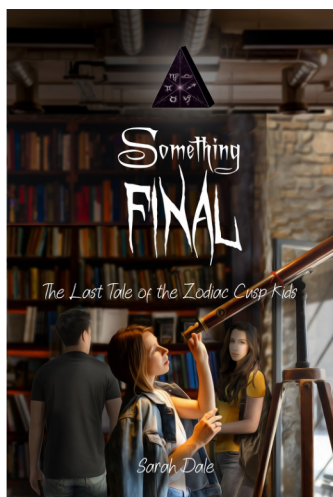


STUDY GUIDE

SOMETHING FINAL

THE LAST TALE OF THE ZODIAC CUSP KIDS



About the book:

The adventures of the Zodiac Cusp Kids are laid to rest in the raw, cold February of 1989. The Portal has been spilling out more goop and increasingly dangerous goons for the past two years, and it's getting worse. On top of that, the kids are facing a mysterious and charismatic figure from David's past who's not sitting quite right with Jenny. In order to decode the symbols from her vision, there's only one thing to do; a week-long cram session at the library. The things they discover lead them straight toward the fight of everyone's lives. It's going to take every trick they've learned and the combined powers of The Coven, The Guardian, and the Zodiac Cusp Kids to end this story.

Something Final is the last of the stories drawn from Angie's diaries. Kept safely hidden for decades, they tell how the kids spent their teenage years in their hometown of Lincoln, Nebraska - working with their mentor, Mr. Rakow, and Jenny's mom, Lorraine, who leads a coven, to come to the life-changing conclusion of their journey together.

IN CLASS ACTIVITIES

STORY STRUCTURE QUESTIONS

1. Where and when is the story set?
2. Does the setting impact the story?
How?
3. From what point of view is the story written?
4. The narrator is telling the story in past tense. How would this story be different if it were written in present tense?
5. What are two different conflicts present in the story? Are they both resolved?
6. Which character(s) did you relate to?
7. Did any of the characters do something that surprised you?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What did you learn about the 1980's from this story?
2. How might David's and his mom's lives been different if she'd finished high school?
3. What research tools were available to Angie and Jen? Compare to what research tools are available at your library today.
4. Many stories have common threads called Archetypes. Some common archetypal characters are The Hero, The Outlaw, The Sage, The Lover and The Everyman. Which characters in the story might fit into which of these archetypes?

VOCABULARY

1. cusp
2. extract
3. pertain
4. charismatic
5. pacifist
6. portent
7. ethicist
8. sleuthing
9. lucid
10. sojourner
11. carbon dating
12. share and explain two 80's slang words or expressions from the story

ZODIAC CUSP KIDS

- In Astrology, what does it mean to be born on a Cusp?
- In our galaxy, the planets rotate around the Sun. That's called a heliocentric pattern. In Astrology, the planets are viewed as they rotate around the Earth. What is that pattern called?

INDIVIDUAL/SMALL GROUP PROJECTS

WRITING IDEAS

1. Choose a scene and rewrite it from the point of view of one of the other characters.
2. Compare Angie's point of view to Scout's in Harper Lee's, "To Kill a Mockingbird." How are they the same or different?
3. Everyone in the story has a part to play on the team. If you were going to build a team to go into battle, who would be on your team and why?

RESEARCH IDEAS

1. Angie and Jen track Mike across the US, touring with his band. Map out a 7-stop tour for your band. What cities will you visit? How will you travel? What will you see?
2. Research other major world-wide epidemics, like Polio, the 1918 influenza, cholera or the plague. How did they affect the society in their time? Were the effects on society the same with each illness?
3. What is the Einstein-Rosen wormhole theory? Have any wormholes been discovered?

SYMBOLS

The pink triangle was an important symbol in this story and in the 1980's. What are some of the many things that symbol communicated? Historically, name some other symbols that gained national or world-wide importance and understanding.

80'S SLANG AND REFERENCES

The books contain, like, a mega-ton of slangy 80s words and enough pop-culture shoutouts to totally gag on. Like, why is Angie calling out Jane Fonda about exercise? I thought she was some old actress and political activist? Omigod, like I'm so sure

Look up a reference or a slang word you didn't understand the first time around. Were you able to sort of figure it out using the context? Now that you've looked up and understand the reference, does it change your understanding of the scene?

