

THE SCENT KEEPER

ERICA BAUERMEISTER



General questions:

1. What is the smell of childhood for you?
2. If you could preserve one scent, what would it be?
3. If technology was not an issue, what invention would you create?
4. In the course of the book, Emmeline lives on the island, in Secret Cove, and in the city. Each location affected her profoundly and differently. How have the places you've lived affected you?

Discussion Questions

Nightingale/scent questions:

5. What do you think the story of the Nightingale means to John? To Emmeline? Why do you think John cut it from the book?
6. The Nightingale machine is a fictional invention. Discuss its role in the book.
7. Both John and Victoria have a wall of scents. What do you think they mean to each of the characters?
8. Emmeline's father strives to preserve memories through scent. Emmeline's mother uses scent to influence others. Rene is trying to re-create scents that are disappearing in the modern world. What are the up- and downsides to their actions?
9. What do you think about Emmeline's relationship with scent? How does it change as she grows older?



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Emotional Arc questions/Parents:

10. Secrets are an important element in *The Scent Keeper*. Which secrets do you think the characters were right to keep? Which should they have told and when?
11. What do you think about John's decision to take Emmeline to the island? How do you feel about their relationship?
12. What do you think was the most important lesson that Emmeline learned on the island?
13. At one point, Emmeline comes to understand her father has been revealing his past through stories. What do you think he'd been trying to tell her?
14. Emmeline experiences the deaths of Cleo, her father, and Dodge. How does her reaction to each differ? What does each one tell us about her?
15. How do you see Emmeline's relationship with her parents change throughout the book?
16. What do you think happens at the end of the book?

Fisher:

17. What role does Fisher play in Emmeline's life? How does that change?
18. What do you think about Emmeline's decision to take Fisher to the island? How does it compare to her father's decision to take her there as a baby?
19. Emmeline blames herself for her father's death, and for the confrontation between Fisher and his father. Do you think she was right to do so?

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20. Fisher chose to leave his abusive father (and Emmeline). His mother chose to stay. What do you think about each of their decisions?
21. At one point in the book, Fisher's mother says: "Martin used to tell me how salmon always return to the same stream to spawn. They say it's the smell that draws them upstream. Maybe we're more like fish than we think." How does this apply to the characters in the book? Do you agree with the statement?

Discussion Questions

Literary questions:

22. Several chapter titles are repeated in the book. Why do you think that is?
23. *The Scent Keeper* is told through Emmeline's perspective. Imagine if it had been told through the varying perspectives of the major characters—Emmeline, Fisher, John, and Victoria. How would that change the book?
24. How does the prologue affect your reading of the rest of the novel? How would the book have been different if it had come at the end?
25. Fairy tales and stories are present throughout the book. What is their role in the book? In our lives?

