

The Mystery at Black Rock Beach:

Comprehension Questions for Chapters 9-11

1. In chapter 9, how does Franny discover that the pearls used to make the dog collars were stolen?

In an attempt to escape Frankie and Fawny, Franny and her brothers fly away, hiding down a seemingly abandoned road. They fly up through a crack in the window of what appears to be an old warehouse. When the flies enter, they discover Frances and other dogs who are kept in cages. Frances tells his fly friends that the pearls were stolen from a popular Lahaina Town jewelry store, revealing a secret: he and the other dogs have been used as slave laborers to both make, and model custom pearl-lined dog collars.

2. In chapter 9, why did Frankie pick Black Rock Beach as the location to sell his dog collars?

Black Rock Beach is frequented by upscale beach-goers, many of whom are well off or have money.

3. In chapter 10, in what additional way(s) *could* Fillmore have supported Franny in standing up to Frankie?

One possible answer is that Fillmore *could* have supported Franny by claiming that in order to forgive yourself, you must first love yourself.

4. Why do you think people are afraid to stand up to a bully? What are some things you can do to overcome that fear?

One possible answer is that people are afraid to stand up to a bully because they are afraid of getting hurt. One thing you could do to help overcome that fear is to remind yourself that a bully is a coward. A bully is hurting inside and the only way he/she knows how to release the hurt inside, is by hurting someone else, often verbally. Once you realize that a bully is not a

strong person but actually very weak, you can try and talk to him/her by giving them the love that they are lacking on the inside.

5. Why isn't it a good idea to make choices based on who or what is popular at the time?

One possible answer is that what is popular at *one* moment in time, may or may not be popular at a later date. Thus, it is usually better to follow your heart and do what feels right to *you* as opposed to making decisions based on what is trending at the time, considering that is subject change.

6. Is it always negative to be a follower? Can you think of a time when being a follower is a *good* thing?

If you see someone who is making a difference in your community by giving to others in need or showing kindness and respect to others, that is a person whose footsteps you may want to follow in. In that case, it is positive to be a follower.

7. What is the benefit in giving yourself approval as opposed to waiting for someone else to approve you?

One possible answer is that people cannot give you what they do not have. If you are thirsty, someone else cannot give you a drink of water if they themselves do not have water. Sometimes, you are looking for someone to tell you they are proud of you for doing a great job in school. Even if no one else tells you they are proud of you, you can always tell *yourself* that you are proud of you!

8. In chapter 10, what does Fillmore teach Frankie about learning to forgive himself?

Fillmore reminds Frankie that it is important to forgive yourself when you think you've make a mistake. He draws on his own personal experiences as a perfectionist, explaining that even when things haven't been his fault, he has blamed himself which in turn, made the situation much worse. He notes the importance of freeing yourself from personal guilt whether or not you were at fault in the first place.

9. In chapter 10, what does Franny mean when she says that love is the gift that keeps on giving?

Franny acknowledges that love doesn't end simply because someone, something, or *somewhere* has been taken from you. She feels strongly that it is not necessary to have someone, something, or somewhere close by in order to give love but rather, acknowledges that love can be given and shared from a distance.

10. In what ways is love an experience?

According to Franny, "Love is the experience of giving more than taking." Ultimately, what Franny means is that you experience love when you *give* love to someone, something, or somewhere as opposed to simply *feeling* love.

11. Explain how it is possible to give love to people, places, or things that are taken away from you.

One possible answer is that even if someone, something, or somewhere is taken from you, you can still give love to the *memory* of that person, place, or thing.

12. How can defiance and rebellion be viewed as positive and not negative? (Hint: Franny's favorite band, The Fussy Finches)

Franny admires the somewhat defiant attitudes of Finn and Fern Finch from the blues rock band, The Fussy Finches. Franny argues that what makes their music great is that they are not swayed by the opinions of others, making only the type of music that their hearts desire. When blues rock was considered an unpopular genre of music, The Fussy Finches continued to do their own thing, regardless of societal input. Franny draws a parallel to standing up to a bully arguing that when everyone else is afraid to stand up to the bully, she would rather be the sole fly to do the right thing than follow the crowd and do what is popular. Franny equates popularity as being unoriginal and often, not true to yourself.

13. How can you tell the difference between fantasy and reality? What elements of the story are fantasy (could not happen in real life?) What elements of the story are reality (*could* happen in real life?)

The Fly family is a family of anthropomorphic house flies (that means they have humanlike characteristics). In real life, flies cannot stand up, walk around, or talk the way the flies in the story do. Also, Frances the Foodle is a dog who displays humanlike characteristics. He is involved in making the custom, pearl-lined dog collars which could not happen in real life. Like the Fly family, he too is able to talk which could not happen outside of the story. The Feldman family as well as Frankie and Fawny are humans, representing elements of reality.

14. What do you think is the advantage in leading with your heart as opposed to your mind or your eyes?

One possible answer is that when you lead with your heart, you are less likely to take into consideration the opinions of others around you. You are more likely to go with your gut feeling. In doing so, you will often make choices that you are more satisfied with compared to making choices based off of "group think," a mentality where you think and believe exactly as members of a club or group do.