



## Reading Group Guide:

### 43 OLD CEMETERY ROAD: OVER MY DEAD BODY

by Kate Klise illustrated by M. Sarah Klise  
Reading Levels: LEX: 890L AR: 5.6

#### PRE-READING ACTIVITY

**Introduce the ghost story genre** Darken the classroom, hold a flashlight under your chin, and tell students a traditional ghost story. (Examples can be found in Alvin Schwartz's *In a Dark, Dark Room and Other Scary Stories* for younger students or *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark* for older students.) Engage the class in a discussion about the ghost story genre. (What is a ghost story? Can you name any "famous" ghosts? What character traits do you expect to see in a ghost? What motivates ghosts? Does a ghost story need a certain type of ending?) Work with students to create an "Elements of Ghost Stories" chart (ominous setting, death, unfinished business, strange sightings or happenings, etc.) When students have completed *Over My Dead Body*, revisit the chart. Do they consider the book a ghost story? Why or why not? (SL 4.1, 5.1, 6.1)

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION OR WRITTEN RESPONSE

- Describe Dick Tater and his International Movement for the Safety & Protection of Our Kids & Youth. What are some of Mr. Tater's ideas about safety and protection? How does his point of view affect the way he describes Seymour, Ignatius, and Olive? (RL 4.3, 5.6)
- Fay Tality says she's keeping the rusty key "front and center" on her desk, but a moment later she can't find it. Where did the key go? What clues in the text helped you make this inference? (RL 4.1, 5.1, 6.1)
- How do the visual elements in *Over My Dead Body* (illustrations, fonts, letterhead, etc.) add meaning to the text? What effect do they have on the reader? Would you be able to understand the story without these visual elements? Why or why not? (RL 5.7)
- Why does Dick Tater think Seymour's living situation at 43 Old Cemetery Road is unacceptable? Why do Seymour, Ignatius, and Olive disagree? Look at the portrait in the scrapbook pages at the end of the book. What is the book's message about family? (RL 4.3, 5.3, 6.3)
- Contrast Dick Tater's ideas about books with the views of librarian M. Balm, using specific quotations to demonstrate each character's opinion. Which point of view does the author share? How can you tell? (RL 6.2)

**OTHER ACTIVITIES TO TRY**

- **Perform a television broadcast** Ask for student volunteers to act out the Tater Tips broadcasts on IMSPOOKY TV (dated September 12, October 24, and October 29). Have the class compare the experience of watching the material performed live with the experience of reading the text. (How did you picture the television show when you read the text? How was the picture in your mind different from what you saw your classmates perform?) (RL 6.7)
- **Read ghost stories from other cultures** Have students read several ghost stories from other cultures. (Examples can be found in *Ask the Bones: Scary Stories From Around the World* by Arielle North Olson and Howard Schwartz.) Ask them to compare the stories to American ghost stories they’ve read or heard. (What details are specific to other cultures? What similar themes and patterns of events do you notice?) (RL 4.9, 5.9)
- **Write spooky stories** Have students write their own ghost stories, incorporating dialogue and sensory details into their work. Ask students to write about a ghost or spirit who continues to appear, communicate, or haunt a character or location because he or she has some unfinished business. Students can present their work—complete with sound effects or props—at a ghost story “read-a-thon.” (W 4.3, 5.3,6.3)

**BUILD VOCABULARY**

**Preview challenging words** Have students work individually or in groups to determine the meanings of new words. Ask students to use a three-columned chart to record context, word meanings, and synonyms. (RL.4.4, L.4.4, RL.5.4, L.5.4, RL.6.4, L.6.4)

adversity	competent	discredited	manifesto	relentless
alacrity	cupola	domicile	nimble	repellent
asylum	deplorable	indignities	perilous	unison
authoritative	deranged	insufferable	petty	wretched

**SITES TO VISIT**

**Find a list of spooky stories** for tweens at <http://tinyurl.com/3lmkx6>

**Read storytelling tips** from a master storyteller at <http://tinyurl.com/3ojj8hv>

**Explore Halloween teaching ideas** at <http://tinyurl.com/3t6vxos>

**NOTE:** Questions are keyed to the Common Core Standards [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)

- RL: Reading Standards for Literature
- W: Writing Standards
- SL: Speaking and Listening Standards
- L: Language Standards