

## **The Neptune Challenge Discussion Questions**

1. How does Nere adjust to life at Safety Harbor? What are some of the challenges she faces? Do any of these challenges resurface later when she is at Atlantea?
2. In chapter six, Nere's team breaks Sea Ranger protocols during a test. Do you think Nere made the right decision to use telepathy and Penn's disrupter? What was Vival testing? Could there ever be a situation in which following the rules could be more important than saving a life?
3. How would you describe the mission of Ran Kuron? Do you think Nere's comparison of Kuron to Dr. Frankenstein is accurate? Are the actions of Dr. Hanson and the other Neptune Project scientists more ethical than Kuron's? Explain.
4. How is Nere portrayed? What qualities does she possess that you find relatable? Likable? Which of the Neptune Project kids do you connect with the most?
5. What physical advantages do Kuron's kids have in the ocean? What are the dangers of splicing the genes of sea creatures into human beings? If you could have some qualities of one marine animal, would you want them? Which animal would you choose? Why?
6. At the start of the mission, Nere doesn't trust Dai or her feelings for him. Why? How does Dai regain her trust?
7. Both Nere and Dai have complicated feelings towards their fathers. How are their relationships with their fathers similar? How are they different? How do these relationships evolve?
8. With the exception of Dai, Kuron collars all of the kids. What is the literal and symbolic significance of this? How does Kuron keep Dai under control? Is Dai figuratively collared?
9. After Sunny tells Tobin and Nere how Kuron's kids were raised, Tobin says, "I'm not sure I would have turned out that nice if I'd been raised the way she was." What do you think about the role of nurture versus nature in how personalities are formed and developed? Give examples from the text to support your viewpoint.

10. Do you think Wasp would be different if she had been raised in another environment? How does Wasp's inability to touch anyone without causing harm shape her personality and life experience?
11. What are the qualities of a successful team? How do the Neptune Project kids work together? Kuron's kids appear divided. Which of Kuron's kids seem the most sympathetic to the Neptune kids? Explain why you think that is.
12. In chapter twenty-five, Nere wants Dai to stop the shark crew from attacking a trapped whale. Dai tells them, "Just because we were raised like animals doesn't mean we have to act like them." Do you think Kuron's kids are more like animals than human beings?
13. Whitey confronts Dai and says he is proud of his shark genes. How does Dai feel about his own genetic background? Why does he keep it a secret from Nere?
14. What does Rad do to help free the others? Why do you think he does this? Are there other examples in the novel of individual's making sacrifices for the good of the larger group?
15. *The Neptune Challenge* is a story of survival. What interpersonal qualities do you think contribute to a person's ability to survive? Compare and contrast that to the qualities needed for a marine animal to survive. How about the characteristics of a society or civilization? What is the difference between surviving and thriving?