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**The Black Cat**

*Guided Reading Questions*

1. The narrator begins by stating that the story he is about to relate is “a series of mere household events”; however, how does he say these events have affected him?

2. What made the narrator happiest when he was a child?

3. Name the various pets the narrator and his wife had. Which of these was his favorite?

4. What superstition did the narrator’s wife believe about his favorite pet?

5. What was the pet’s name? What was -----the god of in Roman mythology (Hades in Greek myths)?

6. Once the narrator begins drinking alcohol excessively, how does his character and his behavior change?

7. One night when the narrator is particularly intoxicated, and the cat reacts to his violent behavior by biting him, what does the narrator do to the cat?

8. What quality (or “spirit”) does the narrator say overcame him when he realized that the cat fled in terror from him? (He also states that he believes it is “one of the primitive impulses of the human heart.”) Based on what he says in the rest of that paragraph, what do you think this means?

9. In this same spirit (mentioned above), what does the narrator do to the cat, even though he’s crying as he does it? What reason does he give for doing this?

10. What happens the same night the narrator commits his cruel deed?

11. What is strange about the one remaining wall; what is the crowd staring at? Which wall, in particular, is the one that remains?

12. How does the narrator explain this unusual wall away?

13. As the narrator begins to feel remorse for what he has done, he looks for another cat to replace Pluto; where does he find it? What is the only difference in the appearance of this cat?

14. Before long, the narrator begins to be disgusted and annoyed by this cat too; however, he does not abuse it as he had Pluto. How does he react to the new cat?

15. What does he discover that the new black cat has in common with Pluto, but only the morning after he brings it home?

16. What is it about the black cat that fills the narrator with dread, a quality which his wife calls to his attention?

17. Who or what suffers most at the hands of the narrator as “evil thoughts” consume him and he succumbs to fury?

18. What does the narrator do to his wife, and why?

19. What does the narrator finally decide to do with the evidence of his crime?

20. Why is the narrator able to sleep soundly the same night that he commits his gruesome crime?

21. When the police come to investigate the narrator’s home, how does he sabotage himself as they are just about to depart?

22. What do the narrator and the police hear coming from behind the wall?

23. What do the police discover when they tear down the wall?

24. From where does the narrator tell us this story? (You may need to look back to the beginning of the story to find this answer.)