

BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS

Victim Without a Face by Stefan Ahnhem, translated by Rachel Willson-Broyles

1. The novel opens with the striking image of a crow landing on a man and pressing its claws into his naked belly. How does the symbol of this crow and its impatient picking resonate throughout the novel? Do any of the characters strike you as crow-like?
2. Did you like the author's choice of names for his characters? Which ones hinted at their true natures?
3. Readers of crime thrillers also play the role of detective, finding clues in the text and making hypotheses. When were you a step ahead of Fabian Risk and the other police in solving a piece of the puzzle? Which narrative twists took you by surprise?
4. Comment on the role of music in the novel. Why do you think the author included so many song titles and lyrics?
5. Fabian's new house is full of half-unpacked baggage from his past, and Torgny Sölmedal plots his murderous schemes in a buried control room he calls "the heart." How do the various homes in the novel reflect the psychologies of their inhabitants?
6. According to Risk, "A bookcase was still one of the places in a home that held the most secrets" (p. 39). Do you agree or disagree? If Risk looked at your bookshelf, what might he deduce about you?
7. Peepholes (and lack thereof) play a significant role in the novel. In what ways does *Victim Without a Face* operate as a peephole into human nature?
8. Did Theo's searing account in his diary about being victimized make you empathize for the perpetrator he became?
9. When the killer enters Theo's room, Theo "looked up from the book, straight into the pitch-black window, where he saw the reflection of a shadow that was coming up behind him" (p. 301). Shadows and reflections are mentioned throughout the novel. How do they pertain to the novel's message about the mutability of identity?

10. Part 2 of the novel begins with an epigraph: “It’s not death itself that scares us when we are dying, but the risk of being forgotten” — I. M. (p. 275). Does the author’s choice to use these initials suggest that this is a universal fear?