

FLIGHTS OF MARIGOLD

ADDICTED TO HEAVEN
BOOK TWO

SUSAN FOREST



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READER'S GROUP GUIDE

Questions and Topics for Discussion

1. In *Flights of Marigold*, Meg is torn between caring for Janat and fulfilling her own quest. In what ways is Meg a good sister and a sympathetic character, and in what ways does she mess up? What decisions does she take that make things worse? What should she have done instead? Why?
2. Janat is a conflicted character, swinging from wild defiance to abject shame. On multiple occasions she vows to reform but fails. What forces are acting on Janat to create this inconsistency? Is her erratic behavior believable? Why or why not?
3. Huwen is seen by many as the all-powerful oppressor, and yet Hada describes him as incompetent. He has been unable to eradicate opposition to his rule despite eight years of war and the Uprisers' ineffectiveness. Why? What factors in Huwen's personality, and of Shangril's geography, economics, and social structures disempower the High King?
4. Gweddien is reviled as a monstrous villain in *Flights of Marigold*. In what ways can he be seen as a victim? Is his characterization of himself as a victim accurate, or is he merely manipulating others? Give evidence.

5. As much as Rennika loves her sisters and is happy to be reunited with them, their arrival upsets her world. Are Rennika's hopes and aspirations in her life as a dyer realistic, considering she must hide who she really is? Or is the disruption brought about by her sisters' arrival a wake-up call? Provide arguments.
6. In many ways Raoul is very adult for a young boy. What factors in his early life caused him to grow up quickly? Is his relationship with Yaquob abusive? In what ways is Raoul child-like?
7. The Verlin family represents a middle class that has been politically disempowered by the High King's occupation of Gramarye. Nevertheless, they have survived despite the far-reaching changes brought about by the war. What factors—personal, societal, political—allowed them to maintain their standing and even thrive?
8. What does Raef fear, and why? How does fear drive his actions?
9. One trope of fantasy (and other genre) literature is the “speech in praise of the villain,” which shows the true immensity of the evil faced by the protagonists. How does the depiction of Kirst's use of Boneblood fit this trope? In what ways do drugs and addictions fit the role of “villain” in *Flights of Marigold*? Make a case for addictions, rather than Raef, Hada, or Huwen, as the true villain of this novel. What character most represents the evil of addictions? Why?
10. Is sugar a drug? What evidence supports this idea? What evidence shows it is harmless?
11. By importing steam technology from Aadi, Raef is a powerful force of economic and social change in Gramarye. What are the effects of industrialization on the people of Highglen? Can a case be made for industrialization as a villain? Why or why not?

12. The Uprisers in *Flights of Marigold* are fractured by competing agendas and pettiness. Why are they unable to unite against their oppressors, eight years after the initial rebellion? What has changed, to rob them of their common purpose?
13. *Flights of Marigold* is the second book in the *Addicted to Heaven* series. What techniques are used to make the story comprehensible to someone who has not read *Bursts of Fire*, without creating repetition for a reader who is familiar with the first book? How are the three sisters' travels to other parts of their personal time streams used to perform this function?
14. Of the three types of magic in the *Addicted to Heaven* series, two are most commonly used in *Flights of Marigold*: worldling magic, akin to herbal remedies or over-the-counter drugs, and magiel magic, akin to stronger medicines or illegal drugs. How does the metaphor of magic as drugs allow the reader to view real-world drug use through a different lens? Does this metaphor help or hinder new understandings about addictions? Why?
15. Appearance is an important motif in *Flights of Marigold*. Regardless of her supposed power, Hada must dress to impress, and Rennika is only able to maintain her lifestyle because of her worldling appearance. What other examples of characters manipulating their appearance can you find in the book? How true to life is the willingness of others to judge a person by their appearance? What examples can you find in the real world?
16. At the end of the novel, Rennika makes some unusual choices. From her perspective, why are they justified? Should she have taken different risks? Why or why not?