

The Turn of Midnight by Minette Waters

Summary

As the year 1349 approaches, the Black Death continues its devastating course across England. In Dorsetshire, the quarantined people of Develish question whether they are the only survivors. Guided by their beloved young mistress, Lady Anne, they wait, knowing that when their dwindling stores are finally gone they will have no choice but to leave. But where will they find safety in the desolate wasteland outside? One man has the courage to find out. Thaddeus Thurkell, a free-thinking, educated serf, strikes out in search of supplies and news. A compelling leader, he and his companions quickly throw off the shackles of serfdom and set their minds to ensuring Develish's future - and freedom for its people but what use is freedom that cannot be gained lawfully? When Lady Anne and Thaddeus conceive an audacious plan to secure her people's independence, neither foresees the life-threatening struggle over power, money and religion that follows...

Questions

1. Describe the main **characters**—personality traits, motivations, and inner qualities.
 - Why do characters do what they do?
 - Are their actions justified?
 - Describe the dynamics between characters
 - Who would you cast as Lady Anne and Thaddeus in the movie of this book?

2. Discuss the **plot**:

- Is it engaging—do you find the story interesting?
- Is this a plot-driven book—a fast-paced page-turner?
- Does the plot unfold slowly with a focus on character?
- Were you surprised by complications, twists & turns?
- Did you find the plot predictable, even formulaic?

3. Is the **ending** satisfying? If so, why? If not, why not...and how would you change it?

4. If you could ask the **author** a question, what would you ask? Have you read other books by the same author? This is a very different style for the author is it what you were expecting? Were you disappointed? If not, does this book inspire you to read others?

5. Are there any comparisons to be drawn between the behaviour of the population, leaders and medical experts of the time and that of the equivalent people in the Pandemic of 2020? Were lessons learnt? What do these behaviours teach us about humanity?

