

Discussion Questions:

Flawless Witness A Novella Sequel by Merida Johns



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Numerous themes and metaphors form the bedrock of Suzanna's Story. Among these is a focus on universal values such as courage, justice, humanity, and transcendence. Achieving a flourishing and purposeful life is Suzanna's North Star. Life vision, forgiveness, gratitude, self-awareness, and self-compassion are threads throughout the story.

Below are quotes of Suzanna's interior thoughts. Choose one or more of these and discuss the themes or values represented.

Chapter 1: *"Grudges are abuser's potent brews, perpetuating endless subjection and cruelty on their targets. But I don't overlook, excuse, or justify my former husband's transgressions and the tsunami of terror he spewed."*

Chapter 2 (speaking of Jonathan's son): *"I want to learn more and suspend my judgment about the character of this new Jonathan."*

Chapter 3: *"Christian forgiveness isn't easy, even for priests. There is acidity in Jon's voice as he describes how his father ground Karen down until she submitted to his bullying and confessed a sin she didn't commit. It is clear who is the victim."*

Chapter 5: *"I didn't set limits on my kindness and love, which got me into trouble with Jonathan. I learned the hard way that everything must have a boundary."*

Chapter 9: *“I step outside myself. I am observational and analytic and reflect on how Jonathan treated anyone unfortunate to be snared in his trap. My blood isn’t sizzling, and my emotions aren’t overflowing. I reframe the events as an outsider might.”*

Chapter 13: *“With each toss—lavender, sage, mint—I replaced regret and resentment with gratitude, a flawless witness to my redemption.”*

General Questions

- Why was this book selected? Was it the theme, subject matter, or author that was of most interest to you?
- Were you immediately drawn into the story? Why or why not?
- What is the true subject of the story? What is happening below the surface? What feelings, ideas, and meanings does the story explore?
- What is the commonality or universality of the lived experiences in *Flawless Witness*? Were these presented realistically and believably?
- What values, strengths, flaws, or characteristics are heightened in the story? What emotional response (love, hate, anger, sympathy, empathy) did you have for the character(s)?
- The author uses several techniques for storytelling, including flashbacks, written letters, internal dialog, and journals/diaries. How effective were these techniques?
- How was a sense of place used in the story? What impact did specific scenes have on you and why?
- The author uses several embedded metaphors to carry themes through the story, such as North Star representing direction and purpose. What are other metaphors you notice? How were these used to emphasize the story’s themes?
- What questions about the story or character haunt you? Are there unanswered questions?
- After turning the last page, what was your immediate reaction?