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Reader's Guide

from Kerry Howley
 author of *Thrown*

Author Asks:

1. The character of Sean Huffman is often described as “likable.” What actions and attitudes lead the reader to root for him?
2. Why does it matter that the narrator’s parents are dead?
3. *Thrown* consists of three intertwined narratives; Sean’s, Erik’s, and that of the narrator. How would the book be different if the narrator were less of a presence?
4. How does the idea of home, both leaving it and returning to it, play into each of these narratives?
5. *Thrown* is not a history of mixed martial arts, but must convey some sense of the sport’s history so that the reader can understand what is at stake for Sean, Erik, and Keoni. How is this information conveyed?
6. What does Kit mean when she declares that the octagon has “arrived”? How does her reverence for various spaces affect your reading?
7. How do ideas of health and decay develop over the course of the story? In what spirit does Kit evoke the “healthy-minded?”
8. How would you describe the narrator’s voice? What is her attitude toward the reader?
9. How is Kit’s resistance to academic philosophy related to her interest in the fighters?
10. *Thrown* is sometimes filed under “sports” in the nonfiction section of the bookstore. Where in the bookstore do you think *Thrown* belongs?

Writing Exercises:

Heteronyms

Portuguese essayist Fernando de Pessoa adopted dozens of “heteronyms” through which he wrote his nonfiction: alternate personas with complex fictional backstories. Think of a true story you’d like to tell. Instead of writing the story, describe, in detail, the fictional persona of the author through which you’d like to tell it.

The Other Kerry Howley

There is another Kerry Howley in the universe, and, for a living, she makes necklaces out of human hair. Find someone online with your first and last name. Starting with the scraps you pick up from the Internet, write a story about him or her in a time of crisis.

Further Reading:

1. St. Theresa de Avila, *Interior Castle*
2. Joe Wenderoth, *Letters to Wendys*
3. Vladimir Nabokov, *Pale Fire*
4. Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*
5. Georges Bataille, *Inner Experience*
6. Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*
7. Randall Collins, *Violence*
8. Wayne Koestenbaum, *Hotel Theory*
9. Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double*
10. Anne Carson, *Decreation*
11. Joan Didion, *Miami*

