

Discussion Questions for *The Unquiet Grave*

- 1) The folk tale version of the Greenbrier Ghost story says that Mary Jane Heaster was a widow, but Jacob did not die until 1914. Why do they assume that he is dead?
- 2) Do you believe that Mary Jane Heaster saw the ghost of her daughter?
- 3) In the first scene, at the Lakin asylum, Mr Gardner refers to a creature with leathery wings and red eyes. This is a reference to a famous figure in WV folklore. Which one? (Hint: Google Richard Gere.)
- 4) Here is a photo of the young Lakin psychiatrist Dr. James Boozer. Does he look the way you expected?
- 5) Although the rest of the Heaster family got tombstones around the time that they died, Zona did not get a grave marker until the historical society erected one in the 1970's. Why do you suppose this is?
- 6) Look at a map of West Virginia. You will see that the story centers around two north/south roads: the one that follows the Ohio River (Lakin and Moundsville) and Rt. 219 which leads from Trout Shue's Droop Mountain home in Pocahontas County, through Lewisburg, and on to Bluefield, where Mr. Gardner practiced law after 1900. The lawyers Preston and Gardner are buried in a churchyard adjacent to that road.
7. If Trout and Zona had not married, how do you think their lives would have turned out?
8. In 1930, James Gardner is 63 years old, while his doctor, James Boozer, is 29, the age that Gardner was during the trial. What differences do you see between the 29 year old Gardner and the 29 year old Boozer?
9. If the trial were held today, how do you think it would have turned out?
10. Compare the characters of the two lead attorneys, Rucker and Preston.