

# TOSCA LEE

- 1) Even before it's revealed that Audra is Progeny, were you aware that she was special or different in some way? If so, what hints and clues in the text led you to that conclusion?
- 2) The word "progeny" means "descendant, or offspring," while the word "scion," means, "a descendant of a wealthy, aristocratic, or influential family." Considering the Progeny and Scion are mortal enemies, how might the similarity of these two words be significant?
- 3) Discuss the themes of memory and history in the story. Do you think that Nikola is right when he says, "*History teaches us who are*"? How important is the past in defining our identity?
- 4) The Progeny gift is carried on through the female line, while the Scion cause is generally passed through the male line. Discuss the importance of this distinction between male "hunters" and female "hunted."
- 5) Before he dies, Ivan tells Audra, "*There is an old saying among the Utod... 'Better to die blindly than having seen too much.' But I say: Better to live.*" With which saying do you agree? Why?
- 6) Discuss the role of the "sibling system" among The Progeny. If you were Progeny, whom might you choose as your sibling and protector?
- 7) After having heard both sides of the argument, do you think Elizabeth Bathory was innocent or guilty of the crimes of which she was accused?
- 8) Claudia reveals that the Bathory line is "affiliated with Vlad Dracul the third," otherwise known as Dracula. Discuss the similarities between the story of Elizabeth Bathory and the legend of Dracula.
- 9) Discuss the symbolism of Piotrek's painting of "the foot of God." Do you find the image disturbing (as Audra does) or comforting (as Claudia does)?
- 10) Were you surprised when you learned that the Historian was a woman? Discuss the "irony— and twisted misogyny" of her role.
- 11) What was your interpretation of the inscription on Audra's key: "Some rise by sin, some by virtue fall." How might this phrase be a metaphor for the Scion and the Progeny, and even Elizabeth Bathory herself?
- 12) Discuss the Audra's decision to erase her memory, knowing that she might never remember or meet her daughter. Do you think she made the right choice?

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13) How do you think the discovery of her child will change Audra's plan going forward?

## Enhance Your Book Club

1) Which Progeny character are you? Take the quiz and find out!  
<https://toscalee.com/which-progeny-character-are-you/>

2) Visit the author's The Progeny Pinterest board for images pertaining to the book:  
<https://www.pinterest.com/toscalee/the-progeny-descendants-of-house-bathory-book-i/>  
and then visit the author's "The Real Progeny" board for the real locations, artifacts, and the author's real-life tie to Elizabeth Bathory herself:  
<https://www.pinterest.com/toscalee/real-life-progeny/>

3) Divide your book club into two "teams" to research and debate the following issue:  
Was Elizabeth Bathory actually guilty of her crimes OR was she framed because of her wealth and power?

4) Hold your own "Progeny court." Ask members of your book club to arrive in wigs, masks, or both! Play music and dim the lights to achieve the full effect!

5) Have your book club read Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula*. After having done so, further discuss any similarities between the character of Dracula and the legendary figure of Elizabeth Bathory.

# THE PROGENY

a novel