



## Book Club Questions

### Marguerite by the Lake by Mary Dixie Carter

1. The novel begins with Marguerite's celebration party for her new book. Just as she is making her speech, the weather takes an unexpected turn, and it begins to rain heavily. Phoenix notices that an old spruce tree is on the brink of collapsing and urges everyone in attendance to evacuate, but Marguerite is insistent on keeping the show going. What do you think Marguerite's lack of concern reveals about her character? How did you feel about her here, and did your opinion of her change as the story developed?
2. Themes of nature and gardening are woven into the novel throughout. How do you find these themes enhanced the plot and its characters?
3. What are your thoughts on the nature of Phoenix and Geoffrey's blooming relationship? Were there any early hints of what was to come that made you suspect they would continue to grow closer?
4. Throughout the novel, we see that Marguerite and Geoffrey's marriage is not as perfect as they try to make it seem. Do you think the importance they attribute to their image and reputation impacts their relationship? If yes, how so?
5. How would you describe Phoenix as a narrator? Does she appear to be trustworthy or unreliable? Are there any specific moments that made you feel this way? How does her first-person narration and her feelings toward the main characters impact your perception of them?
6. Phoenix's brother, Curtis, crops up throughout the story as a supporting character. Based on what is revealed about him, how would you describe his relationship with Phoenix? How does his presence in her life influence the events of the novel?
7. Taylor reacts extremely negatively to Phoenix's presence and relationship with her father after her mother's passing. Do you feel this response was justified? How did Taylor's reaction make you feel about Phoenix?
8. Rachel's suspicion toward Phoenix is immediate. Based on the evidence and testimonies Rachel is able to gather, what do you think held her back from connecting Phoenix with Marguerite's death right away?
9. As the story unfolds, we learn that Serge's history with the Gray family is deeply rooted. Do you believe he has any ulterior motive for being close with them, or is it purely out of affection? Later, a letter Phoenix finds reveals that Geoffrey once harbored feelings toward Serge. How do you think this complicates their relationships with one another, both prior to and after Marguerite's death?
10. The novel ends with Phoenix approaching the smallest maple tree on the drive of the Grays' house. As she continues studying the trees, they appear to shift before her eyes --- the leaves and branches subtly twisting away from her. The trees, which she has poured her heart into, seem to be shutting her out. What do you think this symbolizes?

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