

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR READERS

# SHUTTER

## RAMONA EMERSON

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1. What sort of person is Rita? How have the sacrifices she has made for the sake of her family, such as staying in New Mexico for college, shaped her character? If you had her supernatural abilities, how do you think it would affect you—and in contrast, how does it affect Rita? Has her trauma broken her, or strengthened her?
2. *Shutter* is marked by violence and gruesome descriptions of death, but also thoughtful, poignant scenes of a young girl growing up. How would you describe the genre of this book?
3. What do you think Rita should have done about Erma? Rita did feel compelled to help her—but was it out of selflessness, or just because Erma was making her life “a living hell”? How about the rest of the ghosts, who all need help, too? When does asking for help become an act of violence? Is Mr. Bitsilly right when he insists that trying to help these “things” that latch on to Rita is not only pointless, but also dangerous?
4. Do you relate to any of the beliefs expressed in *Shutter* about death and ghosts, such as the Navajo perspective that these topics are morally wrong and to be avoided at all costs? What are some of the different approaches taken by *Shutter*’s characters to the afterlife?
5. Not everything in Rita’s life is gore and ghosts: she also has two close friends, a warm relationship with her supervisor at work, and even a one-night stand with an attractive stranger. Could these people ever truly accept her for who she is, or are there parts of her life that she can never share? What are the risks inherent in Rita being honest about her abilities?
6. How much do you know about life on reservations? Were you surprised by anything you learned from the sections of *Shutter* taking place in Rita’s childhood?
7. Rita’s initial suspicions about Garcia are proven entirely correct when she uncovers his involvement with the Marcos cartel, but she worries about whether he will ever be held accountable, as he is himself a police officer. What is the best course of action when it comes to crimes committed by the police? Who holds law enforcement accountable, and whom can you call or trust when a law enforcement officer broke the law?

