealed: to call the werewolf. Research character archetypes. What role does Pan fulfill as a "Sidekick" archetype?

Page 114 (6-L)

DISCUSSION

Faith's affection for the werewolf is revealed. Where does this place Hunter emotionally? What is his standing now?

Page 115 (6-M)

Faith's relationship with the werewolf is fully revealed. Wilhelm Geibel maintained Faith as a scientist, and together they produced a son (Old Geibel) and a daughter (Annette's mother).

DISCUSSION

Have students create a family lineage tree. What relationship is Faith to Annette? (Grandmother.) Estimate Faith's age from the hints provided throughout the story. How do Hunter's feelings toward the werewolf change now that he understands the full picture?

Page 116 (6-N)

The werewolf's transformation was incomplete, but Hunter seems to understand him nonetheless.

DISCUSSION

How do humans communicate without speaking — with babies, with pets, with people who cannot speak? What nonverbal cues carry the most meaning?

Page 117 (6-O)

Hunter faces a life-changing decision.

DISCUSSION

Discuss real-life situations that require immediate, life-and-death decisions. Hunter remembers Satan's words from page 87 — how has their meaning changed? If Hunter sacrifices his being to become a werewolf, what might this mean for his eternal soul?

Page 118 (6-P)

Both Hunter and Wilhelm Geibel have decided to sacrifice everything for love.

DISCUSSION

Contrast and compare their sacrifices. Select someone in real life — historical or contemporary — who has sacrificed to achieve a goal, and draw parallels to these characters' choices.

Page 119 (6-Q)

The Denouement. The room is identical to the one depicted on page 1.

DISCUSSION

What does this tell us? The story was told in retrospect. Note that the taxidermy animals appear more sinister on page 119 than they did on page 1 — indicating that Hunter's perspective has changed. This foreshadows his altered physical appearance in the final panel.

Page 120 (6-R)

The panels hint at the life Faith and Hunter now share.

DISCUSSION

What might their lives be like together? What would you like to see happen next for these characters?

The Big Picture

FINAL DISCUSSION

Consider each character in the story — Hunter, Faith, Old Geibel, Annette, Francis Cook, Matron Kitt, the Cleric, the Mistress Caretaker, the Manservant, Pan, and the werewolf (Wilhelm Geibel). Discuss what each character sacrificed — whether by choice or by circumstance — and to what end. What do their sacrifices reveal about the nature of love, duty, obsession, and redemption?

Character	Sacrifice	By Choice or Circumstance?	Purpose or Outcome
Hunter Brown	<i>Student response</i>	<i>Student response</i>	<i>Student response</i>
Faith Geibel	<i>Student response</i>	<i>Student response</i>	<i>Student response</i>
Old Geibel	<i>Student response</i>	<i>Student response</i>	<i>Student response</i>
Wilhelm Geibel (the Werewolf)	<i>Student response</i>	<i>Student response</i>	<i>Student response</i>
Annette	<i>Student response</i>	<i>Student response</i>	<i>Student response</i>
Francis Cook	<i>Student response</i>	<i>Student response</i>	<i>Student response</i>
Matron Kitt	<i>Student response</i>	<i>Student response</i>	<i>Student response</i>
The Cleric / Satan	<i>Student response</i>	<i>Student response</i>	<i>Student response</i>
The Mistress Caretaker	<i>Student response</i>	<i>Student response</i>	<i>Student response</i>
Pan	<i>Student response</i>	<i>Student response</i>	<i>Student response</i>

"More goes into a story than what ends up on the page." — Jan C J Jones