



Reader Guide for SHADE
by Jeri Smith-Ready
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Ages 14 and up
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This reader guide may be duplicated for classroom, book club discussion group, or related purposes.

About the Book

First in a worldwide generation of ghost-seers, Aura's relationship with the dead changes forever when her boyfriend dies and comes back to haunt her.

About the Author

Award-winning author Jeri Smith-Ready lives in Maryland with her husband, two cats, and the world's goofiest greyhound. Jeri's plans to save the earth were ruined when she realized she was more of a "problem maker" than a problem solver. Like her characters, she loves music, movies, and staying up very, very late.

Discussion Questions

- If you were a post-Shifter like Aura who could see and talk to ghosts, how do you think you'd cope? Would you try to avoid them? Would you try to help them? How would you decide which ones to help and which ones to avoid? Since everyone your age can also see ghosts, how would you and your friends deal with it as a group?
- As a post-Shifter, how would you feel if someone you loved died and became a ghost? What would you say to them? What if someone you loved died and *didn't* become a ghost? Would you feel relieved? Disappointed?
- If you were a pre-Shifter who couldn't see or talk to ghosts, how would you handle the fact that they exist? Would you try to talk to ghosts using a post-Shifter to "translate"?
- What do you think would have happened to Aura and Logan's relationship if he had lived? If he had succeeded in becoming a rock star? If he had failed?
- Think about the use of colors in SHADE. Why would a ghost fear the color red? Which feelings do you associate with red?
- If you were in charge of the Department of Metaphysical Purity (DMP), how would you change it? How would you balance the need to protect the world from

shades with the need to protect the rights of ghosts? Are there any parallels to the way our own society treats certain humans?

- A year before SHADE begins, the Keeley family moved from the city into the outer suburbs. How would moving to a bigger house change the way you interact with your family? What are the advantages and disadvantages of living in the city versus the suburbs? If possible, use examples from your own experiences.
- Memories can haunt us as much as any ghost. What are some ways we can preserve our memories of someone we've lost?
- What do you think happened at the end of SHADE? Why did it happen that night, as opposed to any other? What do you think will happen next?
- How is SHADE different from traditional ghost stories?

Activities

Music: Make a soundtrack/playlist for the book. Which songs represent which characters? Which songs make you think of specific scenes? If SHADE were a movie or TV show, which songs would play at the beginning and end?

Writing: Write Logan's obituary. Try writing it first from an outsider's point of view (as if a reporter were writing an article), then from Logan's own point of view. How would another character (like Aura or Mickey) write it differently?

Art: Design a flyer for a Keeley Brothers concert or a cover for their CD. Try this also for Siobhan and Mickey's Irish folk duo, the Keeleys. How has their image changed since Logan's death?

Geography: Many of the scenes occur in real places in and around Baltimore. Make a "story map" with approximate locations of the characters' homes and significant scenes.

Science: Create your own star map, like the ones Zachary and Aura make. Mark the four major directions (north, south, etc.), the celestial equator, and the ecliptic. Sketch as many constellations as possible. Discuss the challenges of reproducing the sky on a flat piece of paper.

History: Study the significance of the winter solstice event within different ancient civilizations. How are these observances reflected in modern-day winter holidays?

Writing/Journalism: Write a dialogue between yourself and one of the ghosts from SHADE (Logan, Jake from the night club, the mother in the food court, the captain of the ship, etc.). Try it as an interview, or put yourself in the story.

Related Reads:

Chasing Brooklyn, Lisa Schroeder

The Sky is Everywhere, Jandy Nelson

Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist, Rachel Cohn and David Levithan

The Twilight series, Stephenie Meyer

If I Stay, Gayle Forman

“The Premature Burial” (short story) and “The Raven” (poem), Edgar Allen Poe

Love is a Mix Tape (memoir), Rob Sheffield

Website links:

Newgrange Passage Tomb: <http://www.knowth.com/newgrange.htm>

U.S.S. Constellation: <http://www.historicships.org/constellation.html>

Edgar Allen Poe House: <http://www.eapoe.org/balt/poehse.htm>