

THE NATURE OF DISAPPEARING

Discussion Questions

1. *The Nature of Disappearing* positions its main character, Emlyn, in both a physical and metaphorical wilderness. Have you ever been in a wilderness? How did you find your way out?
2. Emlyn has a habit of coming up with a single word that captures a person's essence. What do you think? Can a person be summed up in a word?
3. Emlyn and Janessa are opposites. Janessa is vivacious, dauntless, and bold. Emlyn is reserved, thoughtful, and deliberate. Do you have a friend who's very different from you, but whom you love deeply in spite of (or because of!) those differences?
4. Emlyn comes to the realization that Janessa has always had too much of an influence over her. She begins to question whether the two of them were ever healthy at all. Is there such a thing as being too close with a friend?
5. Many of the characters in this novel are, at one point or another, trying to disappear. Where is a place that you can disappear into?
6. Tyler's entrance into Emlyn's life ultimately leads to Emlyn severing her ties to Janessa. What do you think—was this inevitable (and maybe even necessary), or is Tyler to blame? What are your thoughts about necessary endings?
7. This book is intended to capture a very specific season in life—that of entering adulthood and learning to navigate that era. Whether this is the season you're in now, or one you've already lived through, in what ways could you relate to the choices Emlyn faces and the challenges she must work through?
8. In a time of deep struggle and heartache, Rev and Varden befriend Emlyn and ultimately usher her into a new chapter. When has a friend helped pick you up when you were at your lowest? Alternatively, when has someone unexpectedly entered your life and made an impact?
9. Emlyn stays with Tyler long after he succumbs to addiction, in part because she loves him and in part because she feels responsible. How did you feel about this decision? Have you ever been in a relationship—romantic or otherwise—that you know is toxic, but that you can't tear yourself away from? If you left, what has been the impact of your leaving? If you stayed, what was the impact of staying?
10. At one point in the book Varden says, "But it's in the wilderness that you grow." Do you agree or disagree? Do we need hardship to help us become stronger and braver?
11. Emlyn has some strong feelings on #vanlife and social media. Why do you think our culture has such a fascination around influencers and social media in general? What's your relationship with social media?
12. In many ways, *The Nature of Disappearing* is an exploration of identity—how relationships mold our identity, how social media plays a role, how our self-perception ultimately trumps all other facts. What people, places, and institutions have shaped your own sense of identity? What have been the most identity-forming experiences of your life?

