

# Teaching Guide for *The Carrefour Curse*

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## Discussion Questions

1. Describe how the Carrefour family uses earth elements to work their magic.
2. What are ley lines and what is their significance?
3. If you could choose between working magic with a) stones b) plants c) air and water or d) fire, which would you choose and why?
4. Emerald kept Garnet away from Crossroad House for her own protection. But Garnet wants to go there and sabotages her mother's ward for the chance to visit the house and meet her family. Do you think this was a smart or foolish move? Why?
5. The family members claim that no person cast the spell that inflicted Garnet with a plague of frogs and forced her to come to Crossroad House. How did they think it happened?
6. Jasper is the "heir" to the Carrefour magic and has power over the other members of his family. How do we see this work over the course of the story?
7. Why do the members of the Carrefour family talk about the house as if it is a living entity?
8. Why is the transition of power from one Carrefour heir to another a dangerous time for the family?
9. Describe the history of the Old Carrefour House.
10. What strange events have happened at Old House so that Garnet and the other children are forbidden to visit the ruins?

11. When the Carrefours discover that they are trapped on the property, how do the various family members react? What would be your reaction?
12. What is the significance of Garnet's time traveling experiences? What do you think she was supposed to learn from each trip?
13. When David Castellano first meets Garnet in the cemetery, do you trust him? Why or why not?
14. What things has Jasper done (both admitted and suspected) to keep the power of the Carrefour magic?
15. Describe what we know (or think we know) about Tana's experience at Crossroad House in 1998.
16. What does Brand want from Garnet?
17. What kind of magic did Old Linden Carrefour perform on the grounds of Old House in 1892? What was his intention? What mistake(s) did he make?
18. What is a pitcher plant and why does Stella compare Old House to one?
19. How does Garnet break "the Carrefour curse?"
20. What drives Mica to finally leave the attic?
21. Who ultimately chooses the next Carrefour heir? Why do you think this person is chosen, and do you think it's a good choice?
22. Who shows up at Crossroad House in the final chapter, and how do you think this happened?

## Vocabulary

The members of the Carrefour family all have names related in some way to natural elements. Many will be obvious to readers, like Windy, River, Garnet, and Emerald. Readers may need to look up the meaning of other names, such as: **Linden, Ash** (tree), **Tempest, Jasper, Florian, Hestia, Rowan, and Stella.**

## Plot Structure

Using the Plot Structure diagram as a guide, help students to identify the following parts of the story:

- **Exposition:** The introduction of major characters, primary setting, and the initial conflict. (In this case, the initial conflict is that Garnet and Emerald have been summoned to Crossroad House against their will, despite the fact that Garnet is in danger here, according to an augury cast before she was born.)
- **Rising Action:** The series of events that complicates the initial conflict and drives the action in the story forward. (Ex: Uncle Flint dies, family members are trapped on the property, Garnet begins to time travel, Jasper steals life force from family members, someone claiming to be Garnet's father appears only to be later revealed as Brand, Garnet is forced onto Old House property where she sees Old Linden casting his spell and is later assisted by Stella.)
- **Climax:** The tipping point where the conflict has reached its greatest point and solving it finally becomes possible. (Garnet faces off against the cursed magic of Old House alone in a battle to save herself and Tana.)

- **Falling Action:** The events which follow the climax and wrap up minor details of the conflict. (The return to Crossroad House, explanations from Brand, Jasper’s final words, and Ash being chosen by the Carrefour ring itself.)
- **Resolution:** The aftermath of the conflict and end of the story. (Ash takes over as heir, family members decide their future, Garnet’s real father turns up.)

### Science Connection

Each chapter begins with a heading introducing mystical beliefs about certain gemstones, rocks, and minerals. Students may research and report more factual information about these materials, identifying their composition, appearance, history, and uses. While many are primarily used in jewelry or artwork, others have practical or industrial uses. The following is a list of the stones featured in the chapter headings.

Turquoise	Moonstone	Dioptase	Blue Fluorite
Celestite	Flint	Lapis Lazuli	Garnet
Carnelian	Sapphire	Obsidian	Jade
Jasper	Topaz	Ruby	Blue Diamond
Peridot	Hematite	Larimar	Aventurine
Smoky Quartz	Amethyst	Beryl	
Diamond	Rainbow Obsidian	Bloodstone	
Mica	Tourmaline	Opal	
Emerald	Onyx	Aquamarine	