

MADDIE AND JACOB

1. Both Maddie and Jacob have suffered bitter trauma in their pasts. Jacob responds by retreating from family and society and wishing fervently to die. Maddie longs to reach out, to become part of the greater world, and she desperately fears mutilation and death. *What influences do you see at work with such different reactions? Are you more sympathetic with one than the other? Why?*
2. Both Maddie and Jacob have family members who cannot or will not acknowledge or understand their past struggles. Maddie's brother, Andrew, and Jacob's mother both believe Maddie and Jacob should move on. *Have you ever felt like there's an expectation that you should move on too quickly ("Get over it!") from a painful life event? How did you handle this expectation? Have you found closure?*
3. Jacob says of the neighbors that he could "hear the buzz of their voices now, like killer bees swarming, preparing to attack with questions and conversations and nosiness masquerading as sympathy." *Do you, like Jacob, prefer to be alone when processing something painful? The beginning of Chapter 6 states "[m]onsters live in the real world." Do you agree? Is there room for a belief in the goodness of humanity as well as an understanding of human cruelty?*
4. Maddie has a therapist who tells her to draw the monster stalking her to get "the beast out of her head." *Would drawing work for you? If not, what therapy would you suggest to work through debilitating fear?*
5. *Do you have a Mrs. Butenshoen (i.e., a person who judges the actions of others but believes s/he is above reproach) in your life? How do you handle interactions with him/her? Do you feel you have succeeded in rising above such criticism and if so, share your techniques with the group.*
6. *Do you believe, under the circumstances, that you, as one of the brainiac kids, would be able to forgive Jacob for what happened in North Korea? What if you were a parent of one of the children killed? Have you ever suffered such a loss and if so, how have you been able to process the grief and pain? Discuss if you wish.*
7. *Do you believe that Jacob was wrong to kill Dr. Kim? Is murder a sin in the scenario of imprisonment and repeated torture?*

KATERI AND VIRTUE FALLS

1. Deputy Bergen and Sheriff Kwinault have a respectful, but contentious, relationship during the election for sheriff. *Have you ever respected an*

- opponent? Deputy Bergen tells Kateri that he did not like the person he was while running for office. Have you ever lost yourself in a competition? Do you feel men and women handle competition differently, and if so, how? Is one way better than the other? Did you find competition unnerving? Necessary? Or invigorating?*
2. Kateri speaks of the prejudice inherent in the police department because of her race and gender. *Do you agree there is a glass ceiling in certain professions? What are your experiences where you felt prejudice affected your career or personal life? Feel free to discuss.*
 3. What did you think of the two romantic possibilities in Kateri's life during BECAUSE I'M WATCHING? *Do you believe that she should choose between Luis or Stag Denali? Or remain unattached? How would any these choices affect her career as sheriff?*
 4. Kateri goes to the celebration of Luis and Sienna's engagement. *Have you ever had to attend a party to celebrate a life event for an ex? Did you remain sanguine or were there a variety of emotions vying for supremacy? Which emotion won? Please share your thoughts.*
 5. Luis says to Kateri, "If you are going to be sheriff, you can't go every time the men think they need a woman's touch. They'll be calling you for every little thing." (p. 145) *Do you agree with his assessment? Do you feel that a mix of "feminine" and "masculine" approaches is important in law enforcement? Why?*
 6. Officer Moen bows to family pressure and joins the police force. *Do you believe that Moen will make a good police officer? Have you felt familial pressure to follow a certain path? Has it worked out or do you wish you had followed your own path?*
 7. Rainbow is the popular, eccentric and wise waitress who, because of her profession and interest, knows everything that happens in Virtue Falls. *Do you know someone people turn to for advice and counsel? Rainbow dresses without reference to prevailing fashion or people's opinions, but instead as a reflection of her happy attitude towards life. Do you know anyone who expresses himself or herself in this manner? Does this amuse or annoy you? Does their relationship to you (child, parent, friend) change your attitude towards their fashion choices?*
 8. At the end of BECAUSE I'M WATCHING, Rainbow is seriously hurt. *Are you afraid for her? What repercussions would there be in the community of Virtue Falls if Rainbow were to die?*

SUMMARY QUESTION

BECAUSE I'M WATCHING Readers' Guide

Warning! Contains spoilers about BECAUSE I'M WATCHING

9. Within the past few years, PTSD has at last begun to be discussed and analyzed and help offered to our veterans. Prior to that, the impression given by movies and books was that men who went to war and women who suffered debilitating trauma should shake off their experiences and go forward with their lives. Yet according to the most recent report published by the VA in 2016, which analyzed 55 million Veterans' records from 1979 to 2014, the current analysis indicates that an average of 20 veterans a day die from suicide. *Have you, a family member or friend had experience with PTSD? What effect did PTSD have on the individual, the family as a whole and all his/her relationships? Can you discuss what worsened the PTSD? What helped alleviate the PTSD?*