

Book Club Discussion Questions Looking for Jane by Heather Marshall

1. What do Angela's, Nancy's, and Evelyn's individual and shared experiences offer us in our understanding of the legalization of abortion in their given time periods? How does Marshall's narrative contribute to the larger conversation of abortion laws in the United States today?
2. Due to an unfortunate mistake, the letter addressed to Nancy doesn't arrive to her in 2010. How do you think her life might have been different if she received it then?
3. What are some of the societal expectations of women we see throughout the novel? How do those expectations differ in each time period, and how do the women in the novel fulfill or circumvent these expectations?
4. Evelyn's narrative offers two different experiences (i.e., hers and Maggie's) from their time at St. Agnes's Home for Unwed Mothers. How do Evelyn's and Maggie's experiences differ, and what do we glean from their accounts about the events that occurred during their time there?
5. What are the different factors that inspired Evelyn to become a doctor? What do you think she could offer to her patients that others couldn't?
6. Dr. Morgentaler warns Evelyn that the costs of illegally providing abortions are high. What risks do Evelyn—and others fighting for women's rights—face? What sacrifices do these women take in order to contribute to this cause?
7. Multiple groups of women contributed in some way to the advancement of women's rights throughout the narrative. Offer examples of these groups and what the results of their actions entailed? How does this speak to the history of women who contributed to this cause?
8. How does Angela's storyline illustrate the evolution of women's rights? In what way do they still need to advance?
9. Some scenes throughout the novel highlight instances of extreme joy or, conversely, extreme sorrow. Consider examples of these extreme emotions and how they might further our understanding of the different experiences women have during their pregnancy.
10. Contrast the experience Nancy has at Clara's abortion against her own. What do their accounts offer to our understanding of the freedom of choice and the importance of accessibility?

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11. How did Angela, Evelyn, and Nancy each come to know about Jane? What were their individual contributions to the cause and how did they each help the women who came looking for her?
12. Consider the encounter between Brenda and Nancy on p. 285. What does this exchange tell us about the importance of the phrase, “the right to choose”?
13. The novel explores mother-daughter relationships, particularly through Nancy, but also Angela. How are these women shaped by their mothers’ decisions, and how do those choices affect their own attitudes toward pregnancy and motherhood?
14. Consider the difference between Angela’s pregnancy and that of the women who look for Jane. How do these experiences contrast throughout the novel and how does it contribute to our understanding of bodily autonomy?
15. What is the significance of the title Looking for Jane?

Discussion questions by the publisher