

ONE DAY YOU'LL BURN

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When Dustin Sparks, a special effects professional, discovers the victim's body, he notices that it resembles some of his work in horror films. Do you think graphic violence in movies can affect how we perceive reality? Why or why not?
2. Jarsdel found his career as a history professor unendurable and left his field to join the police force. What do you think inspired his career change? Do you think he made the correct decision?
3. Describe the relationship between Jarsdel and his parents. Why is there so much tension between them? Do you think it's fair for his parents to be resentful of his career choice?
4. What do you think of Jarsdel and Morales's dynamic? Do you think they work well together? If you were a detective, who would you choose as your partner? Why?
5. In what ways does Jarsdel's academic background influence his police work? Is his background always helpful, or does it get in the way of the investigation?
6. Aleena and Jarsdel debate the existence of true evil—Aleena claims that people do bad things to each other because of their circumstances, and Jarsdel believes that sometimes a person's "badness", is inherent. Which side do you agree with? Are all people capable of evil?
7. What do you make of someone like Jeff Dinan? Do you think he's a good person?
8. Would working a disturbing case like this make you question your notions of good and evil? Do you think it's possible to investigate violent crimes without becoming jaded?
9. What kinds of things do you associate with modern-day Hollywood? Do you agree with Stevens that the magic of old Hollywood has been lost?
10. Think about someone like the Dog Catcher, who doesn't physically hurt people but still acts maliciously and with the intent to harm. Why does he do the things he does? Is he a bad person? Is he as bad as someone like Stevens?
11. What do all of Stevens's victims have in common? Why does he target them?
12. At the end of the book Jarsdel is conflicted about his place in the Hollywood Homicide, though he ultimately decides to keep his job. Why do you think he decides to stay? Did he make the right decision?
13. We are taught not to repeat the mistakes of the past, but Stevens replicates a killing device from ancient Greece. Discuss the consequences of venerating history, rather than using it as a warning. What are the dangers of trying to bring the past to life? Are there any benefits to it?