

# HOLIDAY HOUSE

## READING GROUP

### GUIDE



# NIGHTRENDER

by JODI MEADOWS

## ABOUT THE BOOK

**Kingdoms will fall, gods will die, and hearts will be broken in this sprawling new fantasy from *New York Times* bestselling author Jodi Meadows.**

In the middle of nothingness is the Island of Salvation. Reality bends easily here. Villages disappear. Forests burn forever. Pockets of inconsistent time are everywhere, their boundaries strung with yellow ribbon. And the three kingdoms of Salvation have been at war for a thousand years.

Not that the human world takes much interest. Of more concern is the upcoming marriage of Rune Hightower, Prince of Caberwill, and Johanne Fortuin, Princess of Embria—the serpent bride, a girl of famous cunning—which offers a possible end to the ancient conflict. Rune has noticed the growing darkness, and he is determined to summon mankind's only defense: Nightrender, the hammer of the gods, an immortal warrior more weapon than girl.

There is only one problem. The last time she was summoned, she slaughtered every royal in Salvation, and no one knows why. Will she save humanity from the Malice . . . or plunge it deeper into the fires of eternal war?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Most fantasy has a unique setting that may include a realistic world as well as an underworld that is clearly born from the imagination. Describe the continent of Salvation. How do the three kingdoms of Salvation contribute to the conflict of the novel? What is the significance of Deepway Woods?
- How are themes of good versus evil established at the beginning of the book? Debate whether good wins over evil by the end of the novel.
- The novel is told from three points of view: Hanne, Rune, and the Nightrender. Discuss good and evil from each point of view.
- How is the arranged marriage of Rune and Hanne about power? What risks does Hanne take when agreeing to marry Rune? What does Hanne learn about evil when she goes to Ivasland?

- What is the grand quest in *Nightrender*? How do the smaller missions contribute to the ultimate quest?
- Identify the magic in this novel. Explain the role of Malstop. What is the purpose of the mal-device? How are the Rancor magical and demonic?
- Discuss the connection between legends and fantasy. Explain why the Nightrender is a legend in Salvation. Has the legend of the Nightrender changed in the 400 years that she has been sleeping? Discuss whether Rune is selfish or desperate when he wakes her.
- Explain Queen Grace’s reaction to Rune waking Nightrender. Why does she tell the Nightrender that she isn’t needed?
- How do the people both fear and revere the Nightrender? Discuss the Nightrender’s reaction when Rune tells her why she is feared. Why is Rune terrified of the Nightrender? Debate whether this changes as the story progresses.
- The Nightrender represents light and dark. Explain this symbolism as the novel progresses and in the following metaphor: “She was their sword against darkness.” (p. 77)
- What does obsidian represent? There are yellow ribbons with bells tied around trees in Deepway Woods. What do they symbolize? Point out other examples of symbolism in the novel.
- Describe Rune’s relationship with his parents. How was Opi, his deceased brother, the favorite son? Why does Rune feel responsible for his brother’s death?
- How does it take courage for Rune to face off with his parents? In what other ways does Rune display courage?
- Explain what the Nightrender means when she tells Rune “Your quest for self-worth makes you selfish.” (p. 300)
- What is the purpose of rising and falling action in a plot? How does the rising action contribute to the overall conflict of the novel? Discuss the peaks and valleys that Rune experiences as the action builds.
- The climax of a novel is the turning point and marks the beginning of the falling action. Identify the climax of *Nightrender*. How does the falling action lead to the novel’s resolution?
- Explain the following: “How quickly her [Nightrender] victory had become surrender.” (p. 355) In what ways is the Nightrender victorious? What does she surrender?
- Make a prediction about what is next for Rune, his kingdom, and all of Salvation.
- The world of fantasy is often a metaphor for real life. What is the metaphor of *Nightrender*? How is it both cautionary and hopeful?

## ABOUT THE CREATOR



photo credit: Jodi Meadows

**Jodi Meadows** is the author of the Incarnate trilogy, the Orphan Queen duology, the Fallen Isles trilogy (HarperCollins/Katherine Tegen), and the Nightrender duology (Holiday House). Jodi wants to be a ferret when she grows up, and she has no self-control when it comes to yarn, ink, or outer space. She is also a coauthor of *New York Times* bestsellers *My Lady Jane*, *My Plain Jane*, and other books in the Lady Janies series (HarperTeen). She lives in rural Virginia. Visit her at [www.jodimeadows.com](http://www.jodimeadows.com).