

Discussion Questions for
The Blazekeeper of Bowmore House

by Elizabeth de Veer info@elizabethdeveer.com

1. As children, everybody learns the Cinderella story, either from the variety of movies or from storybooks, or both! When you were growing up, did you like or identify with Cinderella – the character and/or the story – or did you revile her? What qualities about the character or the original (e.g. Disney) story did you love/complain about? Did this book preserve or update any of those? How did it make you view the character or the story differently?
2. The title of the book is *The Blazekeeper of Bowmore House*. How is our heroine, Cinder/Marga a blaze-keeper? In what ways is she herself fiery? How does that quality help her or hinder her in her efforts to grow as a person?
3. The book is set in “fairy tale times,” an era loosely based on pre-industrial Europe, a time in which women had few choices. Cinder mourns this fact when she says: “I suppose I could stay at Bowmore House my whole life, baking bread and feeding chickens. Or I could take a husband and keep my own house, baking bread for him, feeding chickens and children. Or become a nun ... and in the name of God bake bread, feed chickens.” How do these limitations affect the way she thinks about her pre-identity-reveal life? How do the limitations of this era affect her ambitions and values? If Cinder was alive now in the United States, what possible paths do you think her life would take?
4. Orla and Liisi are technically Cinder’s stepsisters, but that term is never used. They see each other as sisters, for all the positive and challenging aspects that that relationship suggests. Does this change the way you see their relationships? If you have a blended /bonus family, are those relationships different from other family members or basically the same? In what ways?
5. Rhona, Cinder’s stepmother, faces challenges from several directions. She does not want to let any of her daughters down. And though she carries these burdens, she has nobody to talk to about them. Do you have people who have supported you through difficult chapters in life? Who do you talk to when the Lord Warins come knocking?
6. Prince Finn always took his role as next in line for the throne very seriously. This only changed when he was told that the woman he was supposed to marry had wed another. That single event made him reconsider not only who he would marry but whether he was suited to become king at all. What does Finn realize about himself that makes him question this role? What are his values, and how do they align with Cinder’s? What do you think they might have done if Cinder’s identity as queen had not been revealed?
7. When Cinder finds the letter her mother wrote while she was dying, Cinder learns about her mother’s life but also gains a lens on what her stepmother’s upbringing was like. How is Cinder’s

life similar to that of her stepmother and how is it different?

8. In the final reveal, Orla makes the point that Cinder's life has unintentionally prepared her to become – ultimately – a queen. What are some qualities of leaders you admire or appreciate? Do you think Cinder will go on to become a good leader? What are some aspects of her character and life experiences you think she will draw on?
9. This story includes insights on many mothers: Leontyne, Rhona, and Ailen are all mothers, and Nula-na-Nekon even takes on a mothering role. What kinds of mothers do you see these various women as? Do any of these make you think about the mothers, biological, adopted and chosen, in your life?
10. The condition of Bowmore House, a house by the sea, reflects the lives of the people who live inside it. How do you see this playing out in the story?
11. When Nula transforms Cinder so she can attend the ball, Cinder realizes that the clothes changed her up to a point, but her essence is the same as it was before the transformation. Have you ever been in a situation where you felt like the clothes on the outside didn't match the person you were on the inside?