

Ndima Ndima Discussion Guide

Questions for exploring the themes & plot of Tsitsi Mapepa's *Ndima Ndima*

1. Describe the time period and setting of *Ndima Ndima*. If *Ndima Ndima* was set in another country or continent, or in another era, what might change? What would stay the same? How important are specific settings and historical time periods to a story?
2. The author starts the book with this phrase: '... when a moon meets the sun, they create a ring of fire to bear a star.' How is this phrase relevant to the lives of Zuva and Nyeredzi?
3. Consider the following statement: 'We are all related through humanity.' Why does Zuva use this phrase? How would you receive it if someone said this to you? Are there similar concepts to this one in your own culture or spiritual practice?
4. Why did Zuva leave Goho Village in 1970? Besides the circumstantial reasons surrounding her brother and parents, might Zuva have had other reasons for leaving? What choice would you have made, if you were Zuva? What were some of the challenges she faced when making this decision?
5. In a setting that is dominated by males, why do you think the writer chose to give Zuva and Nyeredzi such important responsibilities in their community? What might the setting of this novel look like if more women in the story held positions of power? If Zuva and Nyeredzi were both males, what would change in the story?
6. If more leaders acted and spoke like Zuva, would it change things for the better? Why or why not?
7. If we had more female soldiers, do you think it will help reduce the brutality women face in wars? If yes or no, why?
8. Some scenes in this book are intended to shock readers. What passages did you find the most shocking? Explore the impact it makes when the innocence of Nyeredzi is contrasted with the violence in scenes like that.
9. Even at a young age, Nyeredzi wants to become a better person. What are some life lessons Nyeredzi learns in this story? In what ways does she mature as the story goes on, and in what ways does she remain the same?
10. How does the writer balance her leading characters Zuva and Nyeredzi with side characters' storylines throughout the novel? Why are side characters necessary? Who was your favorite side character?
11. Throughout the novel, the writer makes many references to Zimbabwean symbols and cultural objects. List a few and their impact on the story.

Ndima Ndima Discussion Guide (cont.)

12. If Zuva was not a chief, a church leader, and a soldier, would people in her community have treated her differently? Why? How did her leadership roles affect her relationship with Nyeredzi? How did your parent or family member's role in your community affect your relationship with them?
13. Discuss Zuva and Nyeredzi's complicated relationship. Could things have been different for them? How or why/why not?
14. Some people believe that what you see and experience as a child influences what you become when you are older. Do you believe this is true? Why or why not?
15. Do you think it's important to be able to see something in order to believe it? Or can you believe in something without being able to see it or show it to others? Discuss examples of this in the book, and in your own life.
16. When something terrible happens to Ruth, Nyeredzi sees herself as a failure. How did this event affect Nyeredzi's relationship with her mother? If this tragedy had not happened, do you think Nyeredzi would still have chosen to leave Zimbabwe?
17. If you are not familiar with the First and Second Chimurenga Wars, do some quick research. Discuss why they came to pass, and the major events of each.
18. Explore Nyeredzi's relationship with nature. How does it help her connect with her ancestors? What else does it help her do?
19. Everyone comes from a different culture. For years, people have been relying on the information passed on to them by elders to know their ancestry, but now, the use of technology to track ancestral lineage is possible. Is an ancestry test something you would be interested in doing? Why or why not?
20. Do you have a relationship with your ancestors? What does it look like?
21. What traditions from your own culture or other cultures do you include in your life? Do you think it is okay to include other cultures' traditions in your life? Why or why not?
22. Why is culture so important? What does it offer us as individuals? And as a community? What are some ways you can pass on your culture to future generations?
23. How can traditions help us cope with bad things that happen?
24. The ending of the story shows Nyeredzi making an offering to the ancestors, a thing she has never done. Why do you think she chose this pathway when she was raised a Christian?