

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. One of the recurring themes of the book is revenge. Willie/Kwadzo, in a desperate situation, makes an even more desperate choice to exact retribution. What would it take for you to act on the thought of revenge? What action against you do you believe would constitute just cause for retaliation?
2. Throughout much of the book, Willie/Kwadzo is at odds with Gertie regarding his actions toward gaining freedom, and it takes its toll on their relationship. Have you ever been in a relationship where someone you loved made a decision that went against your moral code? How did you handle it? Was it a deal-breaker?
3. The horror element in the book is twofold: There is the horror of the violence the Ramangans display against the colonizers, and there is the brutal horror of slavery. Which did you find to be more chilling, and why?
4. In the taking of Ramangan Blood, the slaves of the Barrow Plantation go from dominated to superhumanly powerful almost instantaneously, yet their desires remain human. Were you to obtain superhuman power overnight, how difficult do you think it would be to maintain your humanity? What rules would you set for yourself?
5. Irene is caught in a unique situation as a mixed-race woman where she is not accepted by either the African slaves or the

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

white colonists. Have you ever felt ostracized by two separate groups even though you were a part of both? How did that make you feel?

6. In the book, Willie/Kwadzo makes the ultimate sacrifice to do what he believes is best for Gertie and their unborn child by giving up his human life. Is there anything you believe is worth dying for? If so, what is it?
7. The slaves of the Barrow Plantation are presented with the choice of becoming powerful immortals. Arguments are made against Ramangan Blood by Gertie and for it by Irene. If you had been one of the slaves on the plantation, would you have been Team Gertie or Team Irene and why?
8. Another major theme in the book is the age-old one of good versus evil. The Ramanga Tribe has a history of evil, but Kwadzo uses their power for good, while Gertie believes they can be nothing more than evil. Do you think there is any circumstance in which doing something bad can lead to a greater good?
9. If given the chance to become an immortal vampire, would you take it? Why or why not?
10. One of the more moving moments in the book is when Willie reclaims his true name, Kwadzo. How important is identity to you? How do you define it?
11. Willie/Kwadzo had to go from being a slave to becoming a leader in a very short period of time. How do you think he handled it? Have you ever had to unexpectedly step into a leadership role without being prepared for it? How did you handle it?
12. Was there a scene or character that stuck with you more than any other?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

13. Do you find this book to be controversial? If so, why?
14. Willie/Kwadzo makes a vow to share the land with the Indigenous peoples once James Barrow has been conquered, thereby paving the way for them to find liberty from the colonists and create their own agency. After all this time, why do you think Native Americans are still denied a powerful voice in this country?
15. Spoiler alert! In the end, the entire Barrow family dies. If it were up to you, would any of them have been spared? If so, why?
16. In what ways do you think the history we know would have changed after the events of the book? What other historical atrocities could have been prevented with Ramangan power? If you had the power to change history, what would you change?

© *Markus Redmond 2025*