

Southfield Public Library

The Shadow Divers by Robert Kurson

From [Readinggroupguides.com](http://www.readinggroupguides.com)

http://www.readinggroupguides.com/guides3/shadow_divers1.asp

Discussion Questions

- 1.** Is there something you would risk everything - your family, sanity, and life - to discover?
- 2.** Was it proper for Chatterton and Kohler to risk their lives, and the lives of others, by insisting that all divers allow the remains of the fallen U-boat sailors to remain undisturbed?
- 3.** Chatterton and Kohler lost their marriages to their quest to identify the U-Who. Was it worth it?
- 4.** Why weren't Chatterton and Kohler bothered more by the German sailors' mission - namely, to sink Allied ships and kill American sailors?
- 5.** Do you think the U-Who's crewmen would have appreciated the efforts of Chatterton and Kohler to identify their submarine and explain their story?
- 6.** The German government told Chatterton that all requests by scuba divers to explore sunken German war graves had been denied. Chatterton politely explained his intentions, then dove the wreck of the U-Who anyway. Was this morally acceptable?
- 7.** Gisela Engelmann dearly loved her fiancé, U-869 torpedoman Franz Nedel, despite Nedel's fervent commitment to Hitler and Nazi ideals - and despite the fact that the Nazis had imprisoned both his father and Engelmann's father. Could you love someone whose political beliefs were abhorrent to you?
- 8.** Despite claustrophobic conditions, many Germans preferred submarine service to army ground service, where they might find themselves dug into trenches and dodging enemy bullets. Which would you opt for?
- 9.** Given the grave danger of Chatterton's final plan to dive the wreck of the U-Who, should Kohler have stuck to his first instinct and refused to accompany Chatterton?
- 10.** Chatterton did not attend the funeral of his dear friend, Bill Nagle. He never completely explains the decision. Why do you think he didn't attend Nagle's funeral?
- 11.** Divers continue to debate the ethics of removing artifacts from shipwrecks. When is it proper to take artifacts from wrecks? Are there circumstances under which artifacts should never be disturbed? Does your answer change if there are human remains onboard?
- 12.** Chatterton seemed emotionally ready for the Rouses to identify the U-Who. But he seemed incapable of accepting the possibility of a "greenhorn" diver doing the same. Why?

13. Kohler gave up diving for two years in an effort to keep his family together. Can a person ever surrender his true passion and hope to live a happy and fulfilled life?

14. Did the discovery of the U-Who hasten Bill Nagle's demise?

15. Given the intentions of the crewmen aboard U-869 - to attack and kill Allied ships - do you think the book treated them too kindly?



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General discussion questions

- For the person who chose the book – What made you want to read it? What made you pick it for the book club? Did it live up to your expectations?
- How is the book structured? First person? Third person? Flashbacks? Narrative devices? Do you think the author did a good job with it?
- How would you describe the author's writing style? Concise? Flowery? How is language used in this book? Read aloud a passage that really struck you. How does that passage relate to the book as a whole?
- How effective is the author's use of plot twists? Were you able to predict certain things before they happened? Did the author keep you guessing until the end?
- Did the book hold your interest?
- How important is the setting to the story? Did you feel like you were somewhere else? Did the time setting make a difference in the story? Did the author provide enough background information for you to understand the setting and time placement?
- Which is stronger in the book – the characters or the plots?
- Would you recommend this book to someone else? Why? And to whom?