

BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS FOR *DIES IRAE* BY BV LAWSON

1. The color red is used throughout the book: Darcie's red panties; red shirts on baristas; Cailan's red paisley pillows; the red lettering on the mirror; a secretary's red earrings in the shape of the letter C with flames on the edge; the red stain on Gary's rug; a Tarocco blood orange soda was turning Tara's lips red; Liam's bleeding heart flower. You might also refer to Sarg's guilt as having a scarlet "G" instead of a scarlet "A" - are the red references symbolic of that or something else?
2. What do you think of Mark "Sarg" Sargosian? Does he finally come to terms with his guilt at the end? Do he and Drayco complement each other, and if so, how?
3. The first two books in the Drayco series, *Played to Death* and *Requiem for Innocence*, were set entirely on the Eastern Shore in Cape Unity. Although his time there was brief, the area made an indelible impression on Drayco, which is why he chose to return to try and "recharge" during *Dies Irae*. Did he succeed? If not, what was holding him back?
4. In this book, we get to see more of how Drayco's synesthesia and music background literally color his life, as if he were "constantly surrounded by kind of a fruit bowl of senses you eat from all at once," as he notes. Although he swears this doesn't make him a Super Detective, can you think of ways it might come in handy in helping him analyze people or settings or possibly help in other ways?
5. How you deal with a troubled past - whether you let it slowly consume you like a soul cancer or whether you let it go and set yourself free - is a running theme throughout the book. How do you see this played out with Andrew Gilbow? And with Scott Drayco?
6. One of the other main themes in *Dies Irae* is second chances, or the belief that it's never too late to start over or adopt a fresh take on life. Which character struggling to overcome the past do you relate to the most and why?
7. Fire is a primary element in the book: the earrings with flames; a mention of witchcraft traditions that associate the Athame with the element of fire; the video game with *Ragnaros, The Elemental Lord of Fire*; and of course the ending. Did you notice other references? How do they relate to the central theme?
8. There are also several lotus references: the lotus flower, the Lotus automobile, Elvis sitting in a lotus position on a couch. The lotus is something universal symbol among various cultures and religions, from the ancient Hindus, Egyptians, and Buddhists, to being revered in China and Japan, and adopted as a Christian emblem by Greek and Latin Churches. It is often seen as representing things that are eternal. Do you see any ways that "eternal things" apply to the characters, relationships, and settings in the book?

9. Troy Jaffray is likened to the Biblical character of Job, who triumphed despite undergoing a series of literal trials and tribulations. One of Job's lessons is that appearances are not always reality. There are many instances of this in *Dies Irae* - can you think of one?
10. What role does political connection or privilege play in this novel?
11. Tara Sargosian calls Drayco "Falkor" after her favorite dragon in *The Never-ending Story*. Drayco's name is a variation of the Latin word *draco*, which means "dragon." Draco is also a constellation in the northern sky named after the dragon that helped guard the maidens and Gardens of Hesperides. How is this appropriate to the events in *Dies Irae*?
12. *Dies Irae* translates as Day of Wrath or Day of Judgment and is frequently used in Christian liturgical music, often as part of the Requiem service. How is this appropriate for the book and its ultimate conclusion?