

The Skeleton Lock and The Epistemology of Shadows

PROVOCATEUR

Your first and last names



Your question

In *The Skeleton Lock*, Dadu is getting ready to leave. He says he's going far, far away. Why is he leaving? And where is he going?

Before class: Read the story and write your opinion

During class: Share your opinion and add to your notes

- ☐ First, you meet with classmates who answered the same question. Compare answers. Add any new thoughts to your notes above.
- ☐ Second, you meet in a new group. Each classmate has a different question. Read your question and give your opinion. Share the thoughts of other students who had the same question as you. Ask your classmates for their opinions. Add their responses to your notes.

After class: Extend your thinking

Respond to one of these four questions. Write a paragraph. Be sure to connect your answer to something from the story.

1. In the first story, Dadu asks, "Does everything have a purpose?" What do you think? Can you give examples of things with a purpose and things without a purpose?
2. At the end of *The Skeleton Lock*, Dadu begins to speak directly to the reader. Why? What effect is the author trying to achieve?
3. In the second story, the shadows are a form of traditional medicine. In the U.S., this is sometimes called alternative medicine. What role does traditional or alternative medicine play in your culture?
4. Read this definition of magic realism (*the link is on our website*). What is the magical realism in these two short stories? Do you agree that it's a natural outcome of "postcolonial writing"? Why or why not?

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FIREBRAND

Your first and last names

Your question

Dadu says that the skeleton lock exists "because it has to exist, it must exist. Someday, perhaps, the world will need more such skeleton locks." Why will the world need more such skeleton locks?



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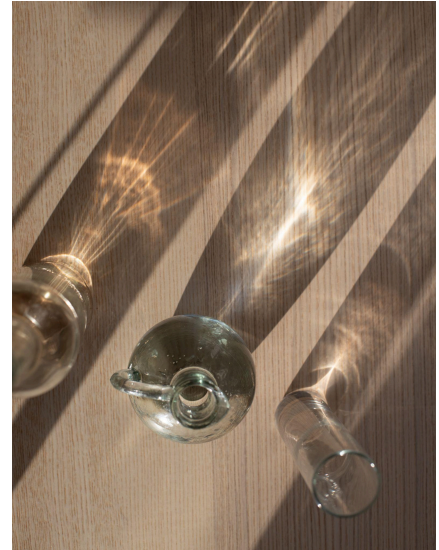
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KINDLER

Your first and last names

Your question

In *The Epistemology of Shadows*, the narrator catches and sells many different kinds of shadows. Who do you think buys them? What do they do with them?



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INSTIGATOR

Your first and last names



Your question

Both stories use symbolism. This means that one thing represents another thing, idea, or quality. What does the skeleton lock signify? What do the shadows signify? Can you identify other symbols?

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