

Questions after reading the story

The Cat Flap is a unique story in that it can only be read 'circularly,' rather than following a linear, one-sided perspective, like most stories we tell ourselves. It invites the young reader to consider the subjective nature of reality, how our story and experience of life is affected by our perspective, attitudes, and point of view. The story seeks to inspire tolerance and present the issue of masculine and feminine differences in a way that is fun and playful, inviting readers to embrace the concept of balance and wholeness. It is a story that is meant to be read and re-read, so that the reader might delve deeper and deeper into its truth each time it is experienced.

Here are some suggested questions for students after reading *The Cat Flap: A Tale of Harmony and Balance*:

1. Which side of the story did you read first?
2. Did you understand what was happening after you read only one side?
3. What questions did you have?
4. What happened when you went back and re-read the story of the first cat (whichever side you read first)? Did you see things more clearly after you had the information from the other cat's perspective?
5. Can you think of a time in your life when you might have benefited from seeing things from another person's point of view?
6. How was the female cat's perspective different from the male cat's perspective?
7. What were some ways in which their personalities appear different?
8. Can you make up words for the story? What do you think each cat is thinking throughout the story? Write down the stream of thoughts for the male cat, and then write down the stream of thoughts for the female cat.
9. How did the male cat help the female cat move forward?
10. How did the female cat help the male cat?
11. What do you think are aspects of the masculine side of a person? Make a list. (masculine = having qualities or appearance traditionally associated with men; of or relating to men; male.)
12. What do you think are aspects of the feminine side of a person? Make a list. (feminine = having qualities or appearance traditionally associated with women; of or relating to women; female.)
13. Can a person have both masculine and feminine qualities?
14. What does it mean to be balanced?
15. How might a balanced individual get along better with other people?
16. What might a relationship between two balanced individuals look like? How might that differ from some of the relationships you see on TV, or relationships you have read about in other books? Compare and contrast.

This is an over-simplification but, essentially:

Masculine side = value of self (over others)

too much masculine energy = egotistical behavior, excessive dominance and aggression

too little masculine energy = victim-like behavior

Feminine side = value of others (over self)

too much feminine energy without masculine balance = human doormat

too little feminine energy = jealousy, backbiting, reactive emotional violence

**Everyone has aspects of both in their personality. A healthy person has a healthy balance between the two.*