



1. In *Under Lock & Skeleton Key*, the joker card—and the jester that inspired it—is mentioned repeatedly. Of the joker card, on page 38, Tempest says, “The jack, the king, and the queen all have their own stories, but this guy? He’s the most powerful character in the whole deck of cards. Because he can be anyone he wants to be. The joker can easily fight off monsters. . . . They speak the truth—even to monsters.” What do you think the joker symbolizes in the book?
2. The Raj family has a curse: The eldest child dies by magic. On page 77, Tempest says, “You don’t believe in curses, do you?” Different characters believe different things surrounding the Raj Family Curse in *Under Lock & Skeleton Key*. What do you think? Do you think there is a curse?
3. Throughout the story, Tempest quotes the tagline from her stage persona: “I’m The Tempest. Destruction follows in my wake.” Do you think that’s an accurate description of Tempest? How, if it all, does it change as the story progresses?
4. What role does social media play in *Under Lock & Skeleton Key*?
5. Secret Staircase Construction specializes in bringing the magic of childhood to all by transforming clients’ homes with sliding bookcases, intricate locks, backyard treehouses, and hidden reading nooks—often inspired by the client’s favorite story or book. What would you want Secret Staircase Construction to build for you?
6. What are some of the classic locked-room mystery novels mentioned throughout the story? Were you aware of these before? Have you read any of them? If not, have you added any to your list?

Discussion Questions



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7. If you could visit only one location in *Under Lock & Skeleton Key*, where would it be? Fiddler's Folly? The Locked Room Library? Calvin Knight's home? Tempest's stage show in Vegas? Somewhere else?
8. Because she's an illusionist, Tempest believes she can use her knowledge of misdirection to solve the case by figuring out *how* the crime was committed rather than *why*. When trying to solve a mystery, which do you try to do first? And are you the type of reader who tries to solve the puzzle as you read a mystery, or do you get swept up in the story and try not to follow the clues?
9. Which character do you identify with the most? Is that also your favorite character?