



DISCUSSION GUIDE



A MADMAN IS HOLDING VITORIA HOSTAGE, KILLING ITS CITIZENS IN BRUTAL WAYS AND STAGING THE BODIES. THE CITY'S ONLY HOPE IS A BRILLIANT DETECTIVE STRUGGLING TO BATTLE HIS OWN DEMONS.

“Stunning. . . Fascinating local color, a handsomely crafted plot, and exquisite characterization make this a standout. Readers will eagerly await the next volume in the series.” —*Publishers Weekly**

ABOUT THE BOOK

Inspector Unai López de Ayala, known as “Kraken,” is charged with investigating a series of ritualistic murders. The killings are eerily similar to ones that terrorized the citizens of Vitoria twenty years earlier. But back then, police were sure they had discovered the killer, a prestigious archaeologist who is currently in jail. Now Kraken must race to determine whether the killer had an accomplice or if the wrong man has been incarcerated for two decades. This fast-paced, unrelenting thriller weaves in and out of the mythology and legends of the Basque country as it hurtles to its shocking conclusion.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Throughout the book, Kraken grapples with his troubled past. How does the trauma of losing his wife and unborn children affect his current role as an inspector—specifically as a specialist in criminal profiling? Does it make him better or worse at his job? Perhaps a combination of both?

2. Discuss the different “silences” that occur in the novel. There are the silences of the lifeless murder victims and the mysterious serial killer, but what else goes unsaid that leads to confusion and intrigue?

3. When Kraken first sees Alba, he observes, “She wore a whistle around her neck. A cautious person. More than that, someone aware of danger. Either she had been attacked, or she was afraid of an attack. And yet, she went out running before dawn every day of the week.” (pg. 22)

After knowing the full scope of Alba’s character, is there some truth to this first impression? Discuss the complexities in her and Kraken’s relationship.

4. Discuss the theme of repetition: the resurgence of the ritualistic murders that occurred twenty years before, the pairs of murder victims with double-barreled surnames, the twin suspects, Ignacio and Tasio, and Inspector Kraken’s unborn twins. Why do so many things happen in pairs? Does this give the shocking twist at the end greater significance?

5. Between Kraken’s brother, German, his grandfather, and his cuadrilla, strong family relationships are an important part of his life in Vitoria. How do these relationships strengthen or weaken Kraken?



EVA GARCÍA SÁENZ DE URTURI was born in Vitoria and has been living in Alicante since she was fifteen years old. She published her first novel, *La saga de los longevos* (*The Immortal Collection*), in 2012, and it became a sales phenomenon in Spain, Latin America, the United States, and the United Kingdom. She is also the author of *Los hijos de Adán* (*The Sons of Adam*) and the historical novel *Pasaje a Tahití* (*Passage to Tahiti*). In 2016 she published the first installment of the White City Trilogy, titled *El silencio de la ciudad blanca* (*The Silence of the White City*), followed by *Los ritos del agua* (*The Water Rituals*) and *Los señores del tiempo* (*The Lords of Time*).



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