The Last Woman in the Forest
Diane Les Becquets Readers Guide

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think the author chose to include the victim portraits? Do you think they are effective? Why or why not?

2. Discuss the characters of each of the victims. What do they have in common besides their deaths? What is different? Do you think these similarities and differences are meaningful?

3. Expanding on the previous question, how do the victims compare to Marian?

4. The setting of this novel spans an enormous geographical and environmental range, including the Rocky Mountains, the deserts of Utah, and the Alberta oil sands. What impact does the environment have on the novel? Do you think it would have been as effective with a more confined or different setting? Why or why not?

5. Discuss the character of Nick. Why do you think it is so important for him, personally, to help Marian? Why do you think the Stillwater killings stuck with him?

6. As Nick notes, although the killer likely had relationships, it was impossible for him to truly reciprocate the feelings women may have had for him. Do you see this in Tate and Marian’s interactions? How does Tate and Marian’s relationship compare to what we see of Nick and Cate?

7. Despite the sense of isolation offered by the wilderness setting, interpersonal connections and relationships are crucial for Marian’s development and for her exploration into Tate’s life. Discuss Marian’s relationships with characters other than Tate and Nick, such as Jenness, Jeb, Emily, and Trainer. How do you think her relationships with these characters influence Marian throughout the course of the novel?

8. There are various dog characters with distinct personalities. What do you think their presence adds to the novel? How do the dogs affect Marian and the other characters?

9. A major theme in this novel is the idea of moving forward after discovering you’ve been lied to. How does Marian reconcile the feelings she had, and the things she experienced, with everything she learns?

10. Discuss the confrontation toward the end of the novel. Was it satisfying? What do you think this scene means for Marian?

11. Do you think this novel explores, to some degree, what it means to be a woman in modern society? Why or why not?