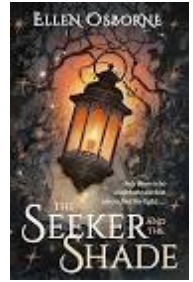


The Seeker and the Shade by Ellen Osborne

Discussion Questions



Questions posed by the author:

1. When a Seeker and a Caster are paired, they must become an effective team if they are to survive. What do you think makes a good pairing?
2. In the story, it's suggested that the vows are weakening because the words have become so detached from their origin. Can you think of examples today where official words spoken regularly may have lost their impact over time? How would you rewrite them to recover their effect?
3. What makes a 'good' Seeker or Caster is often misunderstood - even by the selection system itself. How do you see this play out in the story?
4. Many power dynamics are at play throughout the book. In what unusual or surprising ways do you see power struggles represented?

Additional questions:

5. Consider the meaning of the word 'shade'. Why do you think this word was chosen as the name of the enigmatic antagonist in the story?
6. What do you think would be the hardest thing about living without daylight?
7. Would you rather live in permanent daylight or permanent darkness?
8. What does the 'test' on route to Blackwood suggest about the ethos of Blackwood?
9. Is it wise to pair Casters and Seekers at the enrolment ceremony, or would the second year be a better time for pairing?
10. Connie worries she will be a nightmare pairing; Jasper worries about being given a nightmare partner. What differences in their characters does this highlight?
11. Birchum describes Jasper as a '*relational*' person? What is your understanding of the term and do you think it is an accurate description of Jasper?

12. *'Funny how he'd never really thought properly about the nature of what they were fighting'*.
Do you think this is a common experience for soldiers? Why might soldiers avoid thinking too deeply about their adversaries?
13. Why do you think that sharing secrets helps strengthen Connie and Jasper's connection as Caster and Seeker?
14. Which moment marks the turning point in Connie and Jasper's relationship? How does it develop from hostility to friendship and beyond?
15. Which role, Seeker or Caster, do you feel carries the greater weight of responsibility? Why?
16. Would you rather be a Seeker or a Caster? Why?
17. What are your theories about *'The nature of the Shade'*? Do you agree with Connie that humans were feeding it? How could this theory be related to real life?
18. What does the treatment of children of the administration suggest about privilege and responsibility?
19. How does guilt act as a motivating force in the story?
20. How do expectations placed upon the characters (by themselves and others) create tension and conflict in the story?
21. How do the Shade's illusions and tricks influence and affect the characters?
22. Were there any events you predicted because of foreshadowing?
23. Jasper and Dolapo consider whether Rowan was 'poisoned' by the Shade or if he had always 'secretly wanted it.' What are your thoughts on Rowan's motivation and beliefs. What was he ultimately seeking?
24. What predictions do you have for Connie and Jasper's future? Do you think finding Nathan could bring the closure Jasper is looking for?
25. Do you think it is possible for the Shade to be gone forever?

