

## Themes, Character, and Setting

### 1. Ginevra's identity and power

- How does Ginevra's relationship with her gift (gemstone magic / healing) evolve over the course of the story?

### 2. Faith, superstition, and religion

- What critiques or observations does Rasche seem to make about religious power and corruption? How does the tension between true faith and the exploitation of belief play out?

### 3. Power, control, and corruption

- Which characters wield institutional or social power? How do they abuse or justify it? How does the theft of relics become a battleground for power and control?

### 4. Plague, mortality, and crisis

- In what ways does the backdrop of the Black Death influence the characters' choices and the atmosphere of the story? Does the plague function solely as a historical setting, or does it carry symbolic weight (e.g. internal decay, spiritual sickness)?

### 5. Gender, agency, and marginalization

- How does being a woman affect Ginevra's opportunities and the way others treat her?

### 6. Trust, betrayal, and alliances

- Who surprises you by whom they support (or betray)? Where do alliances shift, and what motivates those shifts? How does trust function in a society where accusation (witchcraft, heresy) is lethal?

### 7. Mysticism, knowledge, and the unknown

- How does knowledge (scientific, mystical, religious) serve as both tool and weapon?
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## Plot, Structure, and Style

### 8. Setting and atmosphere

- How vividly did you feel transported to 14th-century Florence?

### 9. Supporting characters and point of view

- Which secondary characters did you find most compelling, and why? Are there characters whose motivations surprised you or whose actions felt inconsistent?

### 10. Ending and resolution

- Was the ending satisfying? Did the fates of the characters feel earned? What questions were left unanswered (if any)?

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## Deeper / “Big Picture” Questions

### 12. Ethics of healing and power

- Ginevra’s ability to heal is miraculous yet dangerous in that context. What ethical dilemmas does she face in using her gift (who to help, how openly, at what risk)? Is there a point where the act of healing becomes a tool of control or coercion?

### 13. Human agency vs larger forces

- To what degree are characters acting freely, and to what degree are they constrained by history, disease, social norms, or supernatural forces?

### 14. Legacy, memory, and sanctity

- Why are relics so valued—and dangerous—in the story? What do they represent beyond the religious? How is legacy (of saints, of knowledge, of family) used and contested in the novel?

### 15. Resilience and hope in dark times

- Despite the dread and loss, where do you see perseverance, hope, or redemption in the novel?