



SAVAGE GODS

by

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Reader Guide: Questions and Topics for Discussion

1. Consider the epigraph, a quote from the poet Rainer Maria Rilke which encourages to “always trust in the difficult.” Do you think this tone complements *Savage Gods*?
2. Kingsnorth says that he has always run from comfort, believing that his writing would suffer if he allowed himself to be happy or comfortable. Do you believe that all great art must come from suffering?
3. Kingsnorth draws heavily on the image of the Machine world. What is it? What role does it play in the events of his memoir?
4. The narrator notes how “a plan can become, in an eye-blink, a cage,” believing to have inherited his tendency to plan from his father. How is his father’s desire for control mirrored in the narrator’s aims and ambitions in writing? Are the human desires to belong, know, and control perpetually out of our reach?
5. Displaying the uncertainty and turmoil that he is struggling to overcome, the author frequently writes in questions throughout the book. Was this an effective literary technique? Do you think it conveyed the friction between himself and the world around him?
6. Kingsnorth discusses a concept that our lives are divided into halves, the first half one of fire (agitation, movement) and the second half of water (cooling down). What do you think of this notion? Have you experienced this in your own life, or noticed it in someone close to you?
7. Who are the “savage gods” that Kingsnorth alludes to with the title of the book?
8. The author’s juxtaposition of his writer’s block and his yearning for silence are central to the story. After self-reflection, he thinks that he needs to distance himself from writing for some time in order to preserve his sanity and arguably his ability to continue to be a writer. Do you think he overcame this hurdle through writing itself? How did his own expectations hinder him?