

The Mormon Candidate by Avraham Azrieli*: Discussion Points:

1. Discuss Ben Teller's personality:
 - A. What are the roots of Ben's doggedness?
 - B. Is he just another paparazzi, or is he driven by moral reasons?
 - C. Is he transformed by what happened to him through this story?
2. Compare Ben's respective relationships with his mother and with his girlfriend and discuss the reluctance he exhibits about committing to Keera. (Does the death and absence of his father impact this reluctance?)
3. We know Zachariah only through his diary and past actions, but he triggered Ben's curiosity and relentless pursuit. About Zachariah:
 - A. Why was he so upset by Morgan's posthumous baptism of Captain Teller?
 - B. How did he balance his Mormon faith with this new realization that the ritual is somehow wrong?
 - C. Was this objection rooted in his faith, or in newfound unfaithfulness? Did he sincerely believe that he received a 'personal revelation' – or was he mentally ill as the psychiatrist said?
 - D. Where is the line between religion and morality? Are the two supposed to be aligned? Is the Mormon Church that different than other religions?
 - E. What about the Mormon principle of "Truth" vs. "Facts"?
4. Discuss the personal experiences of the ex-Mormons who kidnapped Ben.
 - A. Are these experiences representative of Mormons or unusual cases?
 - B. In that context, does the book emphasize anti-Mormon positions, or is it a balanced story that shows the good and the bad?
5. Discuss Mormon women's position in light of the recent excommunication of Kate Kelly. For example: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/hippo-reads/mormon-feminist-excommuni_b_5585410.html
6. Discuss the issue of presidential candidates and privacy.

A. How much must we know as voters in order to make an informed voting decision?

B. How much do we deserve to know about a candidate by virtue of his choice to seek our vote and become 'public figure no. 1'?

C. How relevant is the candidate's religious faith to the vote—and to the way the candidate will do his job as president.

* Avraham Azrieli, a graduate of Columbia Law School in New York City, tried many complex court cases before publishing his first novel, *The Masada Complex* (a political thriller) in 2010. A full-time author since then, his other books include the Israeli spy novels *The Jerusalem Inception* and *The Jerusalem Assassin*, as well as *Christmas for Joshua* (a family drama dealing with interfaith conflicts), *The Mormon Candidate* (a political thriller), *Thump* (a courtroom drama featuring sexual harassment and racism) and *The Bootstrap Ultimatum* (a mystery involving the commercialization of Memorial Day). He also authored *Your Lawyer on a Short Leash* (a guide to dealing with lawyers) and *One Step Ahead* (a WWII biography, which inspired the musical *By Wheel and by Wing*). www.AzrieliBooks.com