

Discussion Questions for *Day for Night* by Frederick Reiken

1. At the heart of this novel is an occurrence in World War II in which 500 Jewish intellectuals were killed in Kovno, Lithuania. How does this event relate to the present-day story of Beverly Rabinowitz, whose father is believed to have been one of those 500 men?
2. The novel makes use of ten first-person narratives, each of which tells a particular story that in some way advances the book's larger narrative. What is the effect of reading a novel in ten discrete sections? How does it differ from a more conventional novel? How does each narrator's story contribute to the larger story line?
3. While there is ultimately a surprising discovery and resolution for the book's protagonist, Beverly Rabinowitz, not everything in the novel is wrapped up in a neat bow. How did you feel about the ending? In a book such as this, can a reader expect everything to be "solved"?
4. How does the Jungian idea of the collective unconscious relate to the novel's theme of interconnectedness?
5. Another theme in the novel is the idea of shadow selves. Do you think Katherine Clay Goldman should be considered the shadow self of Beverly Rabinowitz? More generally speaking, what is Katherine Clay Goldman's role in the novel?
6. Though the stories of all the characters in the novel are interrelated, the characters often remain unaware of these connections, and therefore, they remain unaware of the larger picture that only the reader sees. How does this approach differ from other novels? Does this make for a more active role on the part of the reader?
7. The novel travels to many different times and places. Which are the most memorable?
8. Several of the chapters incorporate very specific encounters with the natural world. How do these situations, such as swimming with manatees, exploring coral reefs, or interacting with wildlife in the Israeli desert contribute to the novel's story and themes?
9. In chapter three, "Monster," the reader is introduced to an FBI Special Agent who is trying to catch the sixties-era fugitive Katherine Clay Goldman. Does this detective serve a function that is more complex than what we are used to in detective novels?

10. The detective, Leopold Sachs, states that “if you look hard enough into the history of anything, you will discover things that seem to be connected but are not.” Do you agree with this assertion? Does the novel support this idea or contradict it? Could it be said to do both at once?
11. In chapter five, “Little Wolf,” a character states that “one narrative must inevitably be abandoned for another.” How is this idea relevant to the structure and content of the book?
12. In chapter seven, Beverly Rabinowitz writes in a letter to her friend Miriam, “Maybe it’s only a trick of language, but the word ‘life’ or ‘death’ alone could not be understood without awareness of the other. It is the same for light and dark, for day and night, for good and evil.” How does this idea relate to the larger story?
13. In chapter nine, “The Ancient Forest,” the character Max Rubin states that “perhaps the meaning of the story is that you must look deep rather than far if you want to unlock any of the secrets of the universe, that once unlocked a secret loses its power unless a part of it is withheld.” How does this idea relate the novel’s thematic concern with secret histories and secret connections?
14. Discuss the role that Max Rubin’s wife, Doris, plays in bringing several important strands of the story together in the end.
15. The book is set in the mid-eighties, before cell phones and the Internet became a part of mainstream culture. What is your experience of reading a book that is set in the not-too-distant past but in which the technology of everyday life is so different?