

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Warning! Spoilers below!)

- How does the title “Daughter of Kura” relate to the novel’s themes? The original title of this novel was “Signs of Fall”. How do you think this title relates to the novel’s themes?
- What are the traditional roles of women in this imagined culture? What is expected of them as daughters, sisters, mates, and mothers? What is expected of the men? How do you feel about these expectations? How are the cultural roles of the sexes in Snap’s world affected by their ignorance of the role of males in reproduction? Compare Bapoto’s plans for changing the traditional role of men in this imagined culture with the actual changes that have occurred in modern women’s roles in the last forty years.
- Which characters in “Daughter of Kura” have personalities early humans might actually have had? What sorts of social interactions do you think might have originated early in human evolution?
- On page 5, Snap observes that the stories her people tell are always about change, yet their purpose is the opposite: to preserve tradition, pass on memories, and explain how things happen. Is Snap a traditionalist or a revolutionary? Does she change in the course of the novel? Explain how this apparent contradiction works for the people of Kura. Share a few examples of such stories and traditions from your own life.
- People tend to regard the values and practices of their own culture as more natural than or superior to the practices of other cultures. What cultural practices are different between Snap’s people and modern societies? For example, how do you feel about differences in mourning and burial practices between Snap’s culture and your own? What other elements of your life might you consider in a new light when compared to the those of these early humans? Do you find Snap’s culture more or less natural than your own? Why or why not?
- While life for the characters of “Daughter of Kura” is one of extreme danger and hardship, there is joy in their lives as well. Where do Chirp, Whistle, and Snap find happiness? Compare and contrast these sources of joy with the ways in which modern women of different cultures find happiness.
- Compare the value of loyalty to one’s immediate family with loyalty to one’s clan (or, in modern times, to one’s country). Do the relative values change if one is a clan leader? Do the ages of the family members matter? What would you have done in Whistle’s position? In Snap’s?
- When Bapoto first arrives in Kura, he seems genuine in his desire to help. After Snap’s arm wound becomes infected, he offers to perform a healing ritual for her. Chirp refuses his offer, however. What are her reasons for doing so? Do you agree with Chirp’s decision? Why is Bapoto so successful at introducing magical thinking to the Kura?

- On page 60, Bapoto explains his thoughts on who the Great One is and why she must be appeased with rituals and prayer. How does his perspective differ from the world-view of Kura? What is the significance of this shift in perspective, and what does it mean for the people to accept his beliefs? How do you feel about Granite's opinion on page 232, that it "never hurts to watch all the burrow holes?"
- Nudity and public sex are a normal part of Snap's society. Why do you think human cultures developed the practices of hiding genitals and having sex in private? How long ago?
- Every fall, the women of Kura and the surrounding villages choose their mates from the transient men. Sometimes the men express their interest first by bringing gifts to the women they hope will choose them. What are the criteria for a good mate? Why does Snap choose Ash? Why does Whistle choose Bapoto?
- Modern societies have only recently begun to recognize that many, possibly most, rapes are motivated by a need for power over the victim rather than as a result of sexual desire. How is rape perceived in "Daughter of Kura" compared to later societies? How does Snap's perception of the attack compare to the perception of Burrow? Of Bapoto? Of Whistle?
- Because "Daughter of Kura" is set so far in the past, its character's lives are based on a little archaeological evidence, some anthropological theories, and quite a bit of speculation. What characteristics of modern humans do you see emerging in Snap's people? What characteristics of Snap's people are more like non-human species?
- What is the relationship between ritual and religious belief? Is it plausible that rituals developed prior to the first religious beliefs? Why or why not?
- Why does Snap finally begin to believe in the Great One? Why does she stop? When Granite asks why a benevolent spirit would allow terrible things to happen on page 237, Snap signs to Granite, "Maybe 'why' is not the right question." What do you think this means? Do you agree or disagree?
- Bapoto successfully introduces ideas of a supernatural being and of life after death to people who have previously understood their world only through their senses. How does he do this? What needs does Bapoto's Great One fulfill? Does Bapoto's personality matter?
- When the Fukizo attack Kura, Snap is shocked. How does the practice of males moving from their natal villages to nearby ones reduce inter-clan violence?
- Which character in the story did you most identify with and why? Do you think the challenges these people face are universal and even modern? Explain your opinion.