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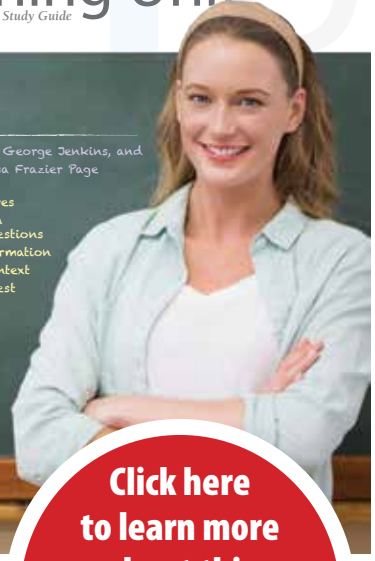
Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



The Pact

by Dr. Sampson Davis, George Jenkins, and
Rameck Hunt with Lisa Frazier Page

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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The Pact

Note to the Teacher

Drs. Sampson Davis, George Jenkins, and Rameck Hunt, also known as the Three Doctors, all grew up in Newark, NJ, under similar circumstances, facing the same daily dangers, negative influences, and pain involved with living in a low-income, crime-infested area. All three had had absent fathers and exposure to the drug scene, but all three had also craved to make something important of themselves, and in 1990, they made a pact—they would all become doctors someday.

The three men met at University High School. Through perseverance and the support of others, they attended and graduated from Seton Hall University and went on to receive post-graduate degrees, Drs. Davis and Hunt at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and Dr. Jenkins at University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey for his dental degree. Dr. Davis fulfilled his residency in emergency medicine at Newark's Beth Israel Medical Center, and Dr. Hunt at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, specializing in internal medicine. *The Pact* traces the doctors' collaborative journey supporting each other's dreams, consoling each other in their disappointments, and remaining connected and giving back to the area they came from.

It is important to note that *The Pact* contains some strong profanity, and incidents of racism, drug abuse, and violence. These topics are important to explore in discussing the poverty the men endured, their lack of educational opportunity, and their amazing resilience; however, the maturity of the class should be considered before teaching this memoir.

Terms and Definitions

Allusion – a reference to a person, place, poem, book, event, etc., which is not part of the story, that the author expects the reader will recognize; **Example:** In *The Glass Menagerie*, Tom speaks of “Chamberlain’s umbrella,” a reference to British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain.

Analogy – a comparison between things, people, places, etc., that are similar in order to point out the dissimilarities. **Example:** a tree being compared to a branching river.

Characterization – the methods, incidents, speech, etc., an author uses to reveal the people in the book; characterization is depicted by what the person says, what others say, and by his or her actions.

Cliché – a familiar word or phrase that is used so often that it is no longer fresh or meaningful, but trite; **Example:** “All’s well that ends well.”

Dialogue – conversation between two or more characters

Epilogue – a short section at the end of the book, after the action has concluded; epilogues sometimes refer to events that take place many years after the main ending to the work.

Epiphany – a revelatory, personal experience through which the individual gains an insight, knowledge, or understanding of the self, other people, or the world; the situation itself may be important or trivial, but the understanding that emerges is life changing. **Examples:** When the Three Wise Men realize that the child they see is Divine, they experience an epiphany. Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* has an epiphany when he observes a bird, which becomes the major turning point in his life.

Figurative Language – words and phrases that have meanings different from their usual ones in order to create a poetic and/or literary effect; **Examples:** Love certainly has its own seasons; crumbling cities made of matches

Foil – a character whose qualities or actions usually serve to emphasize the actions or qualities of the main character, the protagonist, by providing a strong contrast; on occasion, the foil is used as a contrast to a character other than the main one. **Examples:** Hotspur contrasts Prince Hal in Shakespeare’s *Henry IV, Part I*; the Roadrunner of cartoon fame uses Wile E. Coyote as his foil.

Foreshadowing – the use of hints or clues in a story to suggest what action is to come; foreshadowing is frequently used to create interest and build suspense. **Example:** Two small and seemingly inconsequential car accidents predict and hint at the upcoming, important wreck in *The Great Gatsby*.

Objectives

By the end of the Unit, the student will be able to:

1. identify and explain the importance of the following motifs:
 - dreams
 - paternal and maternal figures
 - peer pressure
 - being “rescued” (by a person or by divine intervention)
2. discuss the many challenges and temptations that almost thwarted the narrators’ goal and explain how they managed to dodge these obstacles.
3. analyze the role of friendship in the memoir: How does one distinguish between beneficial and toxic friendships? How does the theme that few things are as important as friendship play an important role in the book?
4. compare and contrast the experiences, characteristics, and struggles of the Three Doctors.
5. point out examples of figurative language (similes, analogies, etc.), their meanings, and how those meanings relate to themes presented in the memoir.
6. examine the theme of how a person can demonstrate compassion and explain how compassion has shaped the Doctors’ outcomes.
7. understand the incidents of racism in this memoir, paying particular attention to how society, in many ways, acts as a rival to the Three Doctors.
8. explain how the Doctors’ many not-so-fortunate childhood friends act as foils to the three narrators.
9. expand upon the theme of giving back and returning to one’s roots.
10. speculate on the purposes of the chapters that are not plot-driven and include only personal narratives.
11. consider the effect on the memoir of having three different narrators and, therefore, three different perspectives.
12. reflect upon his or her own ambitions, friendships, and altruism.
13. analyze how maternal and paternal figures influence the three narrators.

4. COMMON GROUND

VOCABULARY

analyst – one who thinks logically
cutting up – [*slang*] misbehaving
concocted – thought of
exasperated – frustrated
incorrigible – unable to be helped
indefinitely – until further notice
lingered – stayed
mediocrity – average quality
menial – requiring little skill
ousted – overthrew
predominantly – mainly
recruiter – someone who seeks out potential students or employees for a school or organization
reluctant – unwilling
skeptical – doubting
specialized – with a focus on one subject or career

1. Why does George feel drawn to Sam?

2. How does the reputation and purpose of University High School contrast with what the students must face at its current location?

3. How does George explain why he is able to avoid trouble, while Sam is not?

4. Why does Sam’s romantic relationship end? What shocking news does he receive months afterward? How does he react?

5. This chapter includes various incidents in which the trio supports each other. Cite at least two of these occurrences.

6. Explain how medical school “[becomes] a struggle” for Sam. What does he cite as his reason for feeling out of place?

7. How do Sam, George, and Rameck continue to fund their tuition, room and board, etc.?

8. Explain the meaning of the following sentence: “It was easier to walk away from the fun when I looked to my right and there was George, and I looked to my left and there was Rameck.”

19. HOME AGAIN

VOCABULARY

amassed – collected
ancillary – secondary, assisting
eluded – escaped
engagements – events
generate – to cause; to produce
gratifying – rewarding, heartwarming
gurney – a wheeled stretcher used to transport hospital patients
intravenous – into a vein
leery – cautious, wary
proficiency – a degree of skill or ability
strained – tense
subpoena – a summons to testify in court
ventricle – a portion of the heart

1. Describe how the newspaper story about the Three Doctors changes their lives.

2. Which two patients does Sam recognize at the hospital?

3. How does Sam's old friend who dies from gunshot wounds act as a foil to the Three Doctors?
