**THE 7 ½ DEATHS OF EVELYN HARDCASTLE By Stuart Turton**

MEETING: WEDNESDAY, March 31, 2021 (via Zoom) 1:30 PM or 7:00 PM

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. **What or who do you think are the deaths in *The 7 ½ Deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle*? Where does the half death enter the narrative?**
2. **The novel begins in a typically linear way, then shoots off in many different directions. How did the different narratives and perspectives enrich the story?**
3. **The mystery and escape in Blackheath is set up like a puzzle, and the reader plays along with Aiden as he puts the solution together. Were there any pieces you couldn’t find a place for?**
4. **Aiden Bishop has a backstory that readers will never know in full; however, what we do know is there is plenty of revenge, cruelty, and questionable intentions wrapped up in who he was and why he entered Blackheath. With what you know about him, would you call him a hero? Why or why not?**
5. **Why do you think the Plague Doctor wears that particular costume, and how does it affect his relationship with Aiden? Is the Plague Doctor really the good man that the voice in Aiden’s head claims he is?**
6. **Annabelle Caulker, or Anna, is unmasked as someone very different from whom Aiden believes her to be. What do you feel she did to deserve her time in Blackheath, and how do you think Aiden was able to forgive her?**
7. **Were there any tactics Aiden didn’t think of that could have solved the mystery of who killed Evelyn Hardcastle? If you were in his shoes, or hosts, what would you have done differently?**
8. **The construct of Blackheath as a prison feels like something from the future, but do you feel this sort of punishment (and possible redemption) could one day be considered a viable solution for criminals? What do you feel the advantages are, and in what ways could this be considered even more cruel than a standard incarceration sentence?**
9. **No character is ever what they first appear, something Aiden remarks on a few times throughout the novel. Who was your favorite character, and why did they resonate with you particularly? Which character undergoes the biggest transformation, and were there any characters you started off liking or loathing and changed your opinion about?**
10. **Was there one host who felt more important, or can you see how each character, despite their vices, provided something crucial to the story?**
11. **As Aiden switched from host to host, his protection against their memories and personalities waned until he was feeling their lust, their disgust, or their impatience. What characteristics do you feel are solely Aiden’s? Outside of Blackheath, what sort of man do you think he is?**
12. **What recurring symbols or themes did you see throughout the book, and what role do you think they played in the story of Aiden’s escape from Blackheath?**
13. **If you knew someone you loved had a devastating secret, would you choose to find out what it was or love them for who they’ve become? If you knew you did something terrible, would you want to remember or live with that shadow for the rest of your life?**

**FROM:** https://www.readinggroupguides.com/reviews/the-7-12-deaths-of-evelyn-hardcastle/guide

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