

Discussion Questions for *The Ugly One*

The concepts of ugliness and beauty arise over and over again in the book. Throughout time, from the Incans right to our modern day world, why do you think it has been so important for people to be seen as beautiful or handsome? How has our idea of what is beautiful and what is ugly changed over time? How has it stayed the same? How important is it for you to be good looking? Why do you feel this way?

Did having a beautiful sister make life more difficult for Micay? Why or why not?

Micay doesn't say much in the beginning of the book. She has plenty of thoughts and opinions about her life and the people in it, but she remains silent. Why doesn't she speak more? What helps her to find her voice in the book? How important is it that people hear your voice? Have you ever silenced yourself in a situation in which you had strong feelings? Why did you choose to do so? Was it the right decision for you? Why or why not?

If you could talk to Micay, what would you tell her? What would you ask her?

Micay spends a great deal of time in the beginning of the book hiding. She hides on her rock away from the people, and she hides behind her hair when she is near others. Why does she hide the way she does? Do you think she is overreacting to her situation? Why or why not?

Micay is bullied by Ucho and the other boys. What are some of the strategies Micay uses to deal with Ucho throughout the book? Which strategies were the least and most successful, and why? What experiences have you had with bullying as a victim, a bully, or a bystander?

At the beginning of chapter 7, Micay sees Ucho teaching his younger brother a game and treating him very kindly. She says that watching Ucho act kindly toward someone else hurt her more deeply than any of his cruel words to her ever did. Why do you think seeing Ucho behave so caringly toward his younger brother hurt her so much?

Why does Micay reject her mother's love for so long? Did you understand why she did so? Did you agree with her reasoning?

How does fear (or a lack of fear) impact Micay's choices throughout the book? Is her fear helpful or harmful to her?

Micay transformed a great deal in the book. What was the most important change that she made? Why did you choose this particular change?

Which 1-3 characters do you feel were the most important in bringing about Micay's transformation from The Ugly One to The Marked Girl in the book? Why?

Who was your favorite character in the book? Why? Who was your least favorite character? Why?

What would you ask the Sacred Rock if you could pose one question to it? Why?

What and where do you think Beyond is in the book? Is there anything in your own belief system that is similar?

Name several interesting aspects of the Incan culture that you learned from this book. What about the Incan culture did you find the most similar to your own? What was the most different? Were there aspects of the Incan culture that you found surprising? That you wish were a part of your culture? That you are glad are not a part of your culture?