

READER/DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR
Shade

Title: *Shade*

Author: Jeri Smith-Ready

Publisher: Simon Pulse/Simon & Schuster

Date of Publication: May 2010

Ages 14 and up

ISBN: 978-1-4169-9406-0

This reader guide may be duplicated for classroom, book club discussion group, or related purposes.

About the Book

First in a worldwide generation of ghost-seers, Aura's relationship with the dead changes forever when her boyfriend dies and comes back to haunt her.

About the Author

The award-winning author of adult and teen novels, Jeri Smith-Ready lives in Maryland with her husband, two cats, and the world's goofiest greyhound. Jeri's plan to save the earth was ruined when she realized she was more of a "problem maker" than a problem solver. Like her characters, she loves music, movies, and staying up very, very late.

Discussion Questions:

1. How is *Shade* different from traditional ghost stories?
2. In what ways, besides those mentioned in *Shade*, would our society adapt to the omnipresence of ghosts? How would it affect religious beliefs? Politics? National security? Everyday institutions such as education, health care, sports, etc.?
3. How would you live your life differently, knowing you might become a ghost someday?
4. If you were a post-Shifter like Aura who could see and talk to ghosts, how do you think you'd cope? How would you feel if someone you loved died and became a ghost? What if someone you loved died and *didn't* become a ghost?
5. Choose one or more songs from the *Shade* soundtrack <http://www.jerismithready.com/books/shade/music/> and discuss its role in the story and the characters' emotional lives. Does the music add to or detract from your reading experience of *Shade*? Do you often connect certain songs with characters from books and movies?

6. What do you think would have happened to Aura and Logan's relationship if he had lived? If he had succeeded in becoming a rock star? If he had failed?
7. Why is Aura's choice between a living boy and a dead one not as simple as it seems?
8. Why do you think Eowyn assigns Aura and Zachary the task of mapping the stars each month? What lessons will it teach them? What do you think she's preparing for?
9. Think about the use of colors in *Shade*. Why would a ghost be repelled by the color red? What emotions do you associate with red and violet? (Not for further discussion/reading: Red is also associated with obsidian and with the first "chakra" at the base of the spine; while violet is associated with quartz and the seventh "chakra" atop the head.)
10. If you were in charge of the Department of Metaphysical Purity (DMP), how would you change it? How would you balance the need to protect the world from shades with the need to protect the rights of ghosts? Are there any parallels to the way our own society treats certain humans?
11. What do you think happened at the end of *Shade*? Why did it happen that night? What do you think will happen next?

Activities:

Music: Make a soundtrack/playlist for the book. Which songs represent which characters? Which songs make you think of specific scenes? If *Shade* were a movie or TV show, which song would play at the beginning and end?

Writing: Write Logan's obituary. Try writing it first from an outsider's point of view (as if a reporter were writing an article), then from Logan's own point of view. How would another character (like Aura or Mickey) write it differently?

Art: Design a flyer for a Keeley Brothers concert or a cover for their CD. Try this also for Siobhan and Mickey's Irish folk duo, the Keeleys. How has their image changed since Logan's death?

Geography: Many of the scenes occur in real places in and around Baltimore. Make a "story map" with approximate locations of the characters' homes and significant scenes.

Science: Create your own star map, like the ones Zachary and Aura make. Mark the four major directions (north, south, etc.), the celestial equator, and the ecliptic. Sketch as many constellations as possible. Discuss the challenges of reproducing the sky on a flat piece of paper.

History: Study the significance of the winter solstice event within different ancient civilizations. How are these observances reflected in modern-day winter holidays?

Writing/Journalism: Write a dialogue between yourself and one of the ghosts from *Shade* (Logan, Jake from the night club, the mother in the food court, the captain of the ship, etc.). Try it as an interview or put yourself in the story.

Further Subject Matter:

Newgrange, Geraldine Stout and Matthew Stout. Cork University Press, 2008. (Loads of wonderful pictures)

The Stones of Time: Calendars, Sundials, and Stone Chambers of Ancient Ireland. Martin Brennan. Inner Traditions International, 1994.

Newgrange: Archaeology, Art and Legend. Michael J. O'Kelly. Thames & Hudson, 1995.