



Book Club in a Bag

Discussion Questions

“Stranger” by David Bergen

1. “Stranger” echoes many literary classics, such as “Beowulf” and “Paradise Lost”, in a modern setting. What is your impression of the author’s implementation of these literary archetypes intertwined with modern issues?
2. This novel explores how easy it is for people to be unaware of other cultures. Do you think this is an accurate reflection of society? What does this reveal about North American culture?
3. Íso has been assigned as Susan’s keeper as she tries to conceive a baby, and yet Íso is having an affair with Eric. This relationship is further complicated when Íso conceives a baby. Discuss the relationship between Íso, Eric, Susan.
4. What is the symbolism of Íso begin defined as a keeper?
5. Though Bergen has created a passionate relationship between Eric and Íso, it is clear this relationship will not endure. Discuss the challenges Eric and Íso face.
6. Bergen has incorporated very selective Spanish words into his dialogue. What impact does this have on the narrative and your reading of the text?
7. Bergen’s writing is critical of the entitlement of the rich. Discuss the novel’s commentary on the division between the rich and the poor.
8. Íso illegally travels to the U.S.A. from Mexico to try to rescue her daughter. How does this novel depict the underworld Íso experiences? What social commentaries is Bergen making?
9. What is the significance of the title?
10. What is the significance of the book being divided into 9 chapters? Do you feel the final chapter offers any sense of hope?

These questions were created by Clarington Public Library staff to enhance your discussion of the book.

Book Club in a Bag

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