

Reading Group Guide for
In the Shadow of Jezebel
by Mesu Andrews

1. “You have the power to create your own destiny. No man can steal your future.” How does this quote by Queen Athaliah describe and coincide with the attitude of many women today?
2. When faced with a wayward king, president, boss, or leader, how can we as Christians respond?
3. How important is it for leaders to choose calm questioning over chaotic accusation, as Amariah does? Throughout the trials and storms in our lives, how can we be better leaders?
4. When only a few priests come for duty assignments, they are drawn by name, and Jehoiada wonders, *Perhaps Yahweh is more reachable than I thought.* In what ways have you experienced God reaching out to you personally?
5. How does Athaliah gain power over Sheba? How does she maintain that power?
6. Joy is a choice. How does Amariah wake every morning and choose to be joyful?
7. Obadiah says to Jehoiada, “The Yahweh I serve is bigger than Jehoram’s failures and Athaliah’s influence.” How does his statement of faith challenge Jehoiada’s hopelessness and accusation of God’s injustice?
8. As humans, we often want to know our fate—what will become of us and those we love. King Jehoram is granted knowledge of *how* he will die but still faces the uncertainty of *when*. Which would be worse—knowing how or when? Why do you think so?
9. Who is the most evil person you know, the individual who seems farthest from redemption? Are they too far gone? How would you feel if they tried to “buy” forgiveness from God, as King Jehoram does? Could you pray for their forgiveness, as Judah’s high priest was required to do on the Day of Atonement?

10. *Yahweh, please. I cannot be Your high priest. I am not worthy.* How does Jehoiada's response to God's calling mirror our own fears? How often do we let our own insecurities get in the way of God's plan for us?
11. When Sheba discloses her Baal priestess training to Jehoiada, she defines herself as both princess and priestess. How do we live out the roles our lives require without allowing those roles to define us?
12. At the wedding feast, Sheba clings to the mother who has hurt her repeatedly rather than to a new life of untried promises. Why does human nature gravitate toward the known even when it's harmful?
13. How difficult is it to walk the fine line of Jehoiada's moral standard, "Live the truth; be wise without lies"? Why?
14. Sheba is initially terrified of Jehoiada's violence against a sacrificial lamb, though later she comes to understand the atoning significance of the act. Why might modern skeptics or those unfamiliar with the message of the cross be appalled by a Father God who sends His Son to die for others? What other messages of Christianity might be difficult for skeptics and unbelievers to accept until the Holy Spirit draws them?
15. At one point in the story, Jehoiada urges Sheba, "Don't let lies from your past tarnish the hope of our future." How does the enemy of our souls use skeletons from our past to keep us from moving forward—emotionally, relationally, even physically?
16. Obadiah says anger has become Jehoiada's idol. What does he mean by that? Have you ever allowed anger or other emotions to become idols?
17. "Our lives are always a game to the gods, Sheba. We're nothing but ants on a hill, tormented by gods with big sticks." Athaliah's view of the gods mirrors the opinion of many modern-day unbelievers. How can we as Christ followers address their opinion of an uncaring, capricious God?