

The Dead Whisper On Discussion Questions

1. In its review of *The Dead Whisper On*, Publishers Weekly called Candace (Canada) MacHugh a "refreshingly different protagonist." How is she different from the protagonists of most suspense/thriller novels? Why do you think the author chose this kind of main character?
2. The novel's main setting—Butte, Montana—looms large throughout the story. How does the history and personality of Butte affect the characters? How does it affect the story?
3. Keros quotes a familiar verse from the Bible to Canada on a few different occasions: "The heart is deceitful above all things." How is the heart deceitful for Canada? Do you agree that the heart can be deceitful in all of our lives? Why or why not?
4. The character of Keros is never fully explained in the novel. Who—or what—do you think Keros really is? What does he represent for Canada? For the shadows?
5. At one point, Keros says, "We are, all of us, golems. But not all of us are made of clay." What do you think he meant by that?
6. As the story progresses, Canada comes to realize the memories of her father and mother are faulty: neither of them is exactly as she's depicted them in her mind. Do you agree memories can be faulty? Do you have impressions of people or events that are colored by other experiences?
7. In the novel, several scenes of spontaneous human combustion are interspersed with the main story. What do the people profiled in these scenes have in common? How do they tie in with the rest of the story? Do you think there's something symbolic about combusting? tlhines@tlhines.com | www.tlhines.com
8. Some of Candace's most vivid recollections of her childhood are of trips to Columbia Gardens Amusement Park with her father. What do these memories—and their importance to Candace—say about her as a character? Do the gardens have some larger significance or meaning in the story?
9. Keros tells Canada, "You are the kind of person who runs into a burning building." Is that trait a help for Candace, or more of a hindrance?

10. In the climactic scene, contaminated water from Berkeley Pit rains down on the residents of Butte, described as a combination of light and water. What is the significance of this scene? In the novel's world, what do you think will happen to Butte in the aftermath of all this?