

## BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION TOPICS

### CHAPTER 11 – CHAPTER 20

1.

The Agents describe the Alpha ghosts as violent killers. However, despite multiple opportunities, the fugitives show mercy every time. They did not kill the Agents transporting them. RC even spared the bloodhound about to attack, and Axel did not kill the Agents and dogs, instead choosing to mislead them from the trail. The Alpha ghosts also chose not to harm Kara when she discovered them in the barn, even though letting her leave posed a great risk.

What does this mercy tell you about the Alpha ghosts? Do you think the Agents genuinely believe their test subjects are so dangerous, or are they trying to scare the people of Phantom Heights to goad them into hunting down the fugitives? Despite the mercy that the Alpha ghosts have shown up to this point, do you believe they're capable of being the violent killers Agent Kovak described?

2.

Cato comes to an interesting realization when he first meets the human girl Kara in Chapter 12: "Her dress was burnt orange with red flowers lining the bottom, and it astounded me. I guess I assumed all humans Outside dressed in white. *They* always wore white lab coats, and the handlers wore white shirts, and at some point during my captivity, my mind latched onto the concept that humans wore white and ghosts wore black or gray, and that was just how it was. In retrospect, I remembered that was a misconception."

What does this insight tell you about how much his mind was damaged and warped in captivity? How does Cato's connection to colors and what humans/ghosts are supposed to wear illustrate the society the Agents want to impose between the races? What do you think the Human Realm would look like if the Agents succeeded in creating their new weapon and conquering the kálos race?

3.

Finn and Reese seem to have two sides to them. Thus far, we've mostly seen them as helpless and overwhelmed, struggling to process the world around them. However, they've gone from asking who turns the sun "on" and choking on bread because they didn't know how to chew food, to hacking into the AGC's computer system and all technology in the area, even government satellites. How does their sudden competency change your perspective of the frail ten-year-olds? Does it align with the information Agent Kovak gives to the people of Phantom Heights when he visits in Chapter 17?

Jay wanted Finn and Reese to hack into the AGC to prevent the Agents from tracking them. But Finn and Reese, without being asked, go above and beyond the request by shutting down all communications in a tri-state area and creating a program to make the Alpha ghosts "invisible to technology." Considering their loyalty to the Agents and reluctance to break the Rules, how significant is this act of defiance toward their masters? Why would they do this without being ordered to? What do you think Jay said to Reese to convince him?

4.

Agent Kovak is so cocky and certain that the twins will come to him because they'd never disobey the Rules. He even starts playing the little kids' game "Come out, come out, wherever you are!" What does the irony of this seemingly ruthless government agent singing this little kid song up and down the streets of the town show about his true personality? What kind of relationship do you think he had with the twins at the AGC? How does that relationship impact the twins' connection to their lab-family since they've tried to abandon the other Alpha ghosts and return to their masters on multiple occasions?

5.

Although Jay is the eldest, at no point in time did he ever announce that he would be the leader of the group, nor did he ever assert his dominance over the others. Why do you think they all succumbed to his leadership without question? Even Axel, as strong, powerful, and dangerous as he is, has seemingly yielded to Jay. Is it due to his age? His power, which we don't know yet? Particular qualities? How does the promise Jay makes to Axel to "stop him at all costs" if he's in a bloodlust impact this bond?

6.

We learn that the Agents pay ghost hunters a bounty for captured kálos, and certain Divinities fetch a higher reward. And yet, Madison Tarrow is a ghost hunter who "didn't have access to the network, not that she would pay attention even if she did. To date, she'd never delivered a ghost alive or dead to the AGC for a reward."

What do her past interactions with the AGC's payout program tell you about her morals, especially when she tells Kovak, "Forgive me for not having an interest in dissecting people," and he responds, "Oh, I don't dissect people, either . . . I don't really consider them *people*."? Do you think Madison's stance makes her a stronger or weaker ghost hunter? How do Agent Kovak and Madison differ in their views about ghosts?

7.

We learn that Madison's son somehow died in the not-too-distant past, and Agent Kovak was there to witness it. Madison harbors anger and blame toward the Agents, although Kovak claims that it was a tragic accident and he did everything in his power to save the boy.

Do you believe him? Given Madison's recent loss and the resulting friction between her and Kovak, how likely do you think she is to actually help the Agents? How do you think losing her son will potentially impact her if she crosses paths with the Alpha ghosts, who, unbeknownst to her, are only children and teenagers?

8.

Madison asserts that the reason for the increasing violence is because ghosts are retaliating against what Kovak is doing to the prisoners at the AGC. She later half-jokingly says, "What are you doing, training [the Alpha ghosts]? . . . Wait, you *aren't* training ghosts to fight. Are you?" Kovak rather unconvincingly denies this, claiming, "that's ridiculous."

What do you think is the true purpose of Project Alpha? Is he indeed training ghosts to fight, or do you think there's something else going on? Based on what we know about how the Alpha ghosts were treated, do you think Madison's accusation about why the ghosts are angry has merit?

9.

Dr. Anders presents some censored information about the Alpha fugitives. He discusses Axel's creation in Project Delta and how the previous Delta test subjects weren't able to handle the massive power increase during their transformation and subsequently died. Axel was a partial success, clocking in at a whopping Level 9 power level (natural-born kálos range from Level 1-5) but claiming his animosity made him a failed experiment, causing the Project to be shut down. He then went on to discuss Finn and Reese, born and raised in Project Gamma and indoctrinated to serve humans. Dr. Anders emphasizes how "special" they are to Project Alpha.

Looking at our own history, what similarities do you see between Dr. Anders and Josef Mengele, the "Angel of Death" who experimented on twins at Auschwitz during the Holocaust?

If Project Delta had been successful, how could the genetically engineered ghost hybrids solve the problems humankind is facing, and at what cost? Do you think the Agents would successfully be able to control them? And if they were used to win the war against the Ghost Realm, what do you think might happen afterward in the Human Realm if the US government still had these super-soldiers under their control?

Finn, Reese, and Kit are much younger than the other Alpha ghosts and don't seem to have any fighting skills compared to their older lab-siblings. Why do you think they were part of Project Alpha?

10.

Why would the town of Phantom Heights erect a statue to honor "Phantom: A Fallen Hero" for all the lives he saved but abandon him in his hour of need? How do you think they might react to his return?