

MARKMAKER

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

ONE-WORD REVIEW: Start off with your one-word review of the book or a section of the book.

MOST MEMORABLE SCENE: What was the most vivid, emotional, or simply the most memorable moment in the novel?

FAVORITE CHARACTER: Did you have a favorite character in the story? Who was it, and why did you enjoy reading about them?

LAW VS. CONSCIENCE: Mariikel decides to give marks to the exiles, even though he is breaking the law. What is the distinction between the law of Mariikel's conscience and the laws and traditions of Noxxiin society? What happens when the two come into apparent conflict? Why is it that Mariikel feels so ashamed—condemned, even—when he knows in his heart that he is pursuing justice?

IN EXILE: Exile is a major theme throughout the book. Why is exile such a devastating punishment for the Noxxiin? How can different characters be considered “exiles” from normal society (Lakkia, Kophas, Mariikel, Haza'ruux, etc.)? How is this preoccupation with exile related to the Noxxiin race's ancient separation from their native planets?

PARENTS AND MENTORS: Mariikel's birth parents are deceased, but he has several parental and mentor figures throughout the story (Hakham, Chervani, Kilmaya, Haza'ruux). What does he learn from each of these people? How do each of them perceive him? How do they limit him and/or challenge him to change?

WARRIOR OF THE ASCENDANCE: Askko (Mariikel's cousin) is a soldier for the Ascendance, the antagonistic faction in the novel—yet he is portrayed sympathetically. Are his arguments for the necessity of the war with the half-sights convincing? Could you see yourself taking his point of view?

SEEING THE OTHER: Mariikel often finds himself sympathizing with people who are different from him (the exiles, Askko, the half-sight Toh Maas, the artists from Clan Trev'ban, etc.). How does this empathy affect him throughout the story? How does it put him into conflict with his own clan and the markmaker guild?

THE GUILDMASTER: What do you think of Mekkalluthak? Is he a good or bad leader for Clan Serix? Did he contribute to the fall of the clan, or is he simply a victim of political circumstances?



THE SIGIL POEM: What is the significance of the poem that Haza'ruux tattoos on Mariikel's arm? What does it reveal to Mariikel about himself, and why does it frighten him so much? Why do you think he initially tries to remove the tattoo after he discovers what it means?

THE MARK OF THE ARIMAAS: Towards the end of the story, Mariikel discovers that the traditional tattoo of exile actually comes from the mark of the Arimaas, the legendary order of warrior-artists that Haza'ruux secretly belongs to. How does this knowledge change Mariikel's perspective of his clan's heritage? How does it help him come to terms with his own state of exile at the end of the book?

TRUTH IN THE FLESH: In the Noxxiin culture (and even language), the concepts of blood and tattoos are closely associated. Why do you think this is? How is the relationship between these two ideas presented in the novel?

THE DEEP SLEEP: The Deep Sleep—the personification of death—is represented by a white-skinned Noxxiin who does not have any tattoos. Why is this a terrifying image to this alien culture? What is the relation between lack of marks and the ideas of death, loss of memory, and spiritual condemnation?

FOUNTAIN OF WISDOM: The setting of a fountain appears several times in the story, often at key moments in Mariikel's character journey (e.g. his decision to help Kophas, his first meeting with Haza'ruux, his decision to turn himself in, etc.). Why do you think this is? What could the image of a fountain or running water represent?

