



Alumni Book Club: The Underworld by Susan Casey Chapters 4-6



The Underworld by Susan Casey

Technology-Themed Discussion Prompts

“Waterfall” Icebreaker: Which creature from the Abyss would you dress up in costume for Halloween if you had unlimited resources?

1. How does the deep ocean compare to outer space?

On page 117, Don Walsh recalls a conversation with Scott Carpenter, a Mercury 7 astronaut: “You know, you get up there and you’re sitting in this thing, and the fuse has been lit - and you suddenly realize that it was built by the low bidder.” How has reading this book enlightened your understanding of technological innovations and costs involved in research at this scale?

2. Casey introduces a unique cast of characters throughout the book. Who do you admire?

While we’re only meeting the “characters” Casey was able to interview and work with, the field of deep ocean exploration seems full of fascinating people. Which individual(s) from this section would you love to sit down and have coffee with, and what makes them stand out to you?

3. Was there a particular sentence or section that stood out to you?

Did anything resonate with you or strike you as especially evocative? Why? You can also compare this to other books on the ocean you have read—how does this section’s tone or perspective differ? Feel free to make comparisons to the first section of the book.

4. What assumptions do we hold about deep-sea exploration compared to other types of exploration?

On page 121, Casey writes that hundreds of people visited the International Space Station, and thousands Mt Everest, before more than two people had visited the Challenger Deep in the ocean. Does this passage suggest that technology challenges are a primary factor limiting deep ocean research, or does it reveal something about our (humanity’s) interest in exploring these deep-water environments? What might this difference imply about our priorities?

5. **Classroom Connections:** Just for fun, choose one example of technology from our section this week that you think would be useful in the classroom.

Your answer could be practical or fantastical! Why do you think this technology would be useful in your classroom? Would you take it as is or need to modify it in some way first? In which of these broad categories would this modern technology fit best - Planning & Preparation, Classroom Environment, Instruction, or Professional Responsibilities?

Extra Resources:

Underworld Wakelet

