

About the Book

In 1888, in New England, Dr. Pellinore Warthrop, a specialist in monstremology, the study of real-life monsters, and his assistant, twelve-year-old William Henry, face their most terrifying case. Purported to be the memoir of Will Henry, the story opens with the delivery of a corpse to Dr. Warthrop's home by a grave robber. They discover that the gruesome desecration of the body is the work of *Anthropophagi*, horrific headless, man-eating beasts. Dr. Warthrop and Will must find and destroy this monstrous brood.

Pre-reading Activities

- ✦ Discuss what elements are needed to make a great horror story. Ask everyone to share the scariest horror story he/she has read.
- ✦ The novel mentions historians, scientists, and writers readers probably know very little or nothing about. Use online sources or reference books to research background information on the following people: Herodotus, Pliny the Elder, Richard Hakluyt, Sir Walter Raleigh, Charles Darwin, and Francis Galton.

Discussion Topics

- ✦ Why does the author preface the story with quotes about *Anthropophagi* from actual works of history and literature?
- ✦ Why do you think the author frames the story as if it is a real journal?
- ✦ Why do you think the author sets this story in 1888?
- ✦ When Erasmus Gray asks Will Henry what Warthrop is a doctor of, he replies "the grotesque, bizarre, and *unspeakable*." What does he mean by these descriptions? What is the study of supernatural mysteries and phenomena called today?
- ✦ What do you think is the most grotesque physical attribute of the *Anthropophagi*?
- ✦ What does Dr. Warthrop mean when he says to Will Henry, "We are slaves, all of us." To what are Dr. Warthrop and Will Henry enslaved?
- ✦ Dr. Warthrop is angered at Will Henry's suggestion that he is responsible for Erasmus Gray's death. Do you agree that Dr. Warthrop is responsible? Why or why not?

Discussion Topics (continued)

- ✦ Why does Will Henry find Dr. Warthrop's suggestion that he be thankful to him for saving his life "galling"?
- ✦ What are Will Henry's impressions of Dr. Warthrop?
- ✦ How did Will Henry come to be an assistant to Dr. Warthrop?
- ✦ What do the contents of the trunk belonging to Dr. Warthrop's father reveal about the relationship between the doctor and his father?
- ✦ What does Will Henry learn about Dr. Warthrop's relationship with his father in the letter he finds? How is the relationship between Will Henry and Dr. Warthrop both similar to and different from the relationship between the doctor and his father?
- ✦ What do Dr. Warthrop and Will Henry learn about the *Anthropophagi* from Captain Varner? What is Varner's fate?
- ✦ Will Henry thought many times of running away from Dr. Warthrop but never did. What were his reasons for staying?
- ✦ Why does Dr. Warthrop tell Will Henry that he has failed and betrayed him? What is Will Henry's reaction?
- ✦ What connections does Dr. Warthrop see between his father's work in monstrumology, Charles Darwin's in evolution, and Francis Galton's in eugenics?
- ✦ Why does Dr. Warthrop enlist the help of Dr. John Kearns?
- ✦ What do you think Dr. Kearns means when he says he admires the "aboriginal purity" of the *Anthropophagi*?
- ✦ Why does Kearns call Dr. Warthrop a sentimental hypocrite?
- ✦ Why do you think Dr. Warthrop warns Will Henry to steer clear of Kearns?
- ✦ In what ways does Kearns believe humans and the *Anthropophagi* are the same? What does he think is the one significant difference? Do you agree?
- ✦ Why does Will empathize with Malachi's suffering?
- ✦ What does Will remember about his father's final days?
- ✦ What do you think Will means when he says, "I escaped; I am bound. I ran; I remain"?

Discussion Topics (continued)

- ✦ What is the significance of Dr. Warthrop's gift of a new hat to Will Henry? Why was Will's old hat important to him? What is the significance of Dr. Warthrop burning the contents of his father's trunk?
- ✦ How does the relationship between Dr. Warthrop and Will Henry change in the course of the story?
- ✦ What are examples of how the author uses sensory imagery in the story?

Post-reading Activities

- ✦ In the story, Dr. Warthrop mentions *Proteus anguinus*, and Dr. Kearns mentions *Biminius arawakus*, *Spirometra mansonii*, *Wuchereria bancrofti*. Use online resources or reference books to find out which of these creatures are real.
- ✦ Before attacking the *Anthropophagi* pod, Dr. Kearns calls everyone together to review the plan that he calls the "Maori Protocol." Research online or in reference books who the Maoris are and what the Maori Protocol is.
- ✦ Use your artistic talents to create your vision of an *Anthropophagi* based upon the author's descriptions of the monster.
- ✦ Invent a "real-life" monster that Dr. Warthrop and Will Henry can investigate in a new *Monstrumologist* story.

This guide was written by Edward T. Sullivan, a librarian and writer.