

**Book Club Questions for  
The God of the Woods by Liz Moore**

1. Throughout the book, Barbara is portrayed as rebellious, especially in the eyes of her parents. Do you think her disappearance was an act of rebellion, or was it more of a cry for help? What was Barbara truly searching for, and do you think she found it by the end of the novel?
2. The Van Laar family is full of secrets, from Bear's mysterious disappearance to Barbara's current vanishing. How do these secrets affect the family dynamics? Do you think the characters are more damaged by the secrets they keep or by the eventual revelations? How does each character's relationship with secrecy shape their actions?
3. Alice's grief over Bear's disappearance consumes her, leading her down a dark path of denial, alcohol, and isolation. How do you think Alice's grief could have been handled differently if the people around her (especially Peter) had acted with more empathy? How do societal expectations of women impact her mental health and treatment by others?
4. Louise begins the novel as a young, struggling camp counselor who fears being blamed for Barbara's disappearance. How does Louise's character evolve throughout the novel? What does her growth say about resilience, taking ownership of one's actions, and standing up for what's right? Do you think Louise becomes empowered by the end of the story?
5. The Van Laar family is wealthy and powerful, yet their money and status don't protect them from the chaos in their lives. How do class and privilege impact the decisions of the Van Laar family, and how do these dynamics affect the other characters, like Louise and Tracy? Do you think the novel suggests that wealth cannot shield you from deeper emotional or moral struggles?
6. The ending of *The God of the Woods* has many twists and turns, especially concerning Barbara's fate. What was your reaction to the final revelation about her? Were you surprised by what you learned about the Van Laar family's role in her disappearance? How did the ending change the way you viewed the characters?
7. One of the key themes of the book is loneliness and isolation. Barbara feels isolated from her family, Alice is isolated in her grief, and even Louise feels like an outsider. How do these feelings of isolation affect the characters' choices and actions? Do any of them find a way to break free from their isolation, and what role does connection play in their journey?

8. Judyta "Judy" Luptack is the first female investigator in Albany, and throughout the book, she faces obstacles because of her gender. How does Judy navigate the sexism in her career while still being effective at solving the case? How does her quiet determination and empathy make her a unique investigator, and what do you think her character teaches us about perseverance in a male-dominated world?
9. The title of the book, *The God of the Woods*, evokes a sense of mystery and power. What do you think the woods symbolize in the novel? Are they a place of freedom, danger, or both? How do the woods serve as a backdrop for the characters' struggles and secrets, and what do they represent to Barbara, Alice, and the other characters?
10. Tracy is initially portrayed as an introverted, quiet character who is used to being on the sidelines. How does her friendship with Barbara help her come out of her shell? What does Tracy's loyalty to Barbara tell us about the importance of friendship and standing up for others, even when it's difficult? Do you think Tracy's decision to eventually reveal Barbara's secrets was an act of maturity or betrayal?
11. Barbara, despite her complicated personal life, maintains an air of being "untouchable" due to her family's wealth and social position. How does her status affect the way other characters view her? Do you think Barbara ever embraces her privilege, or does she resent it?
12. Bear's disappearance is a key turning point in the novel, and its mystery continues to affect the characters long after. How do you interpret the circumstances around Bear's disappearance? Do you think it was an accident, a murder, or something more sinister? What does Bear's fate represent for the family?
13. Camp Emerson acts as a microcosm for the broader themes of the book, especially in terms of class and privilege. How does the camp setting bring out these themes? How does Barbara's position within the camp mirror her position in society?
14. Alice's struggles with alcohol are a significant part of her decline, especially after Bear's disappearance. How does alcohol function as a coping mechanism for Alice? Do you think her reliance on alcohol is a form of rebellion or escapism, or is it something deeper?
15. There's something so captivating about the way Liz Moore intertwines two disappearances in the Van Laar family. How did this dual mystery affect the tension in the story? Did you find that one mystery was more compelling than the other?
16. This novel digs deep into class issues. How did the stark contrast between the wealthy Van Laars and the working-class townspeople affect how characters interact and make decisions? Did it change how you felt about certain characters?

17. Mother-daughter relationships are always complicated, but Barbara and Alice's dynamic felt especially fraught. Why do you think they were so distant from each other? Could things have been different if Alice had handled things differently?
18. The novel is told from multiple viewpoints, each adding a different layer to the story. Whose perspective did you connect with most? Was there a character's narrative that gave you new insights or completely shifted your understanding of the story?
19. Throughout the book, themes of power and privilege are everywhere, especially when it comes to the Van Laar family. How do you think Moore portrays the corrupting influence of wealth? Did any moments in the book feel especially jarring or eye-opening in terms of these themes?
20. Characters like Detective Judy Luptack and Barbara's mom, Alice, bring interesting layers to the narrative. How does Moore portray their struggles, strengths, and resilience in a male-dominated world? In what ways do they push against or fall victim to the societal expectations of their time?
21. The book shifts between timelines, and 1975 plays a huge part in the events of the story. How does the time period impact the characters' actions and decisions? Were there any historical elements that made the story feel more grounded or add to the overall mystery?
22. The wilderness backdrop of the Adirondacks feels almost like a character in itself. How does the setting impact the atmosphere and mood of the novel? What role does the wilderness play in the story's progression or themes?
23. Now, let's talk formats! Did you read *The God of the Woods* in print, on your Kindle, or did you listen to the audiobook? How did the format impact your experience, and would you recommend it in that format to others?
24. Have you ever had a summer camp experience similar to the one in the book? Was it anything like Camp Emerson? Share your memories (good or bad) from your time at camp!
25. Was there one particular mystery that you found most compelling? Was it Barbara's disappearance, Bear's tragic fate, or something else? What made that storyline stand out to you?
26. Without giving too much away, the book concludes with some shocking revelations. How did the ending affect you emotionally? Do you feel that the resolution was satisfying, or did it leave you with more questions? How do the final moments tie together the novel's themes of grief, family secrets, and redemption?

27. After finishing the book, how does *The God of the Woods* compare to other thrillers or mysteries you've read? What stood out to you as unique about Moore's storytelling style or approach to suspense?
28. There's a lot of tension around social class in this book. How do you think Moore used the Van Laar family's wealth and status to comment on society? What did the book ultimately say about family dynamics and expectations?
29. Was there anything in the book that really stuck with you that we haven't touched on yet? Any moments that left you thinking long after you turned the last page?
30. If you've read Liz Moore's other works (like *Long Bright River*), how did they compare to *The God of the Woods*? Which one stood out more to you?