

Dark Mystery of the Shadow Beasts

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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Imagine that everything you have – your family, your home, your peaceful way of life – has suddenly been taken away from you. Like the main characters in *Shadow Beasts*, you have become an Outcast. How would you feel? What would you do to survive?
2. Imagine that, like Gyro, you are in charge of a group of young people who must survive through cooperation. The problem is that the people in your group have different languages, customs and religious beliefs. What would your strategies be to get everyone to cooperate for the sake of the group? What type of leader is Gyro – too strong, too weak or balanced?
3. When we first meet S'yen, he is speaking in a strange language. Dav'yn also speaks in an unusual language. Discuss how the different languages in the story help or hinder the way the Outcasts interact with each other. Have you ever met anyone who spoke in a foreign language? How did you communicate?
4. Discuss how the characters' homeland environments have an impact on their personalities. For example, Dav'yn comes from a harsh, rocky environment and, to Jax, Dav'yn has a harsh personality. How has homeland affected Jax? Marina? S'yen? How does environment affect a person's attitudes about the world?
5. The Outcasts have different skin and hair colors. Does a difference in skin color affect the way they act with each other? Do you know anyone who treats a person differently because of his or her skin color? How would you resolve a conflict based on skin color?
6. Jax thinks Dav'yn is dangerous. Why does Klanga grow to like Dav'yn? How does Dav'yn react to his young new friend?
7. Klanga has her pet, Feelie, to help her through scary times. Have you ever had a pet or favorite stuffed animal that helped you to feel safe? Why?
8. What is the relationship among Lynai'seth, Marina and Jax? Does this relationship help or hurt the progress of the Outcasts? What do you predict will happen with these three characters?
9. The Shadow Beasts are referred to as fierce creatures of fairy tales and legends. What role do they play in the lives of the Outcasts? How does that role change in the story?
10. Why do you think the Outcasts find an abandoned shrine in the middle of the vast, open land? Are there any countries in the world you can think of that have shrines far away from civilization? Which ones?
11. The Antibodies seem to attack from nowhere. They are incredibly powerful. Why don't they enter the shrine and capture the Outcasts? What stops them? Is it ever right to have armies that blindly attack upon command?
12. In science, what is the definition of an "antibody"? What is its purpose? Do the Antibodies in *Shadow Beasts* have any similar features to antibodies in science?
13. Which character do you identify with most? What is it about the character that you like?