



BLINDED

BY THE LIGHT

‘in the Light we trust’

JOE KIPLING

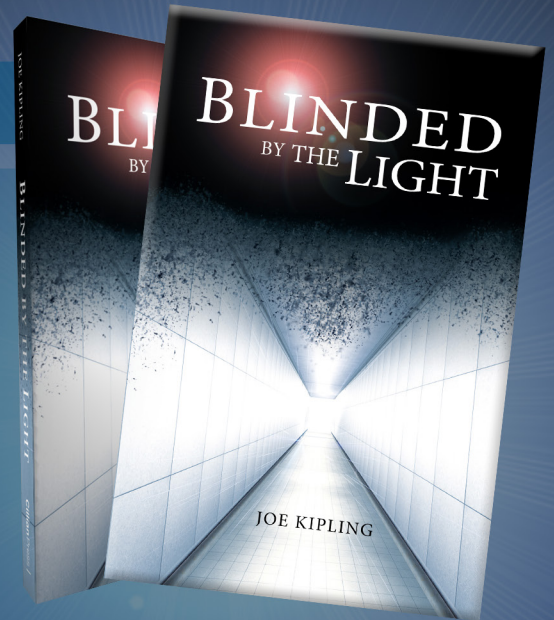
Reading Group & Discussion Guide

CillianPress

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About the book

MaryAnn is 15, living in a world decimated by the Sandman Virus. She's an Alpha, born into a life of privilege and entitlement, protected from the Outside by the Boundary. She worries about the small things: her popularity, having the right boyfriend and wearing the right clothes. These are the things that matter to her friends so they're important to her too.



She has complete and unquestioning faith in The Light and the leadership of The Director who rules the Manchester Neighbourhood. It's a safe haven from the feral wastelands Outside, but some people might think it's a sterile, almost claustrophobic environment. A life-changing event brings her into contact with The Union and the brother she thought she'd lost. For the first time MaryAnn is forced to face up to the reality of the world that she lives in and to question the very foundations of the Neighbourhood that she was born into.

Blinded by the Light is the first book in The Union Trilogy.

Meet the Author



JOE KIPLING is a Hull born writer, currently living in a small village in West Yorkshire with her dog Rosie. After surviving an 80's childhood with the impending threat of nuclear annihilation she developed an obsession with how the world might end. This along with a passion for travelling and successfully avoiding near catastrophe has provided endless inspiration for her writing.

To find out more about an author visit for schools, libraries, youth clubs and YA book clubs contact: Joekipling71@gmail.com.

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

THEMES

There are a number of central themes running through the book. The following questions provide focused discussion around these key topics.

1. **Fear of the unknown:** *'if you're terrified of the Outside then you're less likely to question what's really going on. . . '*

The people in the Neighbourhood are terrified of the Feral Echoes that roam the Outside. How do you think this fear reflects our current society? Are people suspicious or afraid of people/things that they don't understand?

2. **Abuse of power:** Who do you think holds the power in the story? How much power do you think the Director has? Does he abuse his position and why do you think that no one in the Neighbourhood challenges him?

3. **Discrimination:** *'It's easier for you people to think of us as animals isn't it. . ?'*

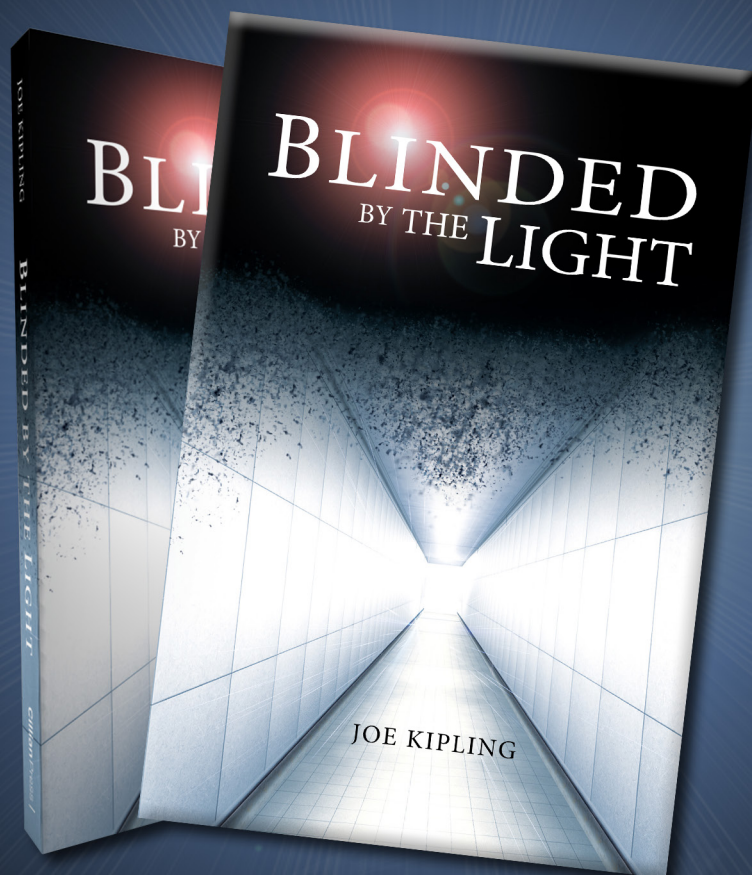
How is inequality portrayed in the book? Do you think that the categorisation system of Alpha, Bravo, Delta & Echo promotes this discrimination? Are there any advantages and disadvantages to this system?

4. **Coming to terms with loss:** How do the characters deal with loss and how does it impact on their behavior?

FURTHER QUESTIONS

1. In the beginning of *Blinded by the Light* we see how MaryAnn has everything that she could want and in a short period of time everything she values is taken from her. How do you think this changes her character?
2. What moral/ethical choices does MaryAnn face throughout the story? What did you think of her choices? How would you have chosen?
3. *'He must be one of those rude teenage boys who hadn't fully developed his social skills . . .'* When MaryAnn and Peter first meet they don't like each other very much. How do their feelings evolve throughout the book? Do you think they have anything in common?
4. If The Light had offered you the opportunity to be part of the 'Select Neighbourhoods Project,' would you have accepted the invite? How would you have felt about the people left Outside?
5. Do you think that MaryAnn's privileged background is the reason why she appears so spoilt at the beginning of the book?
6. *'They had to understand that we aren't going to take it anymore . . .'* MaryAnn refuses to join The Union because they planted the bomb that killed her parents. Why do you think she makes this decision? Do you agree with her?
7. Do you think The Union is a rebel group? Why?
8. *'Most of the people in this room have suffered at the hands of your father . . .'* When MaryAnn learns the truth about her father how does she react? Do you think that Daryl reacted similarly when he was told the truth?
9. In the explosion that kills her parents MaryAnn is badly scarred. How do you think this affects her? Does it have an impact on her relationships with other people?
10. Do you think the title *Blinded by the Light* has any significance to the story?

11. In the beginning MaryAnn and Daryl have a difficult relationship. How do you think she feels about his part in the death of their parents?
12. The Light originated as a pharmaceutical company who discovered the cure to the Sandman Virus. Why do you think they chose to sell the cure to people rather than offer it for free? Do you think this is something that could happen in the world we live in today?
13. In the book MaryAnn refers to her parents as Mummy & Daddy. After she discovers the truth about them she begins to refer to them as Mother and Father. Do you think the author deliberately changed the language and why?
14. The Union planted a bomb in the Building of Light to punish the Light for unfair taxation and for stealing their food. Do you think this action was justified?
15. How do the events of the book change and transform MaryAnn. What impact does it have on her relationship with the other characters in the story
16. *'If death is so meaningless then you have to make sure that you live well . . . '* What does Peter mean by this? How do you make your life count for something?
17. MaryAnn is left with a choice at the end of the book, what do you think she's going to do?



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