

These Silent Woods by Kimi Cunningham Grant

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) Cooper and Finch spend most of their lives in the cabin and the wilderness, totally cut off from civilization. How does the isolated setting affect the tone and atmosphere of the book?
- 2) Cooper and Scotland spend much of the novel seeming to dislike (or at least distrust) one another. In what ways are they similar? Is their dislike founded or unfounded?
- 3) Loss is a common theme throughout this story. When he learns of Jake's death, Scotland brings Finch the gift of the kitten, saying she needs a companion to help her grieve. How do you think each character processes grief in the novel, and how does it impact the actions they take?
- 4) Cooper, deep down, is a good man, but he does make some questionable decisions. He himself admits that he doesn't see the world in black and white. Finch, on the other hand, has a strong moral compass and reacts instinctively and without hesitation when someone is being hurt. Are children sometimes more moral than adults? Or are adults simply working from a more complicated and nuanced view of the world?
- 5) Cindy's family—the Lovelands—are portrayed as prestigious, wealthy, and well-respected in the community, while Cooper comes from a lower-income, less stable family. How do you think that the Lovelands' class and status would have impacted any decisions about parental rights?
- 6) Despite facing difficult circumstances, Cooper and Marie find companionship—and maybe even more—with each other. How do you think that they helped each other heal? What do you think their relationship would look like in the future?
- 7) Cooper is torn between telling the truth about the missing girl and staying in hiding to protect his own daughter. In the same circumstances, what would you have done? Do you agree with how he handled the situation?
- 8) Poetry—especially the works of Walt Whitman—plays a big role in the novel, and the way Finch views the world. Why do you think she connected so strongly with Walt Whitman's poems in particular? What was the significance of the poem that Cooper left for Finch at the end of the book? Which poem would you have picked?
- 9) Scotland sacrifices himself to give Cooper and Finch the chance to be together. Have you ever received something that you really didn't deserve? How did it make you feel?
- 10) The epilogue is the only chapter written from Finch's perspective. What did you think of this shift in point of view? What surprised you, or didn't, about how Finch's life ultimately turned out?

THESE SILENT WOODS

WILL THERE EVER BE PEACE IN THE QUIET?

