

BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The Enlightened, by Larissa Deerich

Chapter-by-Chapter Discussion Questions

Chapters 1–3: Introduction to the World

1. **What is the significance of the kingdom’s food crisis?** How does the setting of a society struggling with drought and scarcity immediately shape the tone of the story?
2. **How does Roman’s discovery of the “zini” plant in these early chapters foreshadow the conflict in the story?** What might this plant represent for the future of the kingdom?
3. **What is revealed about Roman’s character in these opening chapters?** How do his relationships with other characters (like family or friends) help to build his personality?

Chapters 4–7: The Struggle Intensifies

1. **Vactor is introduced as a figure of both hope and vengeance.** How does his backstory influence his role in the rebellion? What do you think motivates him the most—personal loss, a desire for justice, or something else?
2. **In these chapters, the tension between the Albino rulers and the Ecrú rebels becomes clearer.** How does the author show the disparity between the two groups? How do you think this will affect the characters' decisions going forward?
3. **Roman is faced with multiple moral dilemmas when dealing with those who want to control the zini plant.** How do these moments test his character, and what do they reveal about his priorities?

Chapters 8–12: Deepening Conflict

1. **By this point, we see the rebellion grow stronger and more organized.** What do you think is the role of leadership in the success or failure of movements in this story? Do any characters exemplify leadership in ways you admire or question?
2. **Roman’s relationships start to become more complicated.** How does his growing responsibility weigh on him? What sacrifices is he willing to make for the greater good?
3. **The Ecrú are portrayed as both oppressed and powerful in their resistance.** How do these chapters emphasize the strength of marginalized communities? What role does solidarity play in the movement?

Chapters 13–16: Climax and Confrontations

1. **In the final chapters, the stakes are raised as the rebellion comes to a head.** How do the climactic moments change your perception of the characters? Which character's arc felt the most satisfying or surprising by the end?
 2. **In these chapters, Roman and Vactor's paths converge.** How do their contrasting approaches to the rebellion create tension? What is the symbolic significance of their final confrontation or cooperation?
-

Character-Specific Discussion Questions

Roman

1. **Roman begins the story as a young man eager to make a difference.** How does his character evolve over the course of the novel? Do you see his journey as one of self-discovery or as a descent into a more complicated reality?
2. **Roman's discovery of the zini plant offers him both hope and danger.** How do you think Roman's internal conflict mirrors the external conflict between the Albino rulers and the Ecrú? What does the plant symbolize for him personally?
3. **Roman is faced with difficult choices regarding loyalty and the greater good.** How do his relationships with friends and family inform his decisions? Which relationships are the most influential on his journey?

Vactor

1. **Vactor's leadership is driven by vengeance and a desire for justice.** Do you sympathize with his motivations, or do you see his personal loss as blinding him to more strategic or compassionate solutions?
2. **Vactor's relationship with the Ecrú people is central to his character.** How does he balance the role of a leader with the need for personal healing? Do you think he's able to reconcile these aspects of his identity by the end of the novel?
3. **In a world where survival is precarious, Vactor makes decisions that risk the lives of others.** Does his drive for justice outweigh the consequences of these risks? How do you feel about the sacrifices he's willing to make?

The Albino Ruling Class

1. **The Albino rulers are initially seen as distant and oppressive.** How do individual members of the ruling class, like the king or other officials, differ in their approach to power? Are any of them presented in a more sympathetic light, or do they all seem one-dimensional?
2. **How does the oppression of the Ecrú people serve as a backdrop for the rulers' decisions?** Do you believe the rulers see the rebellion as a genuine threat, or do they view it as a nuisance to be extinguished? How does this attitude shape their actions?
3. **Is there any character within the Albino ruling class who might have the potential to change the system?** What characteristics would make such a change possible? Is redemption possible for any of these characters?

Supporting Characters (Ecrú Rebels, Farmers, etc.)

1. **The Ecrú rebels represent a range of responses to oppression, from passive resistance to active rebellion.** Who stands out as a unique character in this group? What role do they play in moving the plot forward?
 2. **Several supporting characters, such as farmers or villagers, have a stake in the food crisis.** How do their lives influence the main characters, and what role do they play in the larger narrative about survival and sacrifice?
-

Additional Overall Discussion Questions

1. **What role does the environment (drought, heat, and food scarcity) play in the characters' choices and motivations?** How is nature itself depicted as both a challenge and a potential source of hope?
2. **The idea of hope versus reality is a recurring theme.** How does hope either fuel or destroy the characters' progress? Which character's hope is the most inspiring or the most dangerous?
3. **What message does the novel convey about systems of power and resistance?** Do you think the story is ultimately about individuals trying to overcome personal challenges, or is it more about the larger social forces at play?
4. **How does Larissa Deedrich use symbolism (e.g., the zini plant, the drought, or other recurring elements) to enhance the themes of the novel?** Are there symbols that stood out to you, and what do they represent in the larger story?