

Discussion Questions

The Man Who Was Thursday by G.K. Chesterton



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Source: New York Public Library, www.nypl.org/blog/2012/07/06/readers-den-man-who-was-thursday-gk-chesterton-week-1

1. Lucian Gregory argues that the true artist "abolishes all conventions" while the orderly Gabriel Syme insists that the most poetical thing in the world is the London subway. Do poetry and art tend towards chaos or order?
2. The novel's humor is evident from the very first chapters. Was there a particular funny scene or line of dialogue that stood out to you?
3. Allusions to British culture abound in the book: Ally Sloper, Joseph Chamberlain, Edward Bulwer-Lytton. Did you come across other interesting references or names, which might not be familiar to an American audience?
4. In Chapters 5-8, we are introduced to a host of strange characters: the madman Gogol, the paralytic Professor de Worms, the fashionable Marquis de St. Eustache, the enigmatic Dr. Bull, and of course, President Sunday. Was there a single character's description you especially enjoyed?
5. Has there been a point in the story so far which has caused you to question whether this is a realistic or fantastic novel?
6. Did you detect any other cultural or religious symbols such as the almond tree mentioned above?
7. If you had to describe the duel between Syme and the Marquis in one word (or subsequent chase) what would it be?
8. Have you encountered British slang words or expressions from the era that gave you pause?
9. Would you classify *The Man Who Was Thursday* as a mystery, conspiracy novel, or something else?
10. How did you interpret the ending of the novel? Did you find the conclusion satisfying?
11. If you had to summarize what this novel is about, how would you describe it?