

Discussion Questions for Rules for Being Dead

1. The book is told from multiple points of view. Who was your favorite character? Who do you think the protagonist of the book is—and why?
2. Did you pick up on any “rules for being dead” while reading? What do you think some of them are? And better yet—what “rules for LIVING” did the book make you think about?
3. Did reading the book change your perception of the grade school teachers you had? Did it make you think about who they were away from the school, what their private lives were like?
4. The book includes a lot of events: tragic, funny, scary. How would you describe the tone of the book to someone who hasn’t read it?
5. Do you think there was a villain or “bad guy” in the novel? If you did, who—and why?
6. Who or what did you relate to more—the child’s point of view (through Clarke and Corey)—or the adults in the book (Creola, L.E., and Rita)?
7. Even if you don’t specifically know the movies Clarke references in the book, did that impede your understanding? What were the iconic books in your childhood that influenced how you saw the world—particularly the adult world? What were some of the scary movies you saw as a kid—that you couldn’t shake away?
8. What was your reaction to seeing the dedication to “my two mothers, Creola Perkins Powers and Rita Cobb Powers”—and then putting it together that those were the names of characters in the book? Why do you think the author did that?
9. How do you interpret what ultimately killed Creola? Suicide, murder, or the tether ball?
10. Creola has a gift of future sight that death has given her. Based on what you read, what kind of persons do you imagine Clarke and Corey grow up to be?

If you could ask the author anything, what would it be? And why hesitate asking IN PERSON—BECAUSE YOU CAN! Email me at kim@kimpowersbooks.com to find out how!

Killer cocktails to pair with Rules for Being Dead

THE CORPSE REVIVER

The Corpse Reviver (aka “Corpse Reviver #2”—guess they didn’t revive Corpse #1) is a classic cocktail, which dates as far back as 1871. Strong but sippable! And great for reviving you after a long night of drinking—so maybe for the day AFTER book club!

- 1 oz Lillet
- 1 oz Gin
- 1 oz Cointreau Orange Liqueur
- 1 oz Lemon
- 4 spritzes or rinse of Absinthe
- Lemon twist & Luxardo cherry (for garnishes!)

Add first 4 ingredients into a shaker with ice and then shake, baby, shake!

LA LLORONA (THE WEEPING WOMAN)

According to Mexican folklore, La Llorona was a beautiful yet unstable woman who drowned her children to be with a man who wanted nothing to do with her. In her afterlife, she wandered through the water, wailing in search of her children. Not quite the story in my book, although the mother character Creola certainly does her fair share of weeping, and she’s a little unstable for sure. So toast Creola with this cocktail!

The liquor Pisco is like a milder tequila, and there’s a lot of citrus in the drink as well. So a little bit like a margarita (with the intriguing addition of coconut cream). So sort of a Mexican influence and would pair well with Churros.

- 3 oz. Pisco
- 1 oz. Fresh Lime Juice
- 1 oz. Fresh Lemon Juice
- 1 Tbsp. Granulated Sugar
- 1 tbsp. Coconut Cream, black food dye (to sass up the coconut and make the drink spookier!)
- dash of Angostura Bitters

In a small bowl, combine coconut cream and a few drops of food dye. Stir to combine, and then add a small spoonful of the mixture to the bottom of a glass (if you are adding a sugar rim, do that before this step).

In a cocktail shaker filled with ice, combine Pisco, lemon and lime juices, and sugar. Cover and shake vigorously for at least 15 seconds.

Double strain the mixture into your chosen glass. Top with bitters. Enjoy!

THE GRAVE DIGGER COCKTAIL

The Grave Digger is essentially a made-up cocktail, not a real classic passed down, so I've come across quite a few variations of it. But I couldn't resist adding it to the list, since, if you've read *Rules for Being Dead*, you'll know Clarke becomes quite the little grave digger himself, after he sees the movie *Mr. Sardonicus*. Or does he??

Both versions I'm including here are particularly good for Fall imbibing; rich, dark, autumnal flavors and ingredients, guaranteed to take the chill of the weather (and the book!) off. And it's perfect for the Halloween season, which you know means a lot to Clark.

Most hard ciders are gluten-free, so it's good if you're gluten-intolerant. And the ginger ale filler helps lessen the wallop of the drink, so it won't leave you in need of a corpse reviver (see above!).

- 2 ozs Hard Cider
- 1 oz Bourbon or other whiskey, ginger ale or ginger beer
- crushed ice

In a tumbler or high ball glass, combine the cider and whiskey. Fill the glass with crushed ice and then ginger ale.

This other variation on the Grave Digger is more like a Spanish coffee, and perfect for anyone with a sweet tooth.

- 1 1/2 oz Vanilla-infused brandy
- 3/4 oz Coffee liqueur
- 1/2 oz Grand Marnier
- 1 oz Espresso

Put all in a shaker with ice and shake until well chilled. Garnish with whipped cream and crushed oreo cookies. (Booze and dessert with one-stop-shopping!)