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**Journal Topics**

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How do you think Asher's balance of faith and art works in his life? Do you think he constantly feels in conflict about them, or has he found a way to balance them satisfactorily? Do you think he should give himself completely to either art or faith, but not both? In this discussion, do not forget to bring up the mythical ancestor, who still haunts Asher's dreams as a terrifying voice from his community's history.

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What exactly is Asher's reaction to the Pieta? What about it inspires him so deeply? Why does he qualify his reaction with phrases such as "I was an observant Jew, but..." and "I do not mean to blaspheme"?

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