

Monster Questions

ELACCRL.8.1: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

TAG Your Answers

T-Turn question in an answer

A-answer the question

G-Give and cite textual evidence from book

Introduction-p. 1-43

1. What is the first thing you notice about how this book is written that makes it different from other books you have read?
2. In the opening line Steve states that, "The best time to cry is at night." Why does he think this? Do you agree with Steve's assumption?
3. Steve decides that the best way to deal with his reality is to look at it like the plot of a movie. Why does he decide that?

Monday, July 6th p. 1-43

1. Steve uses movie script directions to describe his surroundings. Do these directions help you to visualize the scenes in your mind better than a standard novel, or do you find them confusing?
2. A voice over states, "Ain't no use putting the blanket over your head, man. You can't cut this out; this is reality. This is the real deal." Can you think of any other times that people put blankets over their heads? What does this show us about Steve's age?
3. What could the blanket possibly symbolize to Steve?
4. How does O'Brien respond to the fact that Steve is chronicling this as a movie? What does that show us about O'Brien?

5. Petrocelli states in her opening argument, “there are also monsters in our communities.” What does she mean by this?
6. Steve flashes back to his high school film class, why do you think he does this?
7. Why does Steve begin to scribble the word “MONSTER” all over his notebook?
8. What does O’Brien mean when she says, “You have to believe in yourself if we’re going to convince a jury that you’re innocent.”
9. Why could Zinzi’s testimony be called into question?
10. Steve flashes back to an incident with his friend Tony. Can you infer anything about his character from this incident?

Tuesday, July 7th p.45-58

1. What does it say about Steve’s guilt that he says, “I hate this place so much...All they talk about I here is hurting people.”
2. Summarize Bolden’s testimony and explain why his testimony is also brought into question.
3. Why is it ironic that Bolden states, “I just wanted to do the right thing. You know, like a good citizen?”

4. What does Steve's flashback with his brother show us about his character?

Wednesday, July 8th p. 59-88

1. Steve states, *"It's funny, but when I'm sitting in the courtroom, I don't feel like I'm involved in the case. It's like the lawyers and the judge and everybody are doing a job that involves me, but I don't have a role. It's only when I go back to the cells that I know I'm involved."* Based on this what do you think his movie script and the jail cells symbolize to Steve?
2. Why does Steve feel like he already has the word MONSTER tattooed on his forehead?
3. How is being in jail started to change Steve's perception of himself?
4. Summarize Detective Karyl's testimony.
5. O'Brien states, *"Half of those jurors, no matter what they said when we questioned them when we picked the jury, believed you were guilty the moment they laid eyes on you. You're young, you're Black, and you're on trial. What else do they need to know?"* How does this quote challenge the idea that all defendants are supposed to be innocent until proven guilty?
6. How are Osvaldo's demeanor and testimony directly opposite from the flashback Steve has? What can you infer from this?

Thursday, July 9th p. 89-126

1. Inmate Acie says, "All they can do is put me in jail. They can't touch my soul." What does he mean by this?

2. O'Brien tells Steve the judge could sentence him to 25 years to life. What is Steve's reaction to this news?
3. Consider the following quote, "I wanted to open my shirt and tell her to look into my heart to see who I really was, who the real Steve Harmon was." What is the author trying to convey with this quote?
4. Why is there a group of kids sitting in the courtroom?
5. How does Steve feel that these kids are viewing him? Why does he include the two pictures?
6. How do Briggs and O'Brien try to discredit Osvaldo or show the jury that Osvaldo's character is questionable?
7. In a flashback to a conversation Steve has with his father what did Steve's father say he used to imagine, and what did he say he never imagined.
8. What does Steve's father do at the end of the conversation that disturbs Steve deeply?
9. What literary device is being used here, "It's like a man looking down to see his son and seeing a monster instead."
10. What do the two flashback scenes in which Steve learns of Nesbitt's murder suggest about his emotions at the time? What conclusions can you draw about his probable guilt or innocence?

Friday, July 10th p. 127-136

1. What is the, “Cheap trick” O’Brien thinks Petrocelli is trying to use?
2. Summarize what is in each of the four-way split screens. Why did Steve include this?



Saturday, July 11th p. 137-151

1. How does Steve think O’Brien feel about his innocence or guilt? How could this hurt him or help him?
2. What is Ernie’s debate for why he is not guilty? Do you agree with his conclusion?
3. In the flashback where James King asks Steve to be lookout, the author ends the scene before the reader can learn Steve’s answer. Why do you think the author does this? What do you predict was Steve’s answer? Why?

Sunday, July 12th p. 153-159

1. What literary device is called into play in the following quote, “They had church services and I went. There were only 9 guys in the service, and 2 of them got into a fight.”
2. What literary device is called into play in the following quote, “They didn’t allow kids in the visiting area, which was funny. It was funny because if I wasn’t locked up, I wouldn’t be allowed to come into the visiting room.”
3. Why is the “movie” becoming more and more important to Stev.

Monday, July 13th p. 161-200

1. Summarize Lorelle Henry’s initial testimony.
2. How does Asa Briggs try to make Lorelle Henry’s testimony seem less damaging to King?
3. Why is Briggs upset that Bobo is dressed in a prison uniform?
4. What is Bobo’s testimony?
5. What does Bobo say that hurts James King’s case?
6. What does Bobo say that hurts Steve Harmon’s case?

7. What does Bobo say (or not say) that might help Steve Harmon's case?

Tuesday, July 14th p. 201-267

1. Why does O'Brien make Steve write down the names of people who he loves and who love him?

2. What is Dorothy Moore's testimony and how trustworthy is it? Explain.

3. What is George Nipping's testimony?

4. What does O'Brien write to Steve?

5. Why isn't James King going to testify?

6. Why does O'Brien believe Steve has to testify?

7. Describe the significance of the turning cup.

8. Briefly summarize Steve's testimony. How well do you think he does? Explain.

9. How does Petrocelli use the acquaintance/friend trick to make Steve look bad in the eyes of the jury?

10. How does Mr. Sawicki serve as a character witness for Steve? How does Petrocelli try to discredit Mr. Sawicki in the eyes of the jury?

Closing Arguments

- 1. Summarize the arguments Petrocelli uses to prove that James King should be found guilty versus the arguments Briggs uses to prove that King should be found not guilty. Feel free to add any additional arguments you think of that could be used.

Petrocelli→ James King Guilty	Briggs→ James King Guilty

- 2. Summarize the arguments Petrocelli uses to prove that Steve Harmon should be found guilty versus the arguments O’Brien uses to prove that Steve Harmon should be found not guilty. Feel free to add any additional arguments you think of that could be used.

Petrocelli→ Steve Harmon Guilty	O’Brien→ Steve Harmon Guilty

Friday Afternoon, July 17th p. 269-277

- 1. What is the verdict? How do you know?

December, 5 months later p. 279-281

1. Why does Steve continue to look in mirrors and watch film of himself?
2. Why does Steve feel distance from his father?
3. What do you think is the answer to Steve's question: "What did she see?"
4. How do you think that this experience will change Steve's life forever?
5. Where do you see Steve in 25 years?

Monster Questions

Answer Key

Introduction-

1. What is the first thing you notice about how this book is written that makes it different from other books you have read?

Some of the pages look like they are handwritten, and there are movie script directions within it as well.

2. In the opening line Steve states that, "The best time to cry is at night." Why does he think this? Do you agree with Steve's assumption?

Steve cries at night because other inmates cannot hear him over others screaming and crying for help. If people find out he is crying they will beat HIM up. (answers may vary)

3. Steve decides that the best way to deal with his reality is to look at it like the plot of a movie. Why does he decide that?

Steve writes about his life like it is a movie so he can pretend that it is happening to someone else. Also when people are going through tough times sometimes it helps to have something to take their mind off of the hard times.

Monday, July 6th-

1. Steve uses movie script directions to describe his surroundings. Do these directions help you to visualize the scenes in your mind better than a standard novel, or do you find them confusing?

Answers may vary

2. A voice over states, "Ain't no use putting the blanket over your head, man. You can't cut this out; this is reality. This is the real deal." Can you think of any other times that people put blankets over their heads? What does this show us about Steve's age?

Children are known to put blankets over their heads when they are scared. This shows us that Steve still has some childlike tendencies inside him and must be a young boy.

3. What could the blanket possibly symbolize to Steve?

The blanket could symbolize protection or safety to Steve.

4. How does O'Brien respond to the fact that Steve is chronicling this as a movie? What does that show us about O'Brien?

O'Brien just brushes it off and says, "Whatever. Make sure you pay attention." O'Brien does not seem to really care about Steve or who he is as a person, she just sees him as a "job."

5. Petrocelli states in her opening argument, "there are also monsters in our communities." What does she mean by this?

Monsters are not only horror movie villains but they can be people living next door. Your neighbor, your child, your, friend could be a cold blooded killer.

6. Steve flashes back to his high school film class, why do you think he does this?

Steve flashes back to film class right after his jury walks into the courtroom. He hopes that his court case will be anything but "predictable" and that the jury will wait to make up their minds until all the information is presented.

7. Why does Steve begin to scribble the word "MONSTER" all over his notebook?

In her opening argument Petrocelli alludes that Steve is a Monster. This word really bothers Steve and makes him have self doubt about his character.

8. What does O'Brien mean when she says, "You have to believe in yourself if we're going to convince a jury that you're innocent."

If Steve gives up or begins to think that he really is a monster the jury has no reason to believe that he is not.

9. Why could Zinzi's testimony be called into question?

Zinzi is testifying so that he can get out of prison early (where people are abusing him). He has motivation to say that he knows more than he does so that he can get what he wants.

10. Steve flashes back to an incident with his friend Tony. Can you infer anything about his character from this incident?

We can see from the flashback that Steve is honest and truthful, however, he doesn't seem to take responsibility for his actions. This could indicate both innocence and guilt.

Tuesday, July 7th

1. What does it say about Steve's guilt that he says, "I hate this place so much...All they talk about here is hurting people."

Steve does not like that people talk about hurting others. This could show us that he is decidedly against hurting others.

2. Summarize Bolden's testimony and explain why his testimony is also brought into question.

Like Zinzi Bolden also struck a deal with the court to receive a lighter sentence if he testifies in this case.

3. Why is it ironic that Bolden states, "I just wanted to do the right thing. You know, like a good citizen?"

Bolden is trying to get out of a conviction by testifying which means he has had several run ins with the law. It is ironic that he is deciding that NOW is the time he wants to be law abiding.

4. What does Steve's flashback with his brother show us about his character?

Steve wants to be a superhero to save people. This shows us again that he is not interested in hurting people. The fact that his brother looks up to him so much also shows us that Steve does have care and compassion as well.

Wednesday, July 8th

1. Steve states, *"It's funny, but when I'm sitting in the courtroom, I don't feel like I'm involved in the case. It's like the lawyers and the judge and everybody are doing a job that involves me, but I don't have a role. It's only when I go back to the cells that I know I'm involved."* Based on this what do you think his movie script and the jail cells symbolize to Steve?

The jail quite literally symbolizes jail/loss of freedom to Steve while the movie script symbolizes freedom and escape to him.

2. Why does Steve feel like he already has the word MONSTER tattooed on his forehead?

Steve feels as if people are pre judging him instead of being innocent until proven guilty.

3. How is being in jail started to change Steve's perception of himself?

Being stuck in jail with hardened criminals is starting to make Steve wonder if he is all that different from them. They all look the same and they seem pretty young.

4. Summarize Detective Karyl's testimony.

Karyl was at the gruesome crime scene. He states that they did not find much evidence at the scene. He states that cash was missing from the register and that they questioned many people in the case.

5. O'Brien states, *"Half of those jurors, no matter what they said when we questioned them when we picked the jury, believed you were guilty the moment they laid eyes on you. You're young, you're Black, and you're on trial. What else do they need to know?"* How does this quote challenge the idea that all defendants are supposed to be innocent until proven guilty?

All American citizens have the right to a fair and objective trial. They are to be considered innocent until proven guilty. If the jurors have prejudged Steve simply because he is black can he really get a fair trial free of prejudice? (answers will vary)

6. How are Osvaldo's demeanor and testimony directly opposite from the flashback Steve has? What can you infer from this?

In the flashback Osvaldo acts tough and seems to be a bit of a bully. On the stand he acts meek and says that he was afraid of the same people he talked tough to in the flashback.

Thursday, July 9th

1. Inmate Acie says, "All they can do is put me in jail. They can't touch my soul." What does he mean by this?

Acie may be able to have all his rights and freedom taken from him but there is one thing that cannot be taken from him, his soul. He has complete control over that...hopefully he uses that for good.

2. O'Brien tells Steve the judge could sentence him to 25 years to life. What is Steve's reaction to this news?

It makes Steve so upset that he wants to cry and it makes him sick to his stomach.

3. Consider the following quote, "I wanted to open my shirt and tell her to look into my heart to see who I really was, who the real Steve Harmon was." What is the author trying to convey with this quote?

Steve does not want to be viewed simply as a black boy who is being seen as a monster. He wants for people to see inside and realize that he is a person, not a monster, but a good person at heart.

4. Why is there a group of kids sitting in the courtroom?

The class is visiting the courtroom to see how a court case works.

5. How does Steve feel that these kids are viewing him? Why does he include the two pictures?

Steve is upset and uncomfortable at the students prying eyes and realizes that they are looking at him like a prisoner instead of a person. He includes his mug shots because this is how he feels they are seeing him.

6. How do Briggs and O'Brien try to discredit Osvaldo or show the jury that Osvaldo's character is questionable?

Osvaldo was given a deal that if he testifies his part in the crime will be reduced or erased. Which gives him quite a lot of motivation to talk, or even lie.

7. In a flashback to a conversation Steve has with his father what did Steve's father say he used to imagine, and what did he say he never imagined.

Mr. Harmon used to imagine Steve playing sports and going to college but he never imagined seeing his son in prison and on trial for murder.

8. What does Steve's father do at the end of the conversation that disturbs Steve deeply?

Steve's farther starts to sob and Steve can't stand to see it happen and to know that he cause this.

9. What literary device is being used here, "It's like a man looking down to see his son and seeing a monster instead."

A simile. He is comparing a young boy to a monster.

10. What do the two flashback scenes in which Steve learns of Nesbitt's murder suggest about his emotions at the time? What conclusions can you draw about his probable guilt or innocence?

Steve is in absolute shock when he hears the news of the murder. Someone who is involved in the murder would not usually be I complete shock.

Friday, July 10th

1. What is the, "Cheap trick" O'Brien thinks Petrocelli is trying to use?

Petrocelli waited until court was being shortened to show grisly crime scene photos so they would be that last image in the mind of the jury for quite some time over the weekend.

2. Summarize what is in each of the four-way split screens. Why did Steve include this?



Saturday, July 11th

1. How does Steve think O'Brien feel about his innocence or guilt? How could this hurt him or help him?

Steve thinks O'Brien thinks he is guilty. This could hurt him because she could be less motivated to let what she feels is a killer roam the streets, even if it is her job. This could help him because she could be looking at new and fresh angles to prove his is innocent.

2. What is Ernie's debate for why he is not guilty? Do you agree with his conclusion?

Ernie feels that since he was trapped in the store he was never able to leave the store with the merchandise. So technically he never robbed the store. Answers may vary.

3. In the flashback where James King asks Steve to be lookout, the author ends the scene before the reader can learn Steve's answer. Why do you think the author does this? What do you predict was Steve's answer? Why?

The author probably does this to make the reader wonder if Steve really is guilty or innocent because we still don't know for certain one way or another. He is trying to keep the story suspenseful. Answers may vary.

Sunday, July 12th

1. What literary device is called into play in the following quote, "They had church services and I went. There were only 9 guys in the service, and 2 of them got into a fight."

Irony. Church is supposed to be the place you go to be at peace with God and moral...and these two men did the opposite in the house of God.

2. What literary device is called into play in the following quote, "They didn't allow kids in the visiting area, which was funny. It was funny because if I wasn't locked up, I wouldn't be allowed to come into the visiting room."

Irony.

Monday, July 13th

1. Summarize Lorelle Henry's initial testimony.

Lorelle went to the store on the day of the murder and she is the one who IDed James King.

2. How does Asa Briggs try to make Lorelle Henry's testimony seem less damaging to King?

Lorelle was not able to identify King through police station photos at first. Also, there were only six men in the police lineup for her to choose from.

3. Why is Briggs upset that Bobo is dressed in a prison uniform?

It automatically associates Bobo with the people on trial and make him look less trustworthy.

4. What is Bobo's testimony?

5. What does Bobo say that hurts James King's case?

6. What does Bobo say that hurts Steve Harmon's case?

7. What does Bobo say (or not say) that might help Steve Harmon's case?

Tuesday, July 14th

1. Why does O'Brien make Steve write down the names of people who he loves and who love him?

She wants to remind him what and who he is fighting for.

2. What is Dorothy Moore's testimony and how trustworthy is it? Explain.

Moore testifies that King came to her house on the day in question to give her a lamp. She is King's cousin so she could have motive to lie for him.

3. What is George Nipping's testimony?

Nipping testifies that King is left handed.

4. What does O'Brien write to Steve?

O'Brien writes that the shooter might have been right handed but it is a weak argument.

5. Why isn't James King going to testify?

King lied in his statement to the police and this could be proven on the stand, it will make him seem like a liar. So it is safer to keep him off the stand.

6. Why does O'Brien believe Steve has to testify?

If Steve does not testify it will tie him and King closer together in the minds of the jury. His best shot is impressing the jurors.

7. Describe the significance of the turning cup.

How the cup is placed, up or down on the table, will tell Steve how he is doing as he testifies.

8. Briefly summarize Steve's testimony. How well do you think he does? Explain.

Steve maintains his innocence. Steve holds his ground and is respectful and polite on the stand with few hiccups in his testimony.

9. How does Petrocelli use the acquaintance/friend trick to make Steve look bad in the eyes of the jury?

Petrocelli makes Steve say if he is a friend or acquaintance with many of the people in the robbery. When he says that he is an acquaintance with all of them she says, "so you're acquainted with everyone involved in this robbery."

10. How does Mr. Sawicki serve as a character witness for Steve? How does Petrocelli try to discredit Mr. Sawicki in the eyes of the jury?

Mr. Sawicki vouches for Steve's character. Petrocelli tries to discredit his testimony by saying that the teacher does not live in Steve's neighborhood or know him outside of the school walls. Sawicki retorts by saying that Steve's film footage makes it so that he CAN see what he is thinking and feeling outside of school.

Closing Arguments

- Summarize the arguments Petrocelli uses to prove that James King should be found guilty versus the arguments Briggs uses to prove that King should be found not guilty. Feel free to add any additional arguments you think of that could be used.

Petrocelli→ James King Guilty	Briggs→ James King Not Guilty
Evans places King in the store	Bobo Evans "happened" to pick up King after robbery
Henry places King in the store	The state did not produce any witnesses
Witnesses are everything in this case	The person who picked him out of a line up not reliable
	There is reasonable doubt

- Summarize the arguments Petrocelli uses to prove that Steve Harmon should be found guilty versus the arguments O'Brien uses to prove that Steve Harmon should be found not guilty. Feel free to add any additional arguments you think of that could be used.

Petrocelli→ Steve Harmon Guilty	O'Brien→ Steve Harmon Not Guilty
<p>Steve was just bad at the job, but was still there</p> <p>He is equally as guilty as the rest of the men</p>	<p>Not enough evidence to convict anyone</p> <p>If Steve WAS in the story as lookout he did a bad job Steve made no signal</p> <p>Steve is just another “getover” guy</p>

Friday Afternoon, July 17th

- What is the verdict?

James King Guilty.....Steve Harmon Not Guilty

December, 5 months later

- Why does Steve continue to look in mirrors and watch film of himself?

He wants to see if he is still the same person he remembers before the trial....he is looking for a monster.

- Why does Steve feel distance from his father?

His father is no longer sure of who he is or how he could have even associated with those men.

- What do you think is the answer to Steve's question: "What did she see?"

She still saw a monster....she believed that he was guilty

- How do you think that this experience will change Steve's life forever?

Answers will vary

- Where do you see Steve in 25 years?

Answers will vary