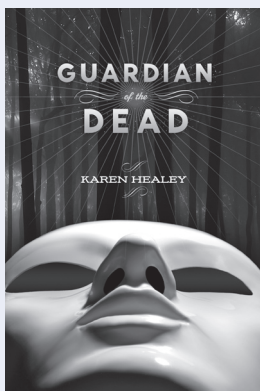


ReadingGroupGuide

GUARDIAN OF THE DEAD by Karen Healey



ABOUT THE BOOK

"You're Ellie Spencer." I opened my mouth, just as he added, "And your eyes are opening."

Seventeen-year-old Ellie Spencer is just like any other teenager at her boarding school. She hangs out with her best friend Kevin, she obsesses over Mark, a cute and mysterious bad boy, and her biggest worry is her paper deadline. But then everything changes. The news headlines are all abuzz about a local string of serial killings that all share the same morbid trademark: the victims were discovered with their eyes missing.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Mark asks Ellie early in the novel, "Do you know what you are? What you could be?" (page 16) Who is Ellie at the beginning of this book? What has she become by its end?
2. Ellie grew up in the North Island of New Zealand and attends school in the South Island. What does she think are the important differences between the two?
3. Professor Gribaldi thinks that New Zealand students don't work as hard as American AP students, while Ellie thinks that working too hard could be dangerous. What are some differences between the New Zealand and American educational systems? Why do you think those differences might exist?
4. Ellie buys a mask at an outdoor market. What attracts her to this seemingly simple object? How does she discover its power? How does it help her save her homeland?

5. Who are the *patupaiarehe*? What do they want? What role do they play in the Eyeslasher murders?
6. Discuss Mark's complicated relationship with his parents. How does he look after them? How do they look after him? Are there similarities between Mark's relationship with his parents and Ellie's relationship with hers? If so, what are they?
7. Mark calls himself "all in-between" and "a chimera" (page 148). What does he mean by that? What is the bargain he makes with Mr. Sand? How does he try to betray Ellie?
8. Who is the Guardian of the Dead? Why can't Ellie lie to her?
9. "Stories change us; they change the world," says Professor Gribaldi. "People are stories of themselves" (page 267). How do stories shape the way Ellie sees her world? How do they shape the way you see yours?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Karen Healey is a New Zealander living in Australia. She is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Melbourne. She's writing a dissertation on the fan culture of American superhero comics, but her real expertise lies in discerning which of the Birds of Prey is objectively the most awesome (it's a tie between Oracle and the Huntress).

