

Grade 7 English

*The Snake-stone*, by Berlie Doherty

**Act 3**

*Characters:*

Stand-alone Stage Directions

Narrator

James

Elizabeth

Young Elizabeth

Woman farmer\*\*

Michael\*

Sam\*\*

Ellie (Champion)\*\*

Joseph\*

Claire

Frances

Sammy

Meggie

Mum\*

Dad\*

Caroline\*

Mr. Frith\*\*

Mrs. Frith\*\*

\*Very small part \*\*Fairly small part

*Questions:*

1. Why didn't Elizabeth run away and marry Sam, the father of her baby? Knowing how her life turned out (with Joseph, as well as with a baby in the world she never got to know), do you think she should have stayed, or gone away with Sam?
2. What did the snake-stone mean to Sam? To Elizabeth?
3. What did the snake-stone mean to James? What did it mean to Pieface Mygrove?
4. What did the snake-stone mean to Elizabeth's mother (Mrs. Frith)? What eventually happened to Elizabeth's mother?
5. What did the snake-stone mean to Mr. Griffiths? The snake-stone was all of those things to different people.
6. In your opinion, should Elizabeth (or any woman who does it) have been punished by law for abandoning a baby? She put the baby at risk of death by putting it in a mailbox, but she also gave the baby a better life.
7. This play is about an adopted boy who goes looking for his birth mother or birth parents. In your opinion, do adopted children have a right to meet their birth parents? Or should birth parents have a right to remain secret, if they want to? (Write at least 5-6 sentences! See different sides of the issue!)
8. Does Elizabeth's current husband, Joseph, have a right to know about her secret other baby she had 6 years before they were married? Should she tell him the whole truth or keep the secret? (Again, write several sentences, not just a short answer. Explore the issue.)
9. In a way, the final meeting between James and Elizabeth is quite short for both of them. Is James happy to have met his birth mother at last? Was it worth the effort and trouble (lying to his parents, walking for miles, etc.)? What did he gain from it? What did Elizabeth gain from finally meeting James?
10. How has James's relationship with his parents changed? What do they realize, and what does he realize, that they didn't fully realize before?