

a reading guide to

ROOM OF SHADOWS

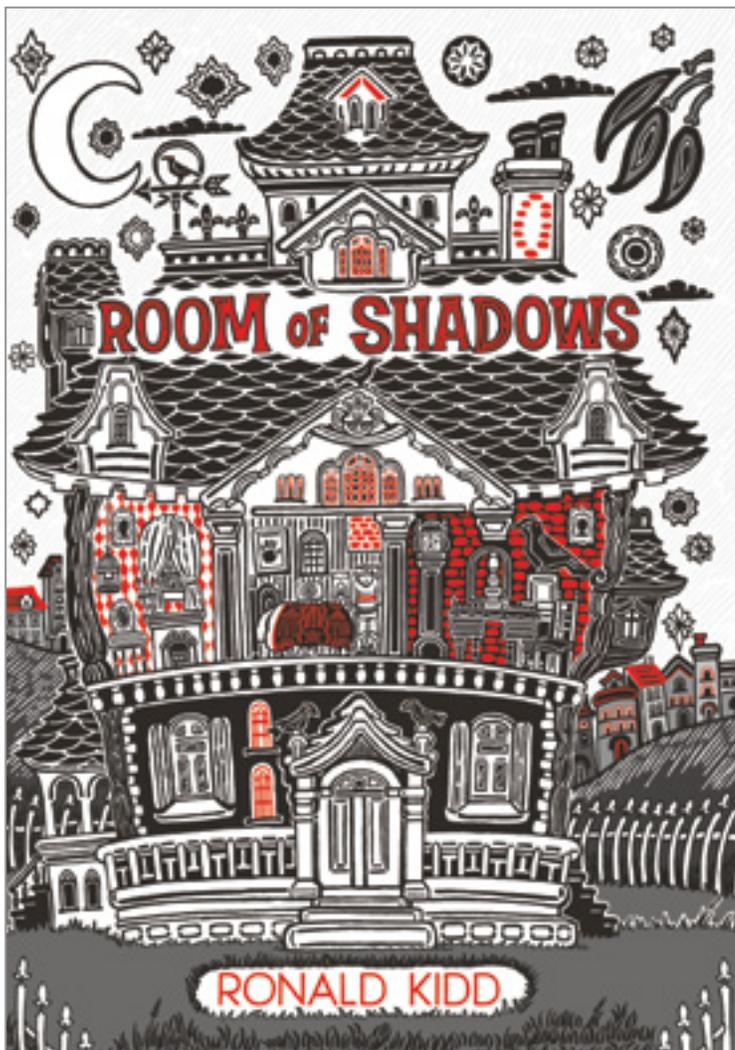
Ronald Kidd

guide prepared by the author

Ages 9–12 // Grades 3–7

About *Room of Shadows*

Ever since his dad left, David Cray has had anger issues. So after he beats up school bully Jake Bragg, his mom grounds him in their creepy new house. Bored, David discovers a secret room with an old-fashioned desk, a chest, and a carving of a raven. Suddenly he's having strange dreams about the room and the house, and violence seems to follow him wherever he goes. Who is the Raven who is taking responsibility for these violent pranks? And why do the pranks resemble Poe's stories?



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Discussion Questions



for a Book Club or Classroom

1. At the beginning of the story, David talks about two kinds of anger. What are the two kinds? Which does he feel? Which have you felt, and when?
2. How did David feel about moving to his new house and school in downtown Baltimore? Have you ever moved to a new place? How did you respond? What did you do to settle in?
3. What's a bully? Why do you think people bully others? What do they get out of it? What are some things they could do instead of bullying?
4. Has anyone ever tried to bully you in person or online? Have you ever bullied someone? If so, share the experience and what you learned.
5. Think of three things that schools could do to prevent bullying. Describe them and why you think each could work.
6. Have you ever wished you had a bully to hurt people you don't like? How would it make you feel? How might it be frightening?
7. In the story, David's anger releases a bully who attacks David's enemies. Describe how this happens and what David does in response. What would you do?
8. If you were David's friend Libby, how would you react to the terrible things that start to happen? What would you tell David, and how would you help him?
9. Some adults try to help David too—his mother, Sergeant Clark, the principal. Which do you think was the most helpful? What do you think they should have done?
10. With bullying and with other problems, it's good to have friends. What do you think Libby's friendship means to David in this story? How do you think the story might have been different if he hadn't met her?
11. Some people might say David's house is haunted. Have you ever been in a place that seemed haunted? Describe it, and tell how it made you feel.
12. What did you know about Edgar Allan Poe before reading this story? What did you learn?
13. How does Poe die in this story? How did he die in real life? Why do you think the author made up a new death for him?
14. When Poe dies, he calls out to Ginny. Who is Ginny, and why does Poe call to her?
15. What's the last thing David decides to do in the story? Why do you think he does it? If you were David, what would you do?

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