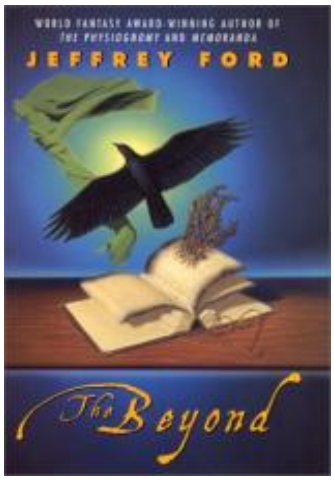
ReadingGroupGuides
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The Beyond

by Jeffrey Ford



About the Book

THE BEYOND continues the story of Physiognomist Cley, a man who can divine good and evil, determine character and intelligence, uncover dark secrets and foretell a person's destiny through the careful study of facial and bodily features. This time, the story is told from the perspective of Misrix, Drachton Below's "son," who was introduced in MEMORANDA. Misrix narrates Cley's journeys to the ends of the world as he struggles with his own humanity.

Discussion Guide

1. What is it that Misrix is hoping to find in writing down Cley's adventures as he envisions them?

2. Why do you think that Misrix must finally decide to become human instead of going back to being a demon?

3. How reliable is Misrix as a narrator? What kinds of problems does his possible unreliability bring to a reading of the text?

4. Why is Wood necessary to Cley's survival? What kind of attributes does the dog have that his master might be missing?

5. How do the Cley sections of the book echo and further develop ideas begun in the Misrix parts?

6. How would you describe the character of the people of the Word?

7. What is the importance of the foliate's, Vasthasha's, role in Cley's journey through the wilderness?

8. Shkchl, Vasthasha, the Sirimon, etc. -- are these all part of Cley's real adventure or merely fanciful characters created

by Misrix to convince others of his innocence?

9. What is it that Cley finds in his life with Willa and Wraith that he had earlier been missing?

10. By the end of the novel, has Misrix achieved what is necessary to become part of humanity or has he fallen short in his attempt?

Author Bio

Jeffrey Ford is the author of **THE PHYSIOGNOMY** and **THE BEYOND**. He is the protege of the late John Gardner, author of the modern classic **GRENDEL**. Ford is a Professor of Writing and Early American Literature at a college in New Jersey.

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