



Colorado Book Club Resource

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE BALLAD OF SONGBIRDS AND SNAKES BY SUZANNE COLLINS

1. Which character in this book most exemplifies the philosophy of Thomas Hobbes that all humans are essentially selfish and need a strong central government?
2. Which characters develop that belief through the events of the story?
3. Which characters believe, as John Locke did, that humans should all be treated equally for the common good? How do these characters act as a result of their beliefs?
4. Do you think the decisions they make are evil or necessary? Do you think they believe their actions are evil or necessary?
5. Discuss how the Mary Shelley quote about the creature created by Dr. Frankenstein relates to the characters in this book. Which of them had the “promise of virtues” destroyed by “the loathing and scorn” that were “manifested toward” them?
6. Do you believe that people can become “monsters” through the way they are treated by others?
7. Compare the family backgrounds of Coriolanus and Sejanus. How do their childhood experiences affect how each feels about the Capitol, the Hunger Games, and being mentors to the tributes?
8. Describe Lucy Gray Baird’s appearance at the reaping and why it has the effect it does on the audience, in District 12 and the Capitol. In what ways does she represent the quotation from Wordsworth— “Sweet is the lore which Nature brings”?
9. Why does Coriolanus decide to meet the train that brings the tributes to the Capitol, and why does he stay with the tributes? Describe the ways that he is influenced by Lucy Gray and how she responds to him. What makes Lucy Gray believe him to be trustworthy? Does he betray that trust?
10. How do Coriolanus’s and Lucy’s views of human nature influence the way they see each other, their communities, and the decisions they make?
11. Which philosophers from the epigraph at the beginning of the book represent each of their viewpoints?
12. Why do you think Sejanus went into the arena? Why does Dr. Gaul insist that Coriolanus go in after him? What does the time they spend in the arena tell us about the nature of both Sejanus and Coriolanus? What does this scene tell us about Dr. Gaul’s motivation?
13. How do Lucy Gray’s songs affect Coriolanus when she sings in the Capitol? Why is he disturbed by some of her ballads and not by others? How else does he respond to her songs in the Capitol? What is the difference when



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he hears her sing in District 12? Beyond the Capitol

14. How does Coriolanus feel about being forced to join the Peacekeepers? Why does he request to be sent to District 12? Why does Sejanus follow Coriolanus to District 12?
15. How do Coriolanus's and Sejanus's personalities affect their behavior in the District?

Discussion questions provided by the publisher.



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